Advocacy for Child Welfare Policy Reforms

Final Report 2012

PBA: SC/2010/0845

Submitted to USAID in the Russian Federation

By UNICEF in the Russian Federation

unite for children

unicef

Table of Contents

Executive Summary: 3

Background: 4

Project Description: 5

Results:..... 5

Expected Result 1.1: Key stakeholders' enhanced awareness on child welfare priorities & approaches..... 5

Expected Result 2.1: Strengthened capacity of child welfare specialists in monitoring & protecting children's rights 6

Conclusion: 13

Annnex1-FinancialReport.....15

Executive Summary:

Over the last few years, significant political attention has been on the need to prioritise child-related issues, including deinstitutionalisation of state care and reduction of 'social orphans', integration of children with disabilities into 'barrier-free' environments, and enhancement of responses to violence against children. This attention has also placed greater focus on the family as an institution, recognising that children have the right to live safely with their parents.

While this principle is clearly recognised by government agencies, it is taking time to bring social sector staff capacities, legislation, mandates and budgets into line with the priority to identify and provide early intervention for families at risk rather than in crisis.

UNICEF has taken a convening role, identifying good practices and the need for consensus and harmonised policy frameworks for all actors.

Under this project, UNICEF collaborated with key strategic partners to strengthen child welfare resources and policy dialogue, enhancing regions' capacities in their child welfare reform strategies. Key partners included the RF Ministry of Education and Science (MOES), the Foundation to Support Children in Difficult Life Circumstances[1], the Federal Child Rights Ombudsperson office, NGOs National Foundation to Prevent Cruelty to Children and EveryChild, and other government and civil society organisations.

The project's overall objective was to contribute to systemic improvements in child protection mechanisms in the Russian Federation by strengthening child rights resources and institutions.

This objective was addressed through:

- Key stakeholders' enhanced awareness about and support for key child welfare priorities & approaches; and
- Strengthened capacity of child welfare specialists in monitoring & protecting children's rights.

The key results achieved over the project were:

- Development of a policy and planning framework for child welfare and de-institutionalisation strategies, based on innovative Russian practices that complements a similar framework directed by international standards. Two accompanying policy papers on root causes for institutionalisation, i.e. baby abandonment and disability issues, were also produced. These documents have been highly valued by the RF Ministry of Education and Science and will be part of their methodological dissemination to the regions. Furthermore, they have provided tools to enhance the planning and monitoring capacity roles of regional administrations' resource management for children.
- Advancement of the child care dialogue to more than 250 regional policy-makers and practitioners, with particular attention to the importance of root causes of children's institutionalization, namely disability and violence issues;
- Extensive exchange of experiences among regional child rights ombudspersons and child rights specialists – reaching over 100 child rights specialists and ombudspersons from 58 regions in regional seminar-study tours; and 140 federal and regional government and civil society members (85 of them regional ombudspersons and their staff from 75 regions) in the Child Rights Ombudsperson Congress;
- Establishment and implementation of a first ever, 72-hour, accredited[2] child rights course for regional child rights ombudspersons, with 70 regional ombudspersons and 6 staff members from the federal child rights ombudsperson office successfully completing the course.

---

[1] The Federal Foundation to Support Children in Difficult Life Circumstances was established by the Russian government, with the organisation's chair being the Minister of Health and Social Development.

[2] Accreditation was given by the RF Ministry of Education and Science.

- Development of informational digest of regional ombudsperson office experiences and two course resources - course textbook and reader (teaching materials).

The project has developed important resources to advance policy-makers' and child rights practitioners' work to better uphold children's rights, striving to the goal of having children's separation from biological families only as a last resort. UNICEF's close collaboration in project design and implementation with Russian partners such as the RF Ministry of Education and Science, the Federal Child Rights Ombudsperson Office, the Foundation to Support Children in Difficult Life Circumstances, and the Russian State Humanitarian University guarantee that these initiatives will continue to grow and develop over the long-term.

Background:

1. Child Rights Continue to be High on Political Agenda:

Over the last few years, significant political developments have been implemented to raise attention to children's needs and particularly children from vulnerable groups. Specifically, government has made high level calls for more attention to child-related issues, such as keeping children in their families and out of state care, integrating children with disabilities into 'barrier-free' environments, and enhancing responses to violence against children.

