

# **Belarus 2007 Performance Report**

## **Operating Unit Performance Summary**

Over the last year, the regime continued its suppression of the political opposition, independent media and civil society. Despite the hostile assistance environment, USG efforts were directed at the Governing Justly and Democratically area, to provide support and often a lifeline to the nascent elements of Belarus civil society. A major break-through this year was a series of USAID-supported strategic dialogue sessions of the United Democratic Forces (UDF) coalition, followed by UDF regional and national conferences. With USAID assistance, the coalition transformed itself into a cohesive organization with an executive body capable of enforcing the coalition's long-term goals. The coalition and the parties launched a long-term public protest campaign consisting of several phases and numerous outreach activities. Extensive USAID support, grant making, leadership and capacity building training to over 60 indigenous NGOs helped sustain and improve their advocacy capacity. An NGO Map was developed to analyze trends of civil society, improve strategic planning and donor coordination; a new network of experts and analysts, - the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, to increase public policy efforts in economic, social and civic fields, was launched. Support to the independent media has seen some major achievements last year: the USAID-funded European Radio for Belarus has grown significantly into a truly multi-media platform.

In FY07, USG priority area was also Investing in People. The growing number of social problems in Belarus is the result of the government's failure to reform the sector. As USG projects increasingly promote an active role for NGOs in working with socially vulnerable groups, assistance had a double impact: it helped improve the health and social situation while strengthening NGO capacity. The NGO grant and training program for victims of trafficking and risk groups in the regions reached out to over a thousand participants, and a massive National Information Campaign reached 38,000 people. In Education, 900 Belarusian youths seeking an alternative to the state-sponsored higher education receive free tuition for participation in the European Humanities University distance learning program. In FY07, USAID completed an HIV/AIDS project with WHO to train medical professionals in team-based AIDS care, launched a maternal and child health project in the Chernobyl area, and developed a project for Combatting TB in Belarus.

### **Program Area Performance \ 2 Governing Justly & Democratically \ 2.3 Political Competition and Consensus-Building**

Major challenges for political parties in Belarus continue to be an extremely repressive political environment and no access to state media, complicated somewhat by a diverse range of policies and methodologies among the pro-democracy forces. Over the past year, the goals of USG party building assistance were to maintain cohesion of the United Democratic Forces coalition (UDF) at the national level, and improve organizational capacity of the individual pro-democracy political parties at the national and regional level. USAID, through its partners IRI and NDI, helped increase the capability of regional party branches; equip political and civic activists with the skills and knowledge to monitor the election campaigns; and improve the organizing skills, planning capacity and outreach of regional political and civic activists in Belarus. Material assistance was also key. A major break-through this year was a series of USAID-supported strategic dialogue sessions of the major coalition members, and subsequent regional and national fora to reinvigorate UDF and plan for the future. With USAID assistance, the coalition transformed itself into a cohesive organization with an executive body capable of enforcing the coalition's long-term goals and

strategy. The coalition and the parties planned and implemented their joint local election strategies in January elections, and a long-term public protest campaign consisting of several phases and numerous outreach activities.

For the coalition of pro-democratic forces, as well as individual pro-democratic political parties, to be credible and effective, they must know what issues are important to voters. USAID assisted pro-democracy parties in informing voters of their platforms and finding out the voters' attitudes and opinions on the most pressing issues. USAID-funded national public opinion polls helped develop research-based party platforms and slogans for campaigns and 2007 local elections.

Assistance in FY07 helped improve the organizational capacity of thirteen local political party branches, and three United Democratic Forces regional branches. USAID-funded political party training promoted increasing the role of women in political life and helped the expansion of party databases of activists interested in their political and civic campaigns. Coordinated assistance effort this past period helped align democratic forces' activities and formulate their strategy well in advance of the 2008 parliamentary elections.

### **Program Element Performance \ 2 Governing Justly & Democratically \ 2.3 Political Competition and Consensus-Building \ 2.3.3 Political Parties**

The goals of USAID party building assistance are to maintain cohesion of the United Democratic Forces coalition (UDF) at the national level, and improve organizational capacity of the individual pro-democracy political parties. USAID, IRI and NDI worked to increase the capability of regional party branches; equip political and civic activists with the skills and knowledge to monitor the election campaigns; and improve the organizing skills, planning capacity and outreach of regional political and civic activists in Belarus. In April 2007, IRI, along with the Council of Europe and NDI, hosted a break-through strategic dialogue session to bring together the Political Council of the United Democratic Forces along with more than 50 activists. It was followed by seven regional conferences which culminated in a national Congress of Pro-democratic Forces, with 693 delegates in attendance. At this congress, delegates discussed and approved several documents created by UDF including economic and social benefits platform, a draft transitional constitution that could be utilized in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy in Belarus and a new national strategy for the coalition. With USAID assistance, the coalition transformed itself into a cohesive organization with an executive body capable of enforcing the coalition's long-term goals.

