

# MID-TERM ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND IN BELARUS

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November 27 – December 4, 2006

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund, DG/DCHA, under Contract #DFD-M-00-04-00238-00 with Manila Consulting Group, Inc. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

## **Table of Contents**

Мар	iv
Acronyms	v
Executive Summary	vii
Targeted Problems Support for Child Welfare in Belarus Project Accomplishments Project Results	viii viii
Recommendations	x
Introduction	13
Purpose of the Report Methodology of the Assessments	
Background	13
Basics of the Republic of Belarus	13
Significant Problems	14
Children Placed In Large Residential Facilities/Institutions Poverty Children with Special Needs Alcohol Overuse Lack of Independent Living Experience for Young People Leaving Institutions Inadequate Human Capacity	15 15 15 16
Support for Child Welfare Development in Belarus	16
The Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children Project	17
Project Objectives and Proposed Results Program Status in November 2006	17 18
Project Activities and Accomplishments	18
Recommendations	20
Sustainability	22
Appendix A: Scope of Work	23
Appendix B: Contacts	24
Appendix C: Performance Results Chart	33



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## Acronyms

CAB	Community Advisory Board
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
DCOF	Displaced Children and Orphans Fund
EEG	Electroencephalogram
GOB	Government of Belarus
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Minister of Health
MOLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PMP	Performance Monitoring/Measurement Plan
PMT	Project Management Team
SOVC	Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children
SDC	Swiss Development & Cooperation Agency
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

### **Executive Summary**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) funds the Christian Children's Fund (CCF) in Belarus to provide a three-year activity, the Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children (SOVC) program, aimed at reducing the number of children in institutions. DCOF supported an on-site review and mid-term assessment of SOVC activity to ensure that SOVC is on track to reach its goals, and to provide guidance for the remaining term of the activity. This report is the result of a seven-day review in Belarus (November 27 to December 4, 2006) in which Lynne Schaberg and Lucia Correll conducted interviews and made observations of the progress made by the SOVC program.

According to a recent United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, there are 32,878 orphans and children without parental care in Belarus. Approximately 12,000 children reside in public institutions governed by three different ministries: the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MOLSP), and the Minister of Health (MOH). This dispersion of responsibilities across ministries is not unusual but necessitates inter-ministerial coordination.

The Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children program is aimed at reducing the number of children in state-administered orphanages and boarding schools. The goals are to prevent institutionalization in selected communities by supporting at-home family care and by moving children into less restrictive environments when circumstances necessitate removal from their family home. The project targets "social orphans," i.e., the children of living parents who are unable to provide proper care or who have been denied parental rights. Activities focus on families who work with social service professionals to maintain and reintegrate children within their original family unit.

This component has three main objectives:

- To further develop and improve access to an integrated system of community-based prevention and rehabilitation services for families as well as institutionalized and atrisk children.
- To improve the quality of training and education available to social service providers and to improve awareness of community members surrounding the development of favorable family environments for children.
- To provide technical assistance to the Belarus Ministry of Education (MOE) to strengthen the national regulatory and methodological base promoting deinstitutionalization and to disseminate key learnings of the project throughout Belarus to build a foundation for replication and sustainability.

#### Targeted Problems

The activities of the project focus on some of the most salient problems affecting children in Belarus such as institutionalization, poverty, disabilities, alcohol overuse, lack of independent living experience for young people leaving institutions, and helping poorly trained social service professionals to increase their knowledge and skills of present-day practices.

#### Support for Child Welfare in Belarus

The Government of Belarus (GOB) has recently made it a "priority" responsibility of residential institutions and guardianship authorities to place orphans and children without parental care into family-based care.<sup>1</sup> This law, along with recent presidential edicts, supports both family and foster care environments for children and suggests incentives for maintaining children in their biological families. These GOB pronouncements reflect current international thinking on child protection and child welfare. However, at present they are unfunded mandates. People in the territories espouse presidential directives in principle, but may be unable to implement them because of a lack of funds, human resources, or both.

Current circumstances have aligned the interests of the central and local Belarusian government with the interests of DCOF and CCF in the child welfare arena. The central government supports the goals of deinstitutionalization and family support; some local governments are directed and motivated to achieve these objectives, but are unable to respond fully because of a lack of resources. This is a sanguine environment for the DCOF/CCF program, which can provide some needed resources. CCF is in a favorable position to help the local authorities accomplish their goals and bring about positive change in the child protection system. Districts, which are trying to follow central directives, seek CCF's resources and expertise. So do the ministries, which need the expertise to develop procedures and educational curricula, as well as to train staff. Through the SOVC, CCF is making a significant positive impact on the development of Belarusian child welfare and civil society groups such as parents advocacy groups and teen volunteers.