With this commitment, new institutional developments were undertaken to better protect children's rights and enhance support to the most vulnerable children. Fully functional by mid-2008, the Foundation for Children in Difficult Life Situations, created via a presidential order, channels federal funding to Russia's regions through a system of co-financing, which has enhanced regional authorities' capacities to address the needs of the most vulnerable children.

Another institutional structure has been the child rights ombudsperson institution which was significantly promoted by the government with the establishment of a federal post in September 2009, via a presidential decree. With this appointment, the president also called on governors to establish regional child rights ombudsperson posts, providing the impetus for significant enhancement of the network of child rights advocates in the regions. In September 2009, there were 24 regions with child rights ombudspersons; today, all 83 of Russia's regions have a child rights ombudsperson.

2. Status of the Family and Child Welfare Responses

At the end of 2009, approximately 2.8% of Russia's child population did not live with their biological parents. Many families with children are also living in poverty, at risk of family breakdown, divorce, and parental substance abuse and violence. Recent trends regarding residential care are positive, with a significant decrease from 127,000 in 2066 to 93,800 in 2010. Approximately 70% of children in institutions are children above 10 years old, and an estimated 43% of them live with some type of disability.

In this project, UNICEF Russia called for greater attention to be directed to supporting families in crisis. While alternative family care was developed in many regions (i.e. foster care, guardianship), preparation, supervision and monitoring systems are not fully in place. Much more needs to be done to support the biological family and reduce separation of children from their parents. This is clearly recognised by government agencies, but it is taking time to bring social sector staff capacities, legislation, mandates and budgets into line with the priority to identify and provide early intervention for families at risk rather than in crisis. Meanwhile, the innovations and capacity-building supported by UNICEF and other donors in this sphere have led to a certain level of knowledge and a cultural shift in several regions.

Project Description:

In this project, UNICEF with key Russian partners focused on strengthening its policy dialogue with federal and regional level stakeholders on key child welfare reform issues, promoting principles of social inclusion and protection for all children and supporting development of resources to advance these reforms.

Expected Results include:

1.1 Key stakeholders' enhanced awareness about and support for key child welfare priorities & approaches; and

1.2 Strengthened capacity of child welfare specialists in monitoring & protecting children's rights.

Results:

Expected Result 1.1: Key stakeholders' enhanced awareness about and support for key child welfare priorities & approaches

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators	Actual Results
Expected Results	Development of policy & planning tool with accompanying child welfare components that reflect regional & federal stakeholders' interests	• Existence of policy & planning tool and accompanying documents • Level of approval for policy & planning tool [number of recommendations for dissemination by federal stakeholders (e.g. MOE) and implementation of tool by regional stakeholders]	• Development of Model interagency child care response, based on Russian good practices and detailed analysis of legislation and financial mechanisms. - Assessing more than 250 relevant Russian normative provisions - Field research in three Russian regions • Full "buy-in" of model by RF Ministry of Education and Science
	Information forum, increasing the knowledge of child welfare specialists and policy-makers regarding innovative planning & de-institutionalisation processes	• Number of conferences • Number of regional policy-makers, child welfare specialists that receive information on innovative child welfare approaches	*International Conferences & roundtable:* • 3 international conferences completed, providing strong messages on strategies to address root causes for family crises and separation • 1 roundtable on statistical data for policy-making and civil society involvement in children's and youth issues • More than 250 regional policy-makers, child welfare specialists and educators participated in conferences & roundtable *Child Welfare Resources:* • Development of two policy papers on prevention of baby abandonment and social inclusion of children with disabilities/ special needs *Social Inclusion Projects:* • Development of social inclusion resources for tolerance, reaching more than 600 children and 400 adults
	Consultative meetings with	• Number of consultative meetings	• 3 roundtables/ peer review of policy papers, involving RF Ministry of Education & Science

	federal & regional stakeholders to inform about resources developed and work toward their support for dissemination of materials	• Number of federal & regional stakeholders participating in meetings • Level of approval for resources presented (# of recommendations for dissemination by federal stakeholders and adoption of framework by regional stakeholders)	colleagues, regional government partners, and NGO members • 5 informal meetings with colleagues from Ministry of Education and Science, and National Foundation to Prevent Cruelty to Children

(1) Development of policy & planning tool with accompanying child welfare components that reflect regional & federal stakeholders' interests:

Several regions have developed more comprehensive approaches in planning de-institutionalization initiatives, providing important good practices. While other regions have expressed the need for practical tools, such as checklists, model legislation, descriptions of services.