This year, USAID strengthened the capacity of the pro-democratic parties to identify key voter issues and to disseminate their message in the run up period to the January 2007 local elections. Major challenges for political parties in Belarus continue to be a repressive political environment and no access to the national media. Elections are an important opportunity to reach out to the voters. IRI assisted UDF to develop a research-based national message for the local candidates to run, and many pro-democratic activists took part in campaigning. Despite wide-spread harassment by the regime, hundreds of nomination groups collecting signatures for candidates' inclusion on election ballot became an important mechanism for message dissemination and campaigning. Unfortunately, local elections again failed to meet even basic pre-conditions to be considered free and fair. Post-election, UDF planned and launched a long-term campaign of public protests. The campaign's various phases include distribution of information, organization of the European March and March for Social Benefits, press conferences and petition drives.

### **Element Indicator Narrative \ 2 Governing Justly & Democratically \ 2.3 Political Competition and**

### **Consensus-Building \ 2.3.3 Political Parties**

1. The target for recipients of political party training was overachieved as more people received the training than initially planned.
2. The number of parties indicator represents the national level data.

### **Program Area Performance \ 2 Governing Justly & Democratically \ 2.4 Civil Society**

To counter constant pressure of the authorities on the most vocal elements of the civil society and independent media, USAID strengthened capacity of CSOs to act as agents for democratic reform, and to operate in unfavorable conditions. Technical assistance last year included grant-making (over 40 grants), NGO networking and cross-border exchanges, training, strategic planning and mentoring, purchase of goods and services for over 60 NGOs. An NGO Map was developed in cooperation with Pact and five Belarusian umbrella organizations, to analyze trends of civil society, improve strategic planning and donor coordination. Together with the Renaissance, Pontis, and Eurasia Foundations, USAID assisted development of a new network of experts and analysts,- the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS) - to increase public policy efforts in economic, social and civic areas. Additionally, a new concept of legal protection was developed by a local legal defense NGO and the Committee for Protection of Repressed, to defend civil activists from illegal actions of Belarusian state.

In FY07, USAID continued to engage other elements of the non-governmental sector through the Eurasia Foundation Business Education Program and the Student Legal Clinics Program. The Business Education Program engaged three business schools in adopting international standards of business education, through summer school, master classes and the annual conference that brought together 300 business leaders, education professionals and MBA students. Clinical Legal Education program enhanced civic engagement by expanding the network of university-based legal clinics. A series of training sessions helped make them more effective in providing legal services to the most vulnerable citizens. USAID is creating a community of legal professionals committed to advanced international principles and practices: ten legal clinics based in universities all over Belarus participated in the program in FY07.

USAID's goal for media is to increase the flow of objective, fact-based reporting within Belarus, and to help independent media defend itself against GOB legal and administrative harassment. This year, USAID supported training of journalists and media managers through Internews. Also, USAID-funded European Radio for Belarus has grown significantly and enjoyed much success. With IREX assistance, ERB developed into a multi-media platform and expanded its audience.

### **Program Element Performance \ 2 Governing Justly & Democratically \ 2.4 Civil Society \ 2.4.1 Civic Participation**

In FY 07, USAID worked to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to act as agents for democratic reform. Technical assistance included grant-making, NGO networking and cross-border exchanges, training, strategic planning and mentoring; purchase of goods and services for NGOs, etc. Activities focused on CSO organizational development, advocacy for improvements in legal environment; rights education and protection; local government engagement. Over 40 grants were awarded to local CSOs in FY07 to support their initiatives. USAID, Pact and NDI mentored over 60 Belarusian CSOs. To strengthen local NGO networking, the Leadership Fellows Program was launched in December 2006 with a six-day Leadership Institute followed by consultations. These activities helped sustain the organizational capacity and

effectiveness of NGOs and promote their role in local communities' decision-making. Local council deputies from 15 cities participated in seminars on local government and strategic planning as well as internships in local councils in Ukraine. The Pact-supported Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS) has also been instrumental in facilitating networking.

USAID supported development of an NGO Map, in cooperation with Pact and five Belarusian umbrella organizations, to analyze trends of civil society, improve strategic planning and enhance donor coordination. With USAID/Pact support, a new concept of legal protection was developed by a local legal defense NGO and the Committee for Protection of the Repressed, to defend civil activists from illegal actions of Belarusian state bodies. Finally, secure equipment was provided to NGO grantees to improve communications and enhance effectiveness of their activities.