#### **Project Accomplishments**

- In little more than a year, the SOVC activity has made significant progress. CCF has been welcomed as a partner and thus been able to influence child protection policy and social work education.
- CCF has supported activities in three communities—Orsha, Zhodina and Kobrin and is planning to select two more locations. Activities in the three communities are similar but not identical. Many CCF activities are preventative and include parenting skills enhancement and training, as well as activities to integrate children with disabilities into the community. There are several activities, which involve disabled children; some of these are care and support groups for the parents of disabled children, enlisting and training teenage volunteers to visit and become associated with special needs children, and small grants awarded to NGOs who will develop rehabilitation services. The first phase of SOVC emphasized start up and prevention activities. The next phase will target the development of community services through

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Analytical Report on Support and Assistance to Orphaned Children and Children without Parental Care in the Republic of Belarus, p.1.

the use of micro-grants. Substance abuse services have already been developed and will continue in the next phase.

- The project has targeted community awareness and training of social service providers and uses a TOT model to rapidly expand its impact.
- On the national level and in conjunction with the MOE, CCF has organized a taskforce, which developed procedures for the "removal of a child from a family." This is an important piece of child welfare legislation, which will now be promulgated throughout Belarus and will safeguard the rights of a child and family in cases of possible abuse or neglect. In the next phase, CCF will continue working to upgrade the education of social workers.
- The CCF project and UNICEF are helping the GOB to develop a national child tracking system. They have begun the process of bringing together various groups who already have some elements of a tracking system and are aiding the GOB to develop a unified system of data collection.
- CCF has stimulated the development of Community Advisory Boards (CABs) in their three pilot communities. The CABs include representatives of local government, NGOs, parents and community members, and mass media. The CABs function as a work group to problem solve and take action when there are problems related to child welfare in their community.
- The project has funded an NGO (through micro-grants) to develop substance abuse treatment programs in the three target communities. The treatment programs are fully used and have waiting lists for those wanting services.

#### **Project Results**

The actual results of the project reflect the positive feedback the evaluation team received from the communities. The performance data indicates that the project is reaching most of its performance goals. (See Appendix C for the performance results chart.) There are more children using community based services than were reported in the baseline figures of 2005. The target number for 2006 was 340 children using community-based services and the actual number of children benefiting from alternative forms of care in the community is 561, well over the target. However, the number of children that were targeted to be returned to their biological families due to the project's community-based prevention and rehabilitation services has not been met. CCF expects an increase in the number of children returned to their biological parents once the micro-grants begin in 2007.

### Recommendations

CCF is making a positive impact on child welfare in Belarus. Many of the recommendations below are in fact endorsement of the activities that are already underway. Other recommendations offer new directions.

#### 1. Develop national policy in child welfare:

Focus on policy development with the MOE to establish policies and procedures for the child protection system and standards for the care of children in the services that are being developed.

#### 2. Continue the development of the child tracking system:

Develop a child tracking and management information system to ensure that competently trained professionals are providing quality services to children. It is fortunate that there is great interest in developing this system and that UNICEF and CCF can collaborate in this with government support.

#### 3. Replicate best practices:

Best models may exist but it is another challenge to ensure that the relevant information is spread throughout the country. Effective aspects of developed activities should be rolled out to other interested communities. CCF should attempt to create a critical mass of communities, which are acquainted with and actively engaged in developing innovative activities. Replication can take place through activities such as study tours, in country visits, and producing written manuals for services.

Use a micro-grant for the administration of a national replication program in two phases. In the first phase, use a roundtable or conference to share information about the services being developed in the pilot communities. Then make a small fund available so that interested parties may visit the site of an established best practice model and learn how to implement it or permit the implementer of a best practice model to visit an interested community and mentor development of a new service or project.

#### 4. Upgrade the curricula for social workers:

Working through the appropriate government ministries, focus on inclusion of new materials and methods of teaching social work in the curriculum of the Academy for Post Diploma Education. Develop an improved system of social work education and target a change in the curriculum that will affect all future students. Increase the knowledge of therapeutic techniques and encourage the use of internships (fieldwork) in order that social work students have actual hands-on experience in their field.

Develop continuing education programs for those who are working in the field and especially for those who will not have had the benefit of new training in the academies and universities.

#### 5. Continue the focus on Community Advisory Boards:

The CABs represent community involvement in the planning and development of services. They are extremely important. It is their voice that will remain to find solutions and advocate for needed services and funds after the CCF project ends.