To respond to this identified need, UNICEF in close collaboration with the RF Ministry of Education and the Russian NGO, "Pro-Mama," has developed two policy and planning frameworks for child welfare and de-institutionalisation strategies that inform regional administrations about international standards on child welfare planning and innovative Russian practices.

UNICEF used USAID funds to support the development of the Russian practices paper, *Model of Regional Interagency Programme for Prevention of Social Orphanhood and Alternative Family Placement for Orphans and Children without Parental Care*, which complements the first framework based on international standards. Specifically, the paper analyzes Russian practices on child welfare mechanisms in normative provisions, management and financing. This document assessed more than 250 relevant Russian normative provisions and developed a model approach for regional administrations to use as a guide in their programming for prevention of "social orphans." The model developed normative provisions, standards, and methodological documentation needed for financing child welfare issues and programme development for retraining staff for new services. In addition to extensive analysis of legislative and financial provisions, this work involved significant field research of existing good child welfare practices in Permsky and Altaisky Krai and Tomsk Oblast.

UNICEF has worked closely with colleagues from the RF Ministry of Education and Science throughout the development of the two policy and planning frameworks. Due to competing obligations of Ministry colleagues, this work involved a longer process than originally planned; however, UNICEF believes that the full "buy-in" of the Ministry of Education is critical for the frameworks to be effectively used by regions.

In October 2011, the Ministry of Education and Science held a roundtable for regional child care specialists where presentations on the content of the two policy frameworks were made. Ministry colleagues have expressed their appreciation for both documents and plan to disseminate the frameworks to all the Russian regions with an accompanying Ministry letter that recommends these practices.

UNICEF has been discussing with Ministry colleagues about conducting a joint review of the Russian practice paper with a region that participated in the research to fine-tune the recommendations and ensure effective application by regional administrations. Ministry colleagues have also expressed willingness to disseminate these policy frameworks and UNICEF's other related policy papers on prevention of baby abandonment and social inclusion in their 2012 All-Russian conferences related to children's issues.

(2) *International Conferences & Roundtables:*

Over the last three years, UNICEF has collaborated with the Foundation to Support Children in Difficult Life Circumstances advanced a child care dialogue among regional forums. In 2009, regional conferences were

held for the Uralsky and Sibersky Federal Districts and the Privolzhsky Federal District. In 2010, conferences covered the remaining federal districts, namely the Far-East Federal District, the North Caucasus Federal District, and the North-West Federal District. Conferences were conducted -- in Chita, covering the Sibersky and Far-East Districts, Vladikavkaz for the North Caucasus District, and Petrozavodsk for the North-West Federal District. In 2011, UNICEF continued this tradition, working with the Foundation to promote a dialogue on key root causes for family breakdown and separation, namely violence and social exclusion (disability issues) for children.

These two conferences involved policy-makers and child welfare specialists from the Privolzhsky and Central Federal Districts. These conferences attracted significant attention, involving high-level decision-makers, such as regions' ministers of education or social protection, other regional government representatives, child rights ombudspersons and NGO representatives. Through these forums, strong messages were made on the importance of prevention work through family support services, in particular providing support for children and families with disabilities to prevent institutionalization and addressing issues of abuse at early stages. These conferences raised attention to the root causes for institutionalization and the need for greater inter-agency coordination. Furthermore, they served as forums for regional exchange of experiences, motivating regions to compare their progress and to recognize through others' experiences their own gaps. Through these conferences, policy threads were integrated greater into the general child care dialogue.