USAID continued to engage the non-governmental sector through the Eurasia Foundation Business Education program and the Student Legal Clinics Program. The former engaged three business schools and over 80 professors and trainers in learning modern business education practices, the latter made 10 university-based legal clinics more effective in providing legal services to the most vulnerable citizens. Six clinic leaders participated in a study tour to St. Petersburg Center for Legal Clinical Education; over 50 students from three Minsk-based and seven regional clinics took part in workshops and clinic activities. A textbook with a corresponding course syllabus and an internet resource were developed to enhance civic engagement of young legal professionals.

#### **Program Element Performance \ 2 Governing Justly & Democratically \ 2.4 Civil Society \ 2.4.2 Media Freedom and Freedom of Information**

The goal for this element is to increase the flow of objective, fact-based reporting within Belarus, and to help media defend itself against legal and administrative harassment. Strategies employed this year were to keep non-state print media alive and available to the general population, use new technologies to bypass the monopoly of state media, work with youth to counteract state propaganda and create an alternative environment, protect online media against attempts by the authorities to control and censor the internet, etc. Throughout the year, USAID supported training of journalists and media managers through the Internews program. A local media support organization conducted two training sessions to improve the skills of web and visual journalists and a seminar on finance reporting for managers of independent newspapers for 21 media managers.

In FY07, USAID-funded European Radio for Belarus has grown significantly and enjoyed much success. The development of ERB to a truly multi-media platform was a major achievement of IREX efforts last year. With the newly designed website re-launch ([www.belradio.fm](http://www.belradio.fm)) and the training to go with it, ERB rapidly expanded its audience, building its interactivity and complementing its broadcasting. In the following nine months after re-launch, the daily unique visitors number grew four times. The launch of live DJs based in Warsaw allowed the audience to interact with ERB via SMS, internet messaging and phone. The hiring of an experienced editor and leading Belarusian independent journalist has also greatly enhanced the capacity of ERB to report and to cover key events such as elections and major political events. The live capacity of ERB and its interactiveness further enhanced the outlet's ability to report these events. The results of the independent polls and IREX-commissioned survey show that ERB's audience has grown significantly, whilst Google Analytics data has confirmed a rapid growth in ERB's web audience. In September 2007, ERB co-organized the rock music festival \"Right to be Free\" near the Belarusian border in Ukraine. Eight Belarusian rock bands banned from performing in Belarus and a Ukrainian rock band took

part in the concert; up to 7,000 people attended despite detentions by Belarusian police. The goal of the festival was to showcase independent Belarusian music which is banned in Belarus, and to raise the profile of ERB.

#### **Element Indicator Narrative \ 2 Governing Justly & Democratically \ 2.4 Civil Society \ 2.4.1 Civic Participation**

1. The FY07 actual number of civil society organizations was slightly higher than established as some of these represent networks or umbrella organizations. Several of these NGOs represent multiple beneficiaries, both individuals and organizations.
2. The civic education programs are currently defined as Community Connections four-week exchange program in the United States, with an emphasis on community activism and mobilization. The actual number of people in FY07 is slightly lower than the target because of the last-minute drop out of participants already selected through a rigorous process.

#### **Element Indicator Narrative \ 2 Governing Justly & Democratically \ 2.4 Civil Society \ 2.4.2 Media Freedom and Freedom of Information**

1. Number of media civil society organizations and support institutions include 4 organizations outside the country implementing programs targeting population in Belarus.
2. The actual number of outlets supported was lower than targeted as support was extended to a number of outlets funded in FY06, and it is difficult to predict how many will apply for assistance. Hence, adjustment of the FY08 target.

#### **Program Area Performance \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.1 Health**

US foreign assistance to Belarus in the health area addresses such needs as fighting HIV/AIDS and TB. This year, USAID continued its HIV/AIDS prevention activities with the World Health Organization and Christian Children's Fund. WHO introduced team-based approach to HIV/AIDS care, providing training to 13 teams from the general health care and penitentiary systems. A team of local trainers was created. Capacity building of AIDS-service NGOs helped enhance their role in the social sphere and HIV/AIDS response in Belarus. The USAID-created national trainers' team continued its professional development and reached out to 1,100 specialists through 70 workshops in 23 local communities. Through USAID-funded small projects, NGOs established 51 innovative community-based services for difficult-to-reach groups or settings, e.g., informal education on HIV/AIDS and interactive theatrical performances for institutionalized children; an educational mini-van for rural youth; services for HIV-positive pregnant women; and home-based palliative care for HIV-positive children and their family members. The total number of the beneficiaries (IDU, PLWHA, STW, MSM, youth, women) is 22,155 people; indirect beneficiaries reached through information campaigns total more than 60,000 people.