#### 6. Create a vision for policymakers and implementers:

If possible to use U.S. Government funds for this activity, plan an international study tour to acquaint the ministers and high-level civil servants who work in the area of child protection and child rights with a developed child protection system and the associated system of private and public community services. It is important for ministers to participate as they are the policymakers. It is equally important for high ranking local-level civil servants to participate; they have non-political positions and are likely to remain in their posts for long periods of time. They will be the ones who implement the vision when they return from a study tour. In addition, a study tour could expand the number of ministries who understand and have knowledge about childcare and protection and also the sphere of influence of the project.

#### 7. Coordinate with other NGOs:

Coordinate and work in cooperation with other donors and service providers. If politically feasible, begin to meet regularly with other donors and NGOs to share experience, materials, and updates on activities and to encourage the development of similar activities in other parts of Belarus.

#### 8. Develop independent living situations for young people in institutions:

CCF should go beyond teaching life skills classes to young people and plan independent living opportunities for young people currently living in institutions. This will allow the young people to practice what they have learned in the classes and give them the opportunity to make mistakes while they have the support of a caretaker. Young people can live in group homes, with foster parents or with *patronat* families as soon as the GOB institutes that method of family care. (Patronat families are similar to foster families except that the state maintains the custody of the child or young person.) The GOB supports the idea of foster parents and *patronat* families and has funds available to pay their salaries.

Foster parents providing care for adolescents need special training. For example, children who have lived in institutions often want less intimacy than children who have been raised in a family. In addition, adolescence is the normal time for youth to be looking outward toward peer groups and the community. Foster parents who will work with adolescents need to be selected not only on their ability to provide care, but also because they can assist the young person to emancipate.

#### 9. Increase domestic adoption:

Develop a pilot to assess the situation and then devise a plan of action to encourage adoptions. According to UNICEF, the number of adoptions increased between 1995 and 2005. However, since the data includes a large increase in the number of inter-country adoptions, it is difficult to ascertain the incidence of domestic adoptions. The GOB has

promoted both foster care and adoption, but foster care appears to be getting more attention and support.

The interviewers received inconsistent information about why adoptions were not more prevalent. The answers varied from lack of public awareness to bureaucratic procedures. CCF should support the MOE to convene a focus group or task force of experts from Belarus to examine the facts and make recommendations about how to decrease the impediments to adoption thereby increasing the number of families willing to adopt children. Based on the assessment of the task force and possibly through the use of micro-grants, CCF should create a domestic adoption pilot in at least one of the five selected communities.

#### **10.** Use the micro-grants to develop services:

Thus far, the project has concentrated on prevention activities. Future grants should target the development of community services through partnerships with local authorities and CABs. This partnership will ensure that the service is genuinely desired and embraced by the local community as well as build indigenous support for continued activities after the project ends.

# 11. Include overall project results in the quarterly reports with a narrative about the met and unmet goals:

Develop a method of reporting on the overall project indicators that makes it clear what the results are and gives an explanation of the reasons that results may be unmet.

#### Introduction

#### Purpose of the Report

The U. S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) funds the Christian Children's Fund (CCF) in Belarus to implement a three-year activity, the Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children (SOVC) program, which is aimed at reducing the number of children in institutions. The program targets social orphans, children whose parents are living but unable or unwilling to provide proper care, as well as the children of parents whose parental rights have been legally terminated. Parentless orphans are targeted through foster family-care programs. DCOF supported an onsite review and mid-term assessment of SOVC to ensure that it is on track to reach its goals, and to provide guidance for the remaining term of the activity.

#### Methodology of the Assessments

This report is the result of a seven-day review in Belarus (November 27 to December 4, 2006) in which Lynne Schaberg and Lucia Correll conducted interviews and made observations of the progress made by the SOVC program. The facts are garnered (1) from site visits in three selected communities where the project is developing services, (2) from interviews with international donors and governmental officials in Minsk, and (3) from written material from U.S. sources and UNICEF. Opinions are either attributed or are conclusions reached by the review team. A list of the persons interviewed can be found in Appendix B.

## Background

#### Basics of the Republic of Belarus

On August 25, 1991, Belarus became independent after 70 years as a constituent republic of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It has retained close political and economic ties to Russia. There are six provinces in Belarus and Minsk is its capitol. The southern part of the country suffered from nuclear fallout from the 1986 accident occurring at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in northern Ukraine. In July 1994, Alexander Lukashenka was elected the country's first president. He remains in power today.

The Belarusian Ministry of Statistics and Analysis reports that there were approximately 10 million people and 1,934,200 children (ages 0-17 years) living in Belarus as of January 1, 2006. There is a declining population, with a fertility rate of 1.43 children born per woman. Eighty percent of the population is Orthodox Christian. There is a 99 percent literacy rate.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> CIA Factbook Belarus 2006.