Addressing social inclusion issues, UNICEF in the Russian Federation with UNICEF's CEECIS Regional Office conducted a two and a half day international conference on inclusive education, involving 20 countries from Western and Central Europe and CIS. The conference objectives were to: (1) highlight the global movement toward inclusive education, and explore how the CEECIS region fits within the current global trend; (2) share experiences and good practices already implemented within the region and highlight ways in which scaling-up might be attained by means of networking and engagement in partnerships; and (3) enhance collaboration among all stakeholders. Conference participants expressed appreciation for the high level of expertise provided, noting the information's relevance and the ability to apply innovative approaches into their daily practices. Russian participants from the Ministry of Education and Science also expressed interest in learning further about Serbia's financial experience on inclusive education and proposed further discussions with UNICEF and disability partners about ways to enhance financial flexibility for inclusive practices. A children's forum was conducted parallel to the inclusive education conference, involving 22 children with disabilities (10-17 years) from 5 Russian regions. Over the three-days, the children explored what social inclusion meant for them and shared strategies with inclusive education conference participants. Over the conference, children experienced significant improvement in their ability to advocate for themselves, interact with authority figures and understand how technology can be used to get their message heard.

Statistical data also plays a critical role for policy making and civil society involvement in children's and youth issues. In 2009-2010, UNICEF collaborated with the Federal State Statistics Services ("Rosstat") to develop two statistical yearbooks, *Children in Russia (2009)* and *Youth in Russia (2010)*, to strengthen statistical information on children and youth to highlight issues of equity and inclusion for vulnerable child groups. As follow up to these publications, UNICEF with Rosstat in 2011 conducted three high level technical expert roundtables to discuss equity issues for children and youth and needs for improvement of statistical indicators. These roundtables involved 20-30 policy-makers and service providers per session, specializing in different sectors. Roundtables were organized by themes according to statistical collection, such as education and leisure,

economic activity, and living standards. Roundtable participants identified statistical gaps and make recommendations for enhancing data collection and monitoring for children and youth which were shared officially with Rosstat. These recommendations will be incorporated into the next planned publications of *Children in Russia* and *Youth in Russia* which are planned by Rosstat for 2012 and 2013 respectively.

Through these forums, more than 250 regional policy-makers, child welfare specialists and educators gained knowledge on strategies to address root causes for family breakdown and children's separation.

(3) *Child Welfare Resources:*

Complementing the child care policy and planning frameworks, UNICEF developed with regional partners two policy resources on prevention of baby abandonment and promotion of social inclusion.

The prevention of baby abandonment toolkit provides information materials – organizational and technical guidelines, documentation of good Russian practices and case studies. An overview for advocacy steps for decision-makers and more detailed information with algorithms for action is also described. Materials have been developed for regional administration heads (e.g. vice-governors for social programmes), regional directors of departments of health, social protection and education, guardianship and trusteeship agencies, social workers and mass media members.

The materials were created in consultation with a peer group of regional administrators and practitioners including NGO colleagues conducting direct outreach to women at risk of abandoning their babies. Review of materials among peer members highlighted outstanding policy issues for consultation with the federal child rights ombudsperson office and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection's Director of the Department of Development of Medical Assistance to Children and Obstetric Services.

The social inclusion policy paper defines clear action steps in different spheres – legislation, education, health, social protection, independent living, and accessible environments – to make communities more inclusive for children and their families. The social inclusion policy paper was drafted by a working group of experts on disability issues from different spheres and, like the prevention of baby abandonment toolkit, involved significant consultation with regional administrators and practitioners, including NGO colleagues focusing on disability issues.

These documents have been printed and will be disseminated in 2012, in coordination with the two policy and planning frameworks on child welfare responses and de-institutionalisation. Colleagues from the Ministry of Education as well as the office of the federal child rights ombudsperson have expressed interest in these publications and willingness to disseminate and use as a base in their seminar discussions.

(4) Social Inclusion Projects:

Developing child care strategies that effectively address institutionalisation of children requires close examination of responses for children with disabilities. A large portion of children in some type of residential care are children with disabilities or special needs. In many cases, children with disabilities have loving parents, but these families do not have access to community services and support to enable them to effectively care for their children at home.