In FY07, TB became a focus of USG foreign policy priorities in Belarus as the TB epidemic continues, exacerbated by HIV/TB co-infection and multi-drug resistant TB. Over the past year USAID concentrated on identifying the assistance needs in this area, developing the strategies to tackle the program, coordinating with other donor organizations and designing a project with the World Health Organization. The project went through numerous iterations as the new data became available, and during the USAID official project design and approval process. At the end of FY07, the agreement with WHO was reached for the two-year activity. USAID will work with WHO to engage the professional medical community in revising the

national TB policies and guidelines according to the most recent internationally recommended standards.

### **Program Element Performance \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.1 Health \ 3.1.2 Tuberculosis**

The growing number of health problems is the result of the Belarusian government's failure to reform the sector. The National TB Program in Belarus is mainly based on TB specialized facilities with limited involvement at the primary health care level. In FY07, TB became a focus of USG foreign policy priorities in Belarus as the TB epidemic continues, exacerbated by HIV/TB co-infection and multi-drug resistant TB. Over the past fiscal year, USAID concentrated on identifying the needs for technical assistance in this area, developing the strategies to tackle the program, coordinating with other donor organizations and designing a project with the World Health Organization (WHO). The project went through numerous iterations and improvements as the new data became available, and during the official USAID project design and approval process. At the end of the fiscal year, the agreement with WHO was reached for the two-year activity. USAID will work with WHO to engage the professional medical community in revising the national TB policies and guidelines according to the most recent internationally recommended standards. Funding will be used to adopt and expand the Stop TB Strategy in the country, promote and facilitate collaboration of TB institutions with general health services and the expansion of TB diagnostics and care at PHC level; and to promote and assist implementation of collaborative TB/HIV activities.

In accordance with these objectives the scope of USAID-funded activities includes: reviewing and revising national TB legislation and policies based on the latest WHO manuals and guidelines by a TB Task Force; assisting the reform of the health system and designing decentralized TB services; assisting the review of curricula and training material for delivery of TB services at primary health care level; an assessment of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) on anti-TB drugs; and an independent survey on the quality of locally produced drugs.

### **Element Indicator Narrative \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.1 Health \ 3.1.2 Tuberculosis**

The indicators will be further identified with the WHO; the baseline data will be collected and targets established by Phase II of the Operational Plan.

### **Program Area Performance \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.2 Education**

The educational system in Belarus is under strict government control and is heavily dominated by state ideology. Ideologically-based teaching does not support the country's transformation to a free-market democracy. Private universities in Belarus are few and one of the leading schools, the European Humanities University (EHU), was ousted from the country and resumed its operation in Lithuania with donor assistance. A US assistance priority in this area is to ensure that Belarusian youth have access to forms of learning that promote independent research and thinking based on democratic values. In FY07, activities continued to support distance learning and in-class undergraduate and graduate studies at EHU. This past period, US assistance was focused on improving academic and managerial capacity of EHU to deliver undergraduate and graduate degree programs in European studies.

USG funding was also provided to ensure that 900 Belarusian youths seeking an alternative to state-sponsored higher education receive free tuition for participation in the distance learning program. USAID assistance helped establish and add new courses to the online university, with currently over a hundred social science and liberal arts courses. EHU distance learning programs continued to promote academic

freedom for Belarusian students, providing them with opportunities for unrestricted study and high-quality education free from state control and ideology.

### **Program Element Performance \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.2 Education \ 3.2.2 Higher Education**

Belarus possesses relatively high quality education, but its education system is under strict government control and is heavily dominated by state ideology. In FY 07, USAID continued to provide assistance to European Humanities University(EHU), now in Vilnius, to ensure access to independent higher education. Founded with donor assistance, including USG funding, the University had gained a well-deserved reputation for excellence before it was closed down by the GOB. The priority focus of USG assistance in this area is providing reform-minded Belarusian youth access to unrestricted studies. Ideologically-based teaching is unsuited to market democracy which requires problem-solving skills and an emphasis on individual social rights and responsibilities.

USAID supported the successful launch of EHU distance courses in fourteen academic areas, and this past year, continued to support undergraduate programs in such areas as Belarusian Studies, European Studies, International Law, Media Studies and Journalism. In FY07, US assistance helped improve EHU's academic and managerial capacity to deliver undergraduate and graduate degree programs in European studies, covering important national and regional development issues for the democratic transformation of Belarus. USG assistance gave 900 Belarusian youths an opportunity to seek an alternative to the state-sponsored higher education by establishing an online university with more than 100 social science and liberal arts courses, based at European Humanities University. Just over this year, USAID funding assisted in development of 67 new courses and certification of 120 courses. This year, EHU distance learning programs continued to promote academic freedom for Belarusian students, providing them with free tuition for participation in the distance learning program for unrestricted study and high-quality education free from state control and ideology.