### **Significant Problems**

There are many social problems effecting children in Belarus. The major areas of concern that relate to child protection and deinstitutionalization are listed below.

#### Children Placed In Large Residential Facilities/Institutions

For many years, institutions were the placement of choice in Belarus when children had no families or could not remain with their families. Families can successfully raise children; institutional substitutes do not do so well. Some institutions are worse than others. Large residential institutions with hundreds of children where activities are done according to a schedule, meals are planned and cooked by staff, and meals are eaten at the same time by the child residents, are the worst. They offer no chance for child individualization and no opportunity for a child to practice the personal and social skills for adult life.

Even a casual observer can see behavioral differences in institutionalized children. Scientific data corroborates these observations.

- Studies document the detrimental effect of institutional settings on children. Children placed in residential care institutions are at risk of attachment disorders, developmental delay, and neural atrophy in the developing brain.<sup>3</sup>
- One study in Romania demonstrated that children from 12 to 31 months of age raised in institutions exhibited serious disturbances of attachment. These results held even when other variables, such as cognitive level, perceived competence, and quantitative interaction ratings, were controlled.<sup>4</sup>
- Another study compared electroencephalogram (EEG) data from institutionalized children and from a matched group of children living with their families. The institutionalized group showed marked differences in their EEGs reflecting a maturational lag in nervous system development. These EEG deficits are consistent with EEG studies of children facing environmental adversity and of children with learning disorders.<sup>5</sup>

Institutions are large facilities, sometimes called children's homes or villages or orphanages, where children live until about 18 years of age, depending on their educational status. They receive care from public servants inside the facility. Wherever large children's homes, villages, or other institutions have been used, there are commonly no community services, such as counseling, daycare, foster care, or rehabilitation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Louise Dixon, M.Sc., Gabriela Misca, Ph.D., Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Zeanah, Charles H.; Smyke, Anna T.; Koga, Sebastian F.; Carlson, Elizabeth, "Attachment in Institutionalized and Community Children in Romania," Child Development, Volume 76, Number 5, September/October 2005, pp. 1015-1028(14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Peter J. Marshall, Nathan A. Fox and the BEIP Core Group, "A Comparison of the Electroencephalogram between Institutionalized and Community Children in Romania," Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience. 2004;16:1327-1338.)© 2004 The MIT Press.

services. This means that whenever a child is in need, there are no community alternatives to institutional placement, and thus the destructive cycle is repeated.

Throughout the world, including Belarus, the harmful effects of living within institutions are well known, but it is not an easy task to transition from institutional to family based care. Institutions cannot be closed without developing alternative services for families in the community. Prevention services must be developed to support families to maintain their family unit. Staff must be retrained.

According to a recent United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, there are 32,878 orphans and children without parental care in Belarus. Approximately half of these children are in substitute families, such as foster care or guardianship situations. Slightly more than 11,500 children are in public institutional care. Responsibility for the care of children in institutions is shared across three different ministries, the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MOLSP) and the Ministry of Health (MOH). This in not an unusual governmental structure but necessitates coordination among the ministries.<sup>6</sup>

#### Poverty

Poverty remains widespread and children are at significantly higher risk of poverty than other vulnerable groups. Poverty affects at least 36 percent of the population in the country, particularly families with many children, single-parent families and families residing in rural areas: 49 percent of families with two children, and 78 percent of families with three or more children live under the poverty line. The annual number of live births has fallen by over 35 percent over the last decade.<sup>7</sup>

#### Children with Special Needs

The number of developmentally and physically challenged children reported in Belarus is increasing. This is probably associated with the nuclear fallout from the Chernobyl disaster. There may also be improvements in the reporting process brought by the increased public awareness of physical and mental disabilities. According to the Belarus National Report on Children's Well-Being, 30,250 disabled children were registered as of January 1, 2003. That incidence is three times higher than in 1990 when the number of disabled children was estimated to be 9,749.<sup>8</sup>

#### Alcohol Overuse

Substance abuse is widespread along with the associated social problems such as child abuse, domestic violence, and child neglect. Unfortunately there are few programs to combat this problem with only one Belarusian nongovernmental organization (NGO) having expertise in substance abuse.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Analytical Report On Support and Assistance to Orphaned Children and Children without Parental Care in the Republic of Belarus, p.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> CCF Belarus Key Children and Family Problems.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> CCF Belarus Key Children and Family Problems.