In establishing resources to strengthen regions' child care strategies, UNICEF with USAID funds was able to partially support two social inclusion projects in Nizhny Novgorod and Sortavala to test approaches that raise awareness about disability

issues and motivate community solidarity for social inclusion, and that enhance educators' abilities to make their classes more inclusive. This work reached more than 600 pre-school and school children and more than 400 adults (parents and educators).

In Nizhny Novgorod, UNICEF partnered with the Moscow Analytical-Methodological Centre, "Development and Correction," to enhance awareness strategies for school children and parents, and educators' professional capacities. Working with four education facilities and the Department of Education in Nizhny Novgorod, methodological materials were created for educators to develop a dialogue with children to raise their awareness about disability issues and foster solidarity for peers with varying needs. These materials include creation of thematic plans for different sessions and lesson plans for using puppet theatre. At the same time, Centre colleagues also developed with the participating schools methodological materials for educators establishing dialogues about disability and inclusion issues with parents. Thematic plans for sessions with parents were created and information leaflets on ways to support children's regimes, key dos and don'ts in caring for children, and opportunities for play. At the end of the project, Centre colleagues with Nizhny Novgorod partners conducted a play, "School for All," integrating children with disabilities and without disabilities. The play, "Wings for Clowns," was conducted by children with and without disabilities and addressed issues of disabilities and tolerance through the fairy tale. This performance involved children from a mainstream school (#24), a special (correctional) school for hearing impaired children, and 10 children with Down Syndrome participating with NGO "Veras." These children presented the play to an audience of more than a 100 5th to 8th graders from mainstream school #24 and the special (correctional) school for hearing impaired children. Through these forums, relationships between children and parents changed. A more respectful relationship was formed towards children with disabilities, with their healthy peers gaining greater understanding and respect for their classmates with special needs. Furthermore, children with and without disabilities fostered relationships as equals, where there became frequently friendships. Parents' attitudes also changed, with parents of healthy peers respecting and supporting participation of children with special needs in the mainstream schools. Parents of children with disabilities also had less fear in allowing their children to participate in inclusive schools.

More than 80 pre-school and school educators gained skills to incorporate more inclusive practices in their classrooms. Through a continued learning course on inclusive education approaches, educators in Nizhny Novgorod received information about the innovative outreach technique for families, "social networking." This approach is particularly important to include in inclusive approaches, as roundtable and seminar discussions revealed that the school environment is not seen as a means for promotion of a social dialogue between teachers, parents and children; teachers are not able to gain a clear enough picture about students' social problems.

(5) Consultations:

Participatory consultations were used in the development of all the policy documents (i.e. the two policy and planning frameworks and the accompanying policy papers on prevention of baby abandonment and promotion of social inclusion). Peer meetings involved regional government members, practitioners and NGO colleagues.

UNICEF also regularly met with colleagues from the Ministry of Education and Science, and the National Foundation to Prevent Cruelty to Children (NFPCC) to discuss the development of the policy and planning frameworks. Ministry partners were closely involved in the design of the research on Russian good practices.

UNICEF advocated the Ministry for presentations of the policy and planning framework as well as resources developed by NFPCC at the Ministry's All-Russian Roundtable for Higher Education Programmes of Specialists addressing Prevention of Social Orphanhood and Development of Alternative Family Care. Ministry colleagues have expressed their appreciation for these documents and plan to disseminate the frameworks to all the

Russian regions with an accompanying Ministry letter that recommends these practices. Furthermore, Ministry colleagues are willing to disseminate these policy frameworks and UNICEF's other related policy papers on prevention of baby abandonment and social inclusion in their 2012 All-Russian conferences related to children's issues.

Expected Result 2.1: Strengthened capacity of child welfare specialists in monitoring and protecting children's rights