### **Element Indicator Narrative \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.2 Education \ 3.2.2 Higher Education**

1. Number of host country individuals receiving USG-funded scholarships to attend higher education institutions represent the number of Belarusian students enrolled in the Distance Learning program of the European Humanities University (EHU).
2. Number of USG-funded scholarships and exchange programs represent EHU distance courses offered free of charge.
3. Cumulative number of courses developed and certified through the internal certification system at the EHU. Increased number of courses developed and certified within the reporting period is due to the increased institutional capacity of the University; hence the FY08 targets are adjusted.

### **Program Area Performance \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.3 Social and Economic Services and Protection for Vulnerable Populations**

About 1/3 of Belarus' population lives below the official poverty line, with the proportion of people living in poverty in some rural areas reaching 45%. The lack of economic opportunity makes the population vulnerable to trafficking. Belarus is primarily a source country for women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and a source of forced labor trafficking for Russia. Belarus is classified as a Tier 2 watch list country by the State Department TIP report. US assistance targets TIP as a transnational threat, which is a US global concern. Investing in the people of Belarus in this area is important for USG

foreign policy goals. USG assistance over the last year was aimed at resolving social and economic problems, facilitating democratic development of local communities and NGOs, and achieving USG public diplomacy goals in the area of trafficking prevention.

In FY07, assistance supported raising awareness of trafficking and preventing its root causes, such as unemployment, through basic job skills and entrepreneurship training. In FY07, USAID through its partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) supported numerous micro-projects initiated by partner NGOs all over Belarus. With the technical and material assistance to NGOs, capacity building training, training of trainers, and equipment supplements, USAID enabled indigenous organizations to implement their wide-scale anti-trafficking activities. Economic Empowerment Training Program for victims and risk groups conducted 91 trainings in the regions for over a thousand participants, with the help of seventeen local trainers. A more advanced entrepreneurship training resulted in a merit-based selection of business plans developed by 33 trained individuals for business start-up grants. Over the period, a massive National Information Campaign, including the dissemination of printed materials, posting of billboards, broadcasting PSA on national TV, national tour of a rock group promoting TIP awareness, conducting lecturing activities, resulted in increased awareness of risks of trafficking and opportunities for legal employment.

### **Program Element Performance \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.3 Social and Economic Services and Protection for Vulnerable Populations \ 3.3.2 Social Services**

Belarus is primarily a source country for women and children trafficked to Europe, North America and the Middle East for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Over the last five years, the number of trafficking in persons (TIP) crimes more than tripled in Belarus. The root cause of vulnerability to trafficking is poverty and lack of employment opportunities in some geographic areas or age groups. Prevention of human trafficking is a USG global priority; moreover, investing in the people of Belarus in this area is important for USG foreign policy goals. Continued assistance was aimed this year at resolving social and economic problems, facilitating democratic development of local communities and NGOs, and achieving USG public diplomacy goals.

All the USAID activities in the past fiscal year targeted one of the underlying causes of trafficking: poverty, the lack of job and personal development opportunities. Activities in the FY07 were aimed at addressing a wide range of issues relevant to the prevention of TIP in Belarus while making the efforts of the non-governmental stakeholders more tangible and sustainable. In FY07, USAID through its partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) supported numerous micro-projects initiated by partner NGOs all over Belarus. Tangible technical assistance, capacity building training, and office and communication equipment to partner NGOs enabled them to successfully implement their project activities. The project's key component Economic Empowerment Training Program for victims and risk groups covered over a thousand participants with 91 training sessions in the regions. Seventeen local trainers were selected and prepared to disseminate the course. The alumni network was established by the trainees in all the locations. A total of 33 trained individuals have been identified on merit-based principles, and their business plans were selected for funding through non-cash micro-enterprise grants. Also, a massive National Information Campaign, including the dissemination of printed materials, billboards, PSAs on national TV, national tour of a rock group promoting TIP awareness, was conducted and resulted in increased awareness of risks of trafficking and opportunities for legal employment. An increase in the percentage of the target group that has a correct understanding of trafficking was already demonstrated by the training evaluation forms of the training participants.

## **Element Indicator Narrative \ 3 Investing in People \ 3.3 Social and Economic Services and Protection for Vulnerable Populations \ 3.3.2 Social Services**

1. The number of people benefiting from the USG-supported social services represent such target groups as victims of trafficking, populations vulnerable to trafficking, and children and youth. Increase in actual FY07 and FY08 target numbers reflect the greater scope of partner NGO activities following the registration of the IOM Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Belarus program with the Government of Belarus.