Lack of Independent Living Experience for Young People Leaving Institutions

Most children currently institutionalized are 11 years or older and were institutionalized in their adolescence. Programs to help young people emancipate into Belarusian society are lacking. Institutions are poor at teaching young people the skills that are needed for independent living in the community. The older youth leave the institutions without skills and without much ability to handle a normal environment. They do not know how to budget money, how to shop, how to cook, or how to maintain basic hygiene, nor do they have established relationships with adult advisors. For those with disabilities, the problems are compounded.

#### Inadequate Human Capacity

Belarus has inadequate social workers or other trained personnel. Only a small number of those providing services have been professionally trained. Social work education is still in a developmental stage and is highly theoretical. Programs do not stress the clinical experience that is essential to develop the ability to work with individuals and families.

There is a need for professional education for new social workers and field training for those who currently perform social work functions on a paraprofessional level. Education and training of social workers is an essential underpinning for providing quality services in Belarus.

### Support for Child Welfare Development in Belarus

The Government of Belarus (GOB) has recently endorsed legislation in support of child protection: "The Law on the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Belarus (Articles 12, 25), as well as Article 118 of the Marriage and Family Code, make it a "priority" responsibility of residential institutions and guardianship authorities to place orphans and children without parental care into family-based care." <sup>9</sup>

The Law on the Rights of the Child, along with recent edicts, support family environments and foster care for children and suggest incentives for maintaining children in their biological families. These GOB pronouncements reflect current international thinking on child protection and child welfare. However, they are unfunded mandates. People in the territories espouse presidential directives in principle, but may be unable to fully implement them because of a lack of funds, human resources, or both. This is a sanguine environment for the CCF program.

NGOs and international donors are generally not well supported by the Government of Belarus. In order to work in Belarus, an NGO or donor must register its concept and plan of action and these must receive government approval. The concept, plan of action, budget, and materials of each new activity must also be registered and receive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Analytic Report on Support and Assistance to Orphaned Children and Children Left without Parental Care in the Republic of Belarus, p 1.

government approval. It may take a long time to obtain project approval in this system and approval is far from guaranteed. This process has considerable impact on the SOVC, not only because CCF needs overall approval, but also because each of the many CCFfunded sub-grants need GOB approval.

Current circumstances have aligned the child welfare interests of the central and local Belarusian government with the interests of DCOF and CCF. The central government endorses the goals of deinstitutionalization and family support; some local governments are directed and motivated to achieve these objectives, but are often unable to respond. CCF is in a favorable position to help the local authorities accomplish their goals and bring about positive change in the system of child protection. Districts, which are trying to follow central directives, seek CCF's resources and expertise. So do the ministries, which need the expertise to develop procedures and educational curricula, as well as to train staff. Through the SOVC, CCF can make a significant positive impact on Belarusian child welfare and the communities in which they are working.

## The Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children Project

The assessment of the child welfare system in Belarus identified three major directions and two over-arching objectives for future activities. The directions are (1) to develop an array of community services in a few target counties as models of a social service *system*, (2) to enhance professional training so that effective services can be implemented and are available to the community, and (3) to develop standards and regulation for social services through a partnership with the Ministry of Education. The objectives are to prevent institutionalization in selected communities (1) by supporting families and (2) by creating prevention and intervention services in the community that will help parents maintain their children in the family home.

#### Project Objectives and Proposed Results

The Supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children program is aimed at reducing the number of children in state-administered orphanages and boarding schools. The goals are to prevent institutionalization in selected communities by supporting at-home family care and by moving children into less restrictive environments when circumstances necessitate a child's removal from their family home. The project targets "social orphans," i.e., the children of living parents who are unable to provide proper care or who have been denied parental rights. Activities focus on families who work with social service professionals to maintain and reintegrate children within their original family unit.

The SOVC has three main objectives:

- To further develop and improve access to an integrated system of community-based prevention and rehabilitation services for families as well as institutionalized and atrisk children.
- To improve the quality of training and education available to social service providers and awareness of community members surrounding the development of favorable family environments for children.

• To provide technical assistance to the Belarus Ministry of Education (MOE) to strengthen the national regulatory and methodological base promoting deinstitutionalization and to disseminate key learnings of the project throughout Belarus to build a foundation for replication and sustainability.

#### Program Status in November 2006

CCF has been welcomed as a partner and has been able to influence child protection policy and social work education in Belarus. Unlike other international organizations in Belarus, it has not been plagued with delays in approvals. In this period of GOB support for deinstitutionalization, CCF is in a propitious position to influence the policies and procedures which will guide future Belarusian efforts in child protection.

#### Staff and Office

In the first year of the project, CCF has increased staffing from 8 to 20 people and has enlarged their office space from three small rooms to a suite of offices. This new space also includes a training room where all the national training activities are conducted. The staff demonstrated their knowledge and competence during the assessment period.