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators	Actual Results
Expected Results	Information forums, developing knowledge about and exchanging innovative practices on child rights	• Existence of Congress meeting of Association of Child Rights Ombudspersons • Number of study tours • Number of ombudspersons participating • Existence of research or good practice documentation • Extent to which ombudspersons use information in their daily work	• Two, three-day regional seminar-study tours for over 100 child welfare specialists, with participation of child rights ombudspersons from 58 regions. • Two-day Child Rights Ombudsperson Congress, involving 140 people – 85 of them from regional child rights ombudsperson offices from 75 regions - Involved also 17 representatives from federal and regional government – including Minister of Education Fursenko, Head Doctor of *Rospotrebnadzor* Onischenko, and heads of Moscow Government Head of Department of Family and Youth Policy, Ludmila Guseeva and Moscow Government Deputy Head of the Education Department, Natalia Sherri. - 50 media representatives (TV, radio, print) were present at the Congress press conference • Development of digest of informational materials and office experiences from regional ombudspersons: *Protecting the Rights of Children in Difficulty Life Circumstances: Work Experiences from Child Rights Ombudsperson Offices*
	Development of child rights university course, with primary target group being child rights ombudspersons (CROs) and with accompanying e-learning components	• Existence of course curriculum • Existence of accompanying methodological materials (e.g. textbook) • Existence of e-learning component • Quality/ relevance of course curriculum for CROs	• Development and launch of 1 child rights university course, comprising 72 academic hours. - Course accredited by RF Ministry of Education and Science and all course participants received course certification from the RF Ministry of Education and Science.

			- Course textbook and reader (teaching materials) were developed. • 70 regional child rights ombudspersons and 6 staff from the office of the federal child rights ombudsperson completed the course.

The child rights ombudsperson institution is a critical ally in advancing child welfare priorities and practices, being a state institution with a mandate focusing solely on child rights and having broad coverage throughout the country.

With the rapidly growing number of regional ombudsperson posts over the last two years, the need to build the overall knowledge and capacities for child rights across the institution was identified to ensure more consistent and quality responses for children. This project component focused on two ways to enhance the professional capacities of child rights ombudspersons:

- Active exchange of experiences among regional child rights ombudspersons; and
- Development of an accredited, child rights university course.

(1) Information Forums for Exchange of Experiences for Child Rights Ombudspersons

With the piloting of child rights ombudsperson institution in Russia starting in 1998, there are offices with strong and extensive experience that can be shared with more recently developed offices. Over the years, meetings by the Russian Association of Child Rights Ombudspersons have shown the value and relevancy of ombudspersons sharing strategies on specific child rights issues. This exchange is particularly important for new colleagues as they are then able to learn specific responses that might also work in their regions, working under the same legislative structures.

To foster this exchange, UNICEF supported two, two-day seminar-study tour sessions for regional child rights ombudspersons. These sessions were held in two regions, which have strong child rights ombudsperson offices (Permsky Krai and Volgogradsky Oblast). In the first day, regional ombudspersons discussed key child rights issues such as educational rights, rights of children with disabilities and without parental care, and the role of ombudspersons in child welfare system issues at the regional and federal levels. Presentations were made by ombudsperson colleagues on different issues to initiate discussion, enabling colleagues to talk about specific professional experiences and challenges faced in their daily work. On the second day, the ombudspersons visited different child care institutions within the hosting regions to observe good practices. In total there were more than 100 child welfare specialists participating in the two seminar-study tours with child rights ombudspersons from 58 regions. At the end of workshops' second day, coordinating council meetings were held for the federal district. The fast growing pace of the child rights ombudsperson network required development of regional focal points (coordinating councils) that enable greater collaboration among ombudspersons in the regions. A coordinating council for child rights ombudspersons has been established in all eight of Russia's federal districts.

Exchange of experiences among the ombudspersons was also promoted through the Russian Congress for child rights ombudsperson, involving 140 participants that included 85 regional child rights ombudspersons and their office staff colleagues from 75 of Russia's regions. Like the two regional seminar-study tours, this two-day seminar explored key child rights issues for ombudspersons and enabled them also to discuss specific strategies and challenges that they face in their daily work. This opportunity for all the ombudspersons from the regions to meet also enabled them to discuss overarching strategies and priorities that they as an institution wanted to promote in federal and regional policy development. The meeting attracted the attention of high-level policy makers, with participation in seminar sessions of federal leaders such as RF Minister of Education and Science, Andrei Fursenko, Head Doctor of *Rospotrebnadzor,* Onischenko, Head of

the Moscow Government's Department of Family and Youth Policy, Ms. Guseeva, and Deputy Head of the Moscow Government's Department of Education, Natalia Sherri. Extensive media coverage of the event was also achieved through a press conference where 50 media representatives (TV, radio, print) were present, raising greater public attention to the ombudsperson institution.