### **Key Issue Performance \ Reducing gender based violence and exploitation**

The goal of reducing gender based violence and exploitation is at the core of anti-trafficking activities in Belarus, designed and funded by USAID. In the framework of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons project implemented by the International Organization for Migration, directed at preventing trafficking from Belarus, particularly among women aged 16-25 living in border areas, all awareness-raising events were protecting and enforcing the rights of women and explaining the risks of becoming a victim. The essence of the project is to reduce gender-based violence and exploitation which focuses on target groups such as victims of trafficking and people-at-risk. All counter-trafficking awareness raising events, including lectures, training sessions for target group, etc., aim at preventing violence against vulnerable groups. An increase in the percentage of the target group that has a correct understanding of trafficking and its risks was demonstrated by the data collected from the evaluation forms submitted by the participants of the Job-Skills and Job-Seeking Skills trainings. Over the past year USAID continued to provide funds to create a referral and monitoring system for a sustainable, safe and humane reintegration of victims of trafficking (VoT). In FY07, USAID also offered psychological assistance to sixty two VoTs through national NGO partners and civil society organizations, aiming at their sustainable, safe and comprehensive reintegration into the society.

### **Key Issue Performance \ Local Organization Capacity Development**

In FY07, USAID continued to focus on civil society capacity development, engaging government agencies and representatives mostly in the Investing in People area. The organization capacity building activities over this year included NGOs' staff training sessions, providing office equipment to NGOs, as well as exchange visits and building networks for NGOs' representatives. As a result, high expertise and efficient activities by the NGOs led to a gradual acknowledgement of their efforts by the government. Thus, the Minister of the Interior publicly praised NGOs for their role in anti-trafficking information campaigns and service provision. Advocacy efforts of Belarusian AIDS Network led to the Council of Ministers' approval of their recommendations to the country strategic document on HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment and Care.

In business education, USAID efforts were focused on creating alternatives to the old Soviet-style concepts and methods of teaching. A group of 36 leading business education professionals participated in a Summer School program and learned new teaching methods in strategic management, marketing and human resource management. In four master classes, 80 business school professors and trainers learned various modern business education practices. Most participants started developing or updating their own business education courses. Three Belarus business schools participating in the program already introduced a new course on logistics into their curricula.

### **Key Issue Performance \ Microenterprise**

The main focus of USG assistance in Belarus is democracy promotion and social and health areas, and there is no dedicated funding for the economic growth promotion. However, some activities contribute indirectly to the creation and sustainability of microenterprises. Thus, in FY07, as a result of the Economic Empowerment Training in the framework anti-trafficking activities, 33 participants' business plans were selected on merit-based principles, and were supported through non-cash start-up grants. Through Eurasia Foundation's small grants program, a project with the Gomel Agency for Regional Development built the capacity of the Khoyniki Center for Rural Development. The Center conducted 13 seminars for local entrepreneurs on such issues as registering a business, and tax procedures and financial management; organized two study tours to Ukraine; designed six local business models to distribute freely to start-up entrepreneurs, and offered ongoing consultation and assistance to small businesses. The number of private entrepreneurs in Khoyniki region increased by 25%, and the number of tax violations decreased. Another local grantee, NGO "Rest in the Village," designed a certification system for rural farmsteads in tourism. After providing a series of training on the new certification system, the expert group certified 77 Belarusian farmsteads. The project trained and motivated the rural entrepreneur community and increased incentives for providing quality services.

### **Key Issue Performance \ Applied Research**

USAID assistance in research focuses on developing the local capacity of economic, social and political analysis and prognosis, and building the polling capacity. Over the last year, USAID was engaged in development of Belarus' new network of experts: the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS), located in Vilnius, Lithuania. USG funds supported creation and operations of BISS, together with the Renaissance, Pontis and Eurasia Foundations, and Pact. The aim of the research capacity building is provide a new "hub" (<http://www.belinstitute.eu/>) for strategic thinking for Belarus civil society and for international community. In addition, graduates of the Pact Leadership Fellows Program engaged in researching topics such as foreign donors' policy as viewed by Belarusian NGOs, levels of students' civic activism, assessment of communication systems of the Belarusian civil society, etc.

This year, public opinion polling continued to be USAID priority. Following 2006 presidential elections, it was unclear whether viable polling could be carried out in Belarus. IRI conducted several simultaneous national polls with different agencies to assess the reliability of data coming from Belarus. Based on Gallup/Baltic assessment, it became clear that polling can produce reliable data. Consequently, the May opinion poll on the Russia-Belarus energy crisis and the September survey on the repeal of social benefits produced data for the civil society and political party campaigns.

### **Key Issue Performance \ Community Mobilization/Participation**

In the past year, USAID focused on increasing citizen participation in community life. The Ukraine-Belarus Partnership for Community Development Initiative co-funded by Pact, the Mott Foundation, and the Renaissance Foundation resulted in formation of the Belarusian Association of Regional Development Agencies (BelARDA) to represent the interests of eight local regional development agencies and their communities. Program participants formed networks and contacts to continue supporting each other's activities and to share knowledge and successes. Local council deputies from 15 cities have participated in seminars on local government, strategic planning and exchange of experience with their Ukrainian counterparts, including internships in local councils in Ukraine. Eight regional development project proposals were supported with USAID funding.