#### **Project Activities and Accomplishments**

CCF has supported activities in three communities—Orsha, Zhodina and Kobrin—and is planning to select two more sites. Activities in the three communities are similar but not identical. Many of the CCF activities are preventive and include parenting skills enhancement and training, and activities to integrate children with disabilities into the community. There are several activities, which involve disabled children; some of these are care and support groups for the parents of disabled children, enlisting and training teenage volunteers to visit and become associated with special needs children, and small grants awarded to NGOs who will develop rehabilitation services.

The project has targeted community awareness and training of social service providers. CCF uses a TOT model in most of its training. CCF has trained specialists to teach a parenting enhancement course and this course is now being taught to parents in two of the project sites. Using the same format, life skills and health information classes have been taught to specialists who now teach those skills to youth in their communities.

The assessment team met with both providers and recipients of CCF services in all three project sites. Recipients of services were positive about what they had received. The community specialists appeared to be carrying out the TOT model, eager to learn the new materials, and enthusiastic about sharing the knowledge with others in the community. The parents and teens that had benefited from the training were complimentary and reported that the training made a substantial difference in their lives.

The actual results of the project reflect the positive feedback the assessment team heard from the communities. The performance data indicates that the project is reaching most of its performance goals. (See Appendix C for the performance results chart.) There are more children benefiting from alternative care in the community because of project

activities. CCF reports that there are now 561 children benefiting from alternative forms of care community services, which is up from the baseline of 335 and well above the anticipated target of 340. However, at this juncture, the goal of returning children to their biological families has not been met. CCF believes that this goal will be positively affected by the current implementation of the micro-grants targeted to develop services.

However, it is quite common that the number of people using community services increases once services become available although this increased use may not affect the number of children who are returned to their biological parents. The services may prevent institutionalization and keep the family together, but it is possible that the people using the services, though they need them, are not the population that would be placing children in institutions and thus not the people that the project most wants to reach. It is difficult to tell whether the CCF project activities are reaching those at greatest risk or expanding the population served to include those at lesser risk. The eligibility criteria for entry into the program activities should be examined to ensure that those using the services are in the high-risk category.

On the national level and in conjunction with the MOE, CCF has organized a task force that developed procedures for the "removal of a child from a family". This is an important piece of child welfare legislation that will now be promulgated throughout Belarus and will safeguard the rights of a child and family in cases of possible abuse or neglect. The project works very closely with Galina Rudenkova in the Ministry of Education and through her has affected child welfare policy and procedures. In addition to helping the MOE to develop procedures to assess and remove children from situations where they are in danger of abuse and neglect, CCF is in the process of assisting the MOE to develop criteria to identify children at risk.

CCF and UNICEF are also helping the GOB to develop a national child tracking system. The two organizations have begun the process of bringing together various groups who already have some elements of a tracking system and are aiding the GOB to develop a unified system of data collection.

CCF has also stimulated the development of Community Advisory Boards (CABs) in the three pilot communities. The CABs include representatives of local government and mass media, NGOs, parents, and community members and function as a working group that identifies and attempts to resolve child welfare-related problems in their community.

The project has funded an NGO (through the micro-grants) to develop substance abuse treatment programs in the three target communities. The treatment programs are filled to capacity and have waiting lists.

## Recommendations

CCF is making a positive impact on child welfare in Belarus. Many of the recommendations below are in fact endorsement of the activities that are already underway. Other recommendations offer new directions.

#### 1. Develop national policy in child welfare:

Focus on policy development with the MOE to establish policies and procedures for the child protection system and standards for the care of children in the services that are being developed.

#### 2. Continue the development of the child tracking system:

Develop a child tracking and management information system to ensure that competently trained professionals are providing quality services to children. It is fortunate that there is great interest in developing this system and that UNICEF and CCF can collaborate in this with government support.

#### 3. Replicate best practices:

Best models may exist but it is another challenge to ensure that the relevant information is spread throughout the country. Effective aspects of developed activities should be rolled out to other interested communities. CCF should attempt to create a critical mass of communities, which are acquainted with and actively engaged in developing innovative activities. Replication can take place through activities such as study tours, in country visits, and producing written manuals for services.

Use a micro grant for the administration of a national replication program in two phases. In the first phase, use a roundtable or conference to share information about the services being developed in the pilot communities. Then make a small fund available so that interested parties may visit the site of an established best practice model and learn how to implement it or permit the implementer of a best practice model to visit an interested community and mentor development of a new service or project.

### 4. Upgrade the curricula for social workers:

Working through the appropriate government ministries, focus on inclusion of new materials and methods of teaching social work in the curriculum of the Academy for Post Diploma Education. Develop an improved system of social work education and target a change in the curriculum that will affect all future students. Increase the knowledge of therapeutic techniques and encourage the use of internships (fieldwork) in order that social work students have actual hands-on experience in their field.