The Congress seminar and the two seminar-study tours in the regions have enabled ombudspersons across the regions to share their child right strategies and to formulate a more coordinated response and advocacy stance as an institution. This capacity to provide a united message in policy is critical as the child rights ombudsperson institution is the only body in the Russian government structure that is solely focused on upholding children's rights.

From these forums, a digest of informational materials and office experiences from regional ombudspersons was developed to further advance the exchange of good practices among child rights ombudsperson offices.

(2) Development of Accredited Child Rights University Course for Regional Child Rights Ombudsperson

The course, comprising e-learning conducted in the beginning and a seven-day course programme in Moscow, was a total of 72 academic hours to comply with continued learning requirements for civil servants, such as the ombudspersons. The course involved a multidisciplinary approach tailored to needs of the ombudspersons, with eight key modules:

- Implementation of International laws and norms and Russian Legislation in the child rights system
- Interaction of regional child rights ombudspersons and Russian government agencies (federal, regional and local levels)
- Individual Contacts to the Ombudsperson office and opportunities for legal representation
- Ombudspersons implementing social right guarantees for children
- Steps for Protection of Child Rights, taking into account children's age and specific psychological needs
- Skills for Public Speaking and Professional Image of Child Rights Ombudspersons
- Management Principles: Budgeting and Analytical Process of Statistical and Sociological Data
- Legal and Psychological Aspects of Children in Conflict with the Law

UNICEF together with the federal child rights ombudsperson defined a core team of experts for the course development, with the work being "housed" within the Russian State Humanitarian University ("RSHU"). Collaborating with the Russian team, UNICEF identified European partners from Ghent and Antwerp Universities, and the Swedish Child Rights Ombudsperson office to participate in the course development. A team of 10 colleagues from RSHU, federal and regional ombudsperson offices, and UNICEF participated in a five-day study tour to Belgium and Sweden to learn about these European partners' strategies for child rights training, enabling them to share methodological practices and to unite the Russian initiative with the broader European network of child rights university programmes.

Active participation of experienced regional child rights ombudspersons as well as a colleague from the federal ombudsperson office was also incorporated throughout the course development. At the beginning, UNICEF with RSHU colleagues surveyed all regional child rights ombudspersons to better understand their specific professional needs. Survey results were presented to the ombudspersons for discussion during a regional meeting of the Association of Child Rights Ombudspersons. Regional ombudspersons served as a steering board for the course design, participating in working groups at different periods to evaluate and provide critical feedback. Ombudspersons also assessed the draft course materials; and a two-day focus

group of 10 regional child rights ombudspersons was also conducted to provide a brief overview of the course plan and to "test" the relevance of different teaching methods before full implementation of the course.

The e-learning session, comprising 24 hours, was conducted in October 2011 with participating ombudspersons. E-learning involved individual tasks as well as video conference sessions. In November 2011, a six-day course was conducted in Moscow comprising a combination of lectures and practical experiences with case studies and discussions among ombudspersons about their specific issues. A specialist from the child rights masters course of the Universities of Antwerp and Ghent participated in the six-day session, service as an observer of plenary sessions and workshops as well as providing a presentation on key cases of children's rights in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and European Committee of Social Rights. Within the course development, accompanying textbook and teaching materials were established.

A total of 70 out of the 83 existing regional child rights ombudspersons and 6 staff members from the federal child rights ombudsperson office participated in the course. The course was officially accredited through the RF Ministry of Education and Science and all 76 participants received certificates of completion.

The course was highly evaluated by the ombudspersons, noting its relevance and quality. The interactive sessions of ombudspersons' real experiences were particularly valued. In fact, the participating Belgian expert noted the importance of this exchange and plans to incorporate this practice into his university's child rights course programme.

The sustainability of the course is recognized through its accreditation as well as the expressed interest by the federal ombudsperson office and RSHU to disseminate this course practice to other universities in Russia, serving as "hubs" for training of ombudspersons in the country's federal districts. UNICEF is currently discussing these opportunities with the federal ombudsperson office and RSHU. Regional ombudspersons participating in the course expressed interest for their staff obtain such training, as well as the value for this training to child rights ombudspersons at the municipal level, in schools and other child facilities.