NDI held a youth conference in February 2007 to assist youth groups in their efforts to mobilize, build organizational capacity, improve cooperation among such groups, and discuss the most effective ways to provide support to these groups. This conference also included an organizational survey, the results of which were used to shape plans for future activities. During FY 07, IRI hosted ten youth training sessions for more than 300 Belarusian youth utilizing trainers from across democratic Europe. Trainings included popular Democracy Schools, as well as trainings developed specifically to reflect the current situation in Belarus.

### **Key Issue Performance \ Public-Private Partnerships**

In Belarus, any new non-governmental organization or a group of people united by common goals or interests can be considered as a step to building civil society, as such groups are under rigid and comprehensive government control. But high professionalism and efficiency of NGOs, both at the national and local level, gained the respect of local state bodies and increased the profile of NGOs. For example, NGOs that provide trafficking prevention services to the local communities are recognized by the local authorities. Last year, the government provided space to the office of an NGO in Brest running a hotline, and to a shelter in Minsk. Several most respected NGOs were able to successfully engage the authorities and have a partner-observer status in the National Working Group on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

The Ukraine-Belarus Partnership for Community Development Initiative co-funded by USAID, Mott and the International Renaissance Foundation strengthened community problem solving activities and improved cross-sectoral cooperation through training sessions and funding of eight project proposals. USAID-funded Eurasia Foundation Business Education Program encouraged cooperation between the education and business sectors. In FY07, 300 business leaders, education professionals and students participated in an annual international business education conference and the second annual business forum and discussed the needs of business education in Belarus.

### **Key Issue Performance \ Civil Society**

USG assistance over the last year was aimed at increasing the capacity of indigenous civil society organizations to advocate for the democratic reforms in Belarus, in general, and their constituencies' rights, in particular. USG assistance focused on solving social and economic problems is facilitating democratic development of local communities and NGOs and elevating their role in local and national decision making. In FY07, USAID funding enabled Pact and NDI to educate and mentor over 60 local civil society organizations (CSOs) and provide regular assistance with their organizational development issues. Lawyers from the local legal defence organization, the Innovation Foundation for Legal Technologies (IFLT), conducted three workshops benefiting 70 civil society activists. Legal experts representing 13 organizations specializing in legal assistance to civil society discussed ways to improve provision of legal assistance to civil society in Belarus. USAID funds helped facilitate cooperation among three leading Belarusian organizations (IFLT, the Viasna Human Rights Center, and the Belarus Helsinki Committee, to establish a united regional network of competent civil society lawyers.

Partner NGOs engaged in HIV/AIDS NGO Capacity Building demonstrated this year impressive progress in fostering democratic practices in their organizational culture: monitoring indicated that 73% of NGOs improved governance, strategic planning, reaching new target groups and geographic regions.

### **Key Issue Performance \ Increasing gender equity**

Women are identified as agents of change in Belarus and hence, an important focus group for USG assistance in Belarus. In FY07, the USAID-funded Pact civil society activities helped the Women Network grow from a few women leadership initiatives before the 2006 presidential elections to a full fledged network of 15 women organizations. To that end, a conference was held in June 2007 to design a comprehensive strategy for the women's movement in the country. To increase the number of women leaders, IRI hosted quarterly video-teleconference training sessions which allowed Belarusian women activists to participate in a virtual cross-cultural exchange with experienced women activists in the U.S.

In the framework of USAID/IOM's Prevention of Trafficking in Persons project, aimed primarily at women aged 16-25, all awareness raising events were promoting, protecting, and enforcing women's rights. Also, local partner NGOs implementing the anti-trafficking project are primarily staffed with women. The capacity building opportunities given to NGOs allow their staff members to increase leadership roles in public and private spheres. That is especially important in small towns where such opportunities for women are traditionally limited due to the existing gender policies and practices. The key project component, Economic Empowerment Training Program, is directly aimed at increasing personal and economic empowerment of women through building skills and material assistance.

# 2 Governing Justly & Democratically - Belarus

## 2.3 Political Competition and Consensus-Building\2.3.3 Political Parties

### Number of Individuals who Receive USG-Assisted Political Party Training

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	Number of women					Number of men				
					2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
1,579	410	566	665	750	679	170	183	275	240	900	240	383	390	510

## 2.3 Political Competition and Consensus-Building\2.3.3 Political Parties

### Number of USG-assisted political parties implementing programs to increase the number of

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
4	5	5	6	6

433  
chars

### 2.3.3 Political Parties narrative (no more than 1500 characters)

1. The target for recipients of political party training was overachieved as more people received the training than initially planned. number of parties indicator represents the national level data.

2. The

## 2.4 Civil Society\2.4.1 Civic Participation

### Number of Civil Society Organizations using USG Assistance to Improve Internal Organizational

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
45	69	73	63	71

## 2.4 Civil Society\2.4.1 Civic Participation

### Number of People who Have Completed USG Assisted Civic Education Programs

Number of women	Number of men
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2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
50	50	48	50	60	28	25	29	25	30	22	25	19	25	30

840

**2.4.1 Civic Participation narrative (no more than 1500 characters)**

chars

1. The FY07 actual number of civil society organizations was slightly higher than established as some of these represent networks or umbrella organizations. Several of these NGOs represent multiple beneficiaries, both individuals and organizations.
2. The civic education programs are currently defined as Community Connections four-week exchange program in the United States, with an emphasis on community activism and mobilization. The actual number of people in FY07 is slightly lower than the target because of the last-minute drop out of participants already selected through a rigorous process.

**2.4 Civil Society\2.4.2 Media Freedom and Freedom of Information**

**Number of Journalists Trained with USG Assistance**

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	Number of women					Number of men				
					2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
13	59	71	65	65	7	30	39	33	33	6	29	33	32	32

**2.4 Civil Society\2.4.2 Media Freedom and Freedom of Information**

**Number of Media Civil Society Organizations and/or Support Institutions Assisted by USG**

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
4	10	9	10	9

**2.4 Civil Society\2.4.2 Media Freedom and Freedom of Information**

**Number of Non-state News Outlets Assisted By USG**

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
18	21	13	21	15

597

**2.4.2 Media Freedom and Freedom of Information narrative (no more than 1500 characters)**

chars

1. Number of media civil society organizations and support institutions include 4 organizations outside the country implementing programs targeting population in Belarus.
2. The actual number of outlets supported was lower than targeted as support was extended to a number of outlets funded in FY06, and it is difficult to predict how many will apply for assistance. Hence, adjustment of the FY08 target.

### 3 Investing in People - Belarus

#### 3.1 Health\3.1.2 Tuberculosis

##### Number of people trained in DOTS with USG funding

					number of women					number of men				
2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target

**153** **3.1.2 Tuberculosis narrative (no more than 1500 characters)**  
**chars**

The indicators will be further identified with the WHO; the baseline data will be collected and targets established by Phase II of the Operational Plan.

#### 3.2 Education\3.2.2 Higher Education

##### Number of host-country individuals receiving USG-funded scholarships to attend higher education institutions

					number of women					number of men					
2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	
	813	900	900	1,000	1,000	500	540	540	600	600	313	360	360	400	400

#### 3.2 Education\3.2.2 Higher Education

##### Number of USG-funded scholarship and exchange programs conducted through higher education

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	
	58	124	119	145	170

#### 3.2 Education\3.2.2 Higher Education

##### Number of USG-supported organizational improvements that strengthen the institutional

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	
	24	156	187	90	72

**1205** **3.2.2 Higher Education narrative (no more than 1500 characters)**  
**chars**

1. Number of host country individuals receiving USG-funded scholarships to attend higher education institutions represent the number of Belarusian students enrolled in the Distance Learning program of the European Humanities University (EHU).
2. Number of USG-funded scholarships and exchange programs represent EHU distance courses offered free of charge.
3. Cumulative number of courses developed and certified through the internal certification system at the EHU. Increased number of courses developed and certified within the reporting period is due to the increased institutional capacity of the University; hence the FY08 targets are adjusted.

#### 3.3 Social and Economic Services and Protection for Vulnerable Populations\3.3.2 Social Services

##### Number of people benefiting from USG-supported social services

					number of women					number of men					vulnerable children					other targeted vulnerable people					war victims					victims of torture				
2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target
	8,750	8,687	9,353	8,500	9,500	8,750	8,687	6,194	5,100	5,700																								

#### 3.3 Social and Economic Services and Protection for Vulnerable Populations\3.3.2 Social Services

##### Number of USG-assisted organizations and/or service delivery systems strengthened that serve

2006 *	FY 2007 Target	FY 2007 Actual	2008 Original Target	2008 Revised Target	
	16	16	15	16	16

**421** **3.3.2 Social Services narrative (no more than 1500 characters)**  
**chars**

1. The number of people benefiting from the USG-supported social services represent such target groups as victims of trafficking, populations vulnerable to trafficking, and children and youth. Increase in actual FY07 and FY08 target numbers reflect the greater scope of partner NGO activities following the registration of the IOM Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Belarus program with the Government of Belarus.