Develop continuing education programs for those who are working in the field and especially for those who will not have had the benefit of new training in the academies and universities.

#### 5. Continue the focus on Community Advisory Boards:

The CABs represent community involvement in the planning and development of services. They are extremely important. It is their voice that will remain to find solutions and advocate for needed services and funds after the CCF project ends.

#### 6. Create a vision for policymakers and implementers:

If possible to use United States Government funds for this activity, plan an international study tour to acquaint the ministers and high level civil servants who work in the area of child protection and child rights with a developed child protection system and the associated system of private and public community services. It is important for ministers to participate as they are the policy makers. It is equally important for high ranking local-level civil servants to participate; they have non-political positions and are likely to remain in their posts for long periods of time. They will be the ones who implement the vision when they return from a study tour. In addition, a study tour could expand the number of ministries who understand and have knowledge about childcare and protection and also the sphere of influence of the project.

#### 7. Coordinate with other NGOs:

Coordinate and work in cooperation with other donors and service providers. If politically feasible, begin to meet regularly with other donors and NGOs to share experience, materials and updates on activities and to encourage the development of similar activities in other parts of Belarus.

#### 8. Develop independent living situations for young people in institutions:

CCF should go beyond teaching life skills classes to young people and plan independent living opportunities for young people currently living in institutions. This will allow the young people to practice what they have learned in the classes and give them the opportunity to make mistakes while they have the support of a caretaker. Young people can live in group homes, with foster parents or with *patronat* families as soon as the GOB institutes that method of family care. (Patronat families are similar to foster families except that the State maintains the custody of the child or young person.) The GOB supports the idea of foster parents and *patronat* families and has funds available to pay their salaries.

Foster parents providing care for adolescents need special training. For example, children who have lived in institutions often want less intimacy than children who have been raised in a family. In addition, adolescence is the normal time for youth to be looking outward toward peer groups and the community. Foster parents who will work with adolescents need to be selected not only on their ability to provide care, but also because they can assist the young person to emancipate.

#### 9. Increase domestic adoption:

Develop a pilot to assess the situation and then devise a plan of action to encourage adoptions. According to UNICEF, the number of adoptions increased between 1995 and 2005. However, since the data includes a large increase in the number of intercountry adoptions, it is difficult to ascertain the incidence of domestic adoptions. The GOB has promoted both foster care and adoption, but foster care appears to be getting more attention and support.

The interviewers received inconsistent information about why adoptions were not more prevalent. The answers varied from lack of public awareness to bureaucratic procedures.

CCF should support the MOE to convene a focus group or task force of experts from Belarus to examine the facts and make recommendations about how to decrease the impediments to adoption thereby increasing the number of families willing to adopt children. Based on the assessment of the task force and possibly through the use of micro-grants, CCF should create a domestic adoption pilot in at least one of the 5 selected communities.

#### 10. Use the micro-grants to develop services:

Thus far the project has concentrated on prevention activities. Future grants should target the development of community services through partnerships with local authorities and CABs. This partnership will ensure that the service is genuinely desired and embraced by the local community as well as build indigenous support for continued activities after the project ends.

# 11. Include overall project results in the quarterly reports with a narrative about the met and unmet goals.

Develop a method of reporting on the overall project indicators that makes it clear what the results are and gives an explanation of the reasons that results may be unmet.

### Sustainability

It is important to consider sustainability throughout the life of a USAID activity but particularly in the second half of a project, implementers must devote special attention to obtaining support for continuing the activity. All of the above recommendations are important but there are several that will contribute to lasting changes in the system of services for children in Belarus. The first six recommendations speak directly to sustainability of the gains that the project has made and should receive attention in the remaining tenure of the grant activity.

#### Appendix A: Scope of Work

The consultant reviewed the Christian Children's Fund (CCF) unsolicited proposal to the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund in 2005 and this us in an excellent position to determine the degree to which the grantee has successfully executed the scope of work for the Community Services to Vulnerable Groups' project begun in Belarus in September 2005. The consultant will be part of an assessment team led by Dr. Lynne Schaberg and will also be expected to make concrete recommendations as to how CCF can improve their implementation of the vulnerable groups program. While in Belarus, the consultant will visit project sites, meet with CCF staff, implementing partners, relevant ministry officials, and child protection organizations, e.g., UNICEF, etc.

## **Appendix B: Contacts**

## M&E visit to Kobrin.

## Meeting with the Deputy Heard of the Kobrin Executive Committee

Trubchik Valentin	The Head of Kobrin Department of Education
Ivaniuk Valery	Deputy Head of the Kobrin Executive Committee

## 9:00 -10:30 - Presentation of the project activity in Kobrin

s:

N⁰	Name	Position	The role in the project	Contact information
1.	Savchik Valentina	Child Protection Specialist from the Local Department of Education	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01642) 210 91
2.	Boiko Tatiana	Director of Center of Social Support of Population	Local Community Project Coordinator	(01642) 23128, 416 44
3.	Andrikevich Ludmila	Psychologist of Center of Social Support of Population	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01642) 23128, 416 44
4.	Nikolenko Svetlana	Deputy Heard of Director School № 3	Local Coordinator in Kobrin Secondary School № 3	(01642) 25936
5.	Panaseyko Nina	Deputy Heard of Director School № 9	Contact Person	(01642) 37357
6.	Ruimiantseva Irena	Director of Habilitation Center for Disabled Children	Contact Person	(01642) 28686
7.	Slabnina Tatiana	The Director of Kobrin branch of NGO "Belarussian Association of Assistance for Disabled Children and Young People" (BelAPDIiMi)	Small Grant Coordinator	(01642) 28686
8.	Heilo Elena	Social Teacher of Habilitation Center for Disabled Children, BelAPDIiMi member	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01642) 28686

9.	Trava Alexander	Social Teacher of Shelter for Children at risk	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01642) 66318
10.	Nogach Nina	Divin Boarding School	Contact Person	(029) 2241553
11.	Volosiuk Irina	Health care	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01642) 2 36 63

### 10. 40 - 11. 40 - Community Services for Disabled children

№	Name	Position	The role in the project	Contact information
1.	Ruimiantseva Irena	Director of Habilitation Center for Disabled Children	Contact Person	(01642) 28686, (029) 7982645
2.	Slabnina Tatiana	The Director of Kobrin branch of NGO "Belarussian Association of Assistance for Disabled Children and Young People" (BelAPDIiMi)	Small Grant Coordinator	(01642) 28686
3.	Pasyuk Galina	Psychologyst of Habilitation Center for Disabled Children	Trainer of Parenting Training Program	(01642) 28686
4.	Heilo Elena	Social Teacher of Habilitation Center for Disabled Children, BelAPDIiMi member	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01642) 28686

#### Participants of the meeting in Kobrin Habilitation Center for Disabled Children:

## **12:40 – 14:00 - Integrated activity by youth volunteers** (school #3)

#### School 3

Nº	Name	Position	The role in the project	Contact information
1	Nikolenko Svetlana	Deputy Head of Director School № 3	Local Coordinator in Kobrin Secondary School № 3	(01642) 25936

2	Boiko Tatiana	Director of Center of Social Support of Population	Local Community Project Coordinator	(01642) 23128, 416 44
3	Schoolchildren volunteers			

## 15:00 - 16.00 - Divin Boarding school.

№	Name	Position	The role in the project	Contact information
1	Nogach Nina	Deputy Heard of the Boarding School	Small grant implementation	(8 029) 5282679
2	Host parents and children			

Name	Position	Role in the project	Contact information
9.30-10.00			
Meeting with the D	Deputy Head of Executiv	ve Council	1
1. Saksonov Nikolay	Head of Orsha Executive Committee		
2. Pechenkov Vladimir	Head of Education Department of Orsha Executive Committee		(0216) 21 24 83
3. Potyomkina Tatiana	Chief Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Orsha Executive Committee	Head of Community Advisory Board	(0216) 21 03 60
4. Guminskaya Ludmila	Methodologist of Education Department of Orsha Executive Committee	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(0216) 21 03 60
5. Misevich Olga	Director of Social Pedagogic Center and Children's Shelter	Local Community Project Coordinator	(0216) 23 11 46
10.30-12.00			
General Meeting (s	school #19)		
1. Potyomkina Tatiana	Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Orsha Executive Committee	Head of Community Advisory Board	(0216) 21 03 60
2. Guminskaya Ludmila	Methodologist of Education Department of Orsha Executive	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(0216) 21 03 60

# List of participants of M&E meetings in Orsha

	Committee		
3. Misevich Olga	Director of Social Pedagogic Center and Children's Shelter	Local Community Project Coordinator	(0216) 23 11 46
4. Pozdniakova Tatiana	Psychologist, School № 19	Trainer on Parenting Participant of the Child Protection training	(029) 5693805
5. Aladko Tamara	Director of Secondary School № 20	Contact Person	(0216) 238514
6. Kokhova Natalya	Director of School № 19	Coordinator of training programs in school № 19	(0216) 22 31 55
7. Kazakov Alexandr