Furthermore, RSHU is also in discussion with the Belgian colleagues about joining the European network for child rights masters programmes. RSHU's participation in this network will provide an important momentum to build the university's expertise on child rights issues and teaching approaches and to share cutting edge strategies.

Conclusion:

All planned results were achieved under this project, with additional financial resources being leveraged that produced synergy and more effective child rights responses.

Important reference materials were developed for regional administrations' policy planning and programming on child care and de-institutionalisation strategies. Specifically, two policy and planning frameworks were developed, based on international standards and good Russian practices, serving as guidance for regions in their development of child care reform. Establishment of a toolkit on prevention of baby abandonment also has provided regional decision-makers with tools in their planning and child care responses. In all three initiatives, UNICEF was in close consultation with colleagues from the Ministry of Education and Science which is one of the key ministries in directing child care responses. This collaboration resulted in the Ministry's "ownership" of the documents and willingness to recommend and disseminate it further to regional administrations.

UNICEF's collaboration with Russian partners to advance the child welfare dialogue has also been an important platform for regions to share practices and obtain new innovations. The success of this dialogue

can be seen through the federal child rights ombudsperson office's planning to conduct a similar seminar on child welfare issues for specialists from the Far East and Siberian Federal Districts, *For Every Child – A Family and Home*.

Development of the accredited child rights course for ombudsperson has been a critical step to support ombudsperson offices to provide high level and consistent responses across Russia. With the rapid development of the child rights ombudsperson institution, many colleagues are new with differing experiences. Ombudspersons participating in the course expressed its timeliness and significant value to exchange experiences and obtain a basic framework on child rights.

Ombudspersons have also expressed the need for this course to continue, training their office staff and ombudspersons at the municipal levels. The federal child rights ombudsperson office expressed the interest to expand the course practice to other universities in Russia's federal districts. UNICEF with its "course partners" (Federal Child Rights Ombudsperson Office and Russian State Humanitarian University) are now exploring opportunities to work with other universities to implement the course in other universities' curricula. In consultation with partners from the Antwerp University, RSHU is planning to develop a masters programme on child rights and has submitted a proposal to the EU's European Network of Masters in Children's Rights – Curriculum Development (ENMCR-CD). In addition, RSHU has submitted a proposal to the network, European Network of Masters in Children's Rights.

Annex 1

EXPENSES OF USAID GRANT – UNICEF-Moscow

PBA No: **SC/2010/0845**

Description: **Child Protection**

Period covered by report: **January 2011 – December 2011**

Total amount spent: **606,600.31 USD**

Line Item	**Amount Spent to-date** (December 2011)
1) Building awareness about key child welfare policy approaches & priorities	**$211,354.37**
• Development of good practices inventory for UNICEF policy & planning tool	$103,435.37
• Partial support of regional family support and child care conferences & roll-out seminars of resources developed	$107,919.00
2) Strengthening monitoring & advocacy structures in child protection	**$282,854.36**
• Sub-contract with government organization, *NII Semya* -- Support development of Association of Child Rights Ombudspersons for exchange of experiences – study tours among child rights ombudsperson offices	$92,610.38
• **Sub-contract(s) with Russian university/specialists to draft child rights curriculum:**	$190,243.98
Development of Course Programme (including review of existing materials/programmes, facilitating of working group meetings, and drafting of course, testing course through focus groups and implementation) • Review of St. Petersburg child rights programme • Project implemented with Russian State Humanitarian University	$167,856.13
Collaboration with European partners: 5-day Study tour for 8 child rights specialists & UNICEF colleagues to European Partners: • Antwerp/Ghent University • Swedish Child Rights Ombudsperson Office	$22,387.85
3) Programme implementation, monitoring, supervision and technical assistance	**$112,391.58**
• Child Protection Programme Coordinator & Programme Assistant	$89,391.58
• Child Protection Specialist(s)	$23,000
SUB-TOTAL OF DIRECT COSTS:	**$606,600.31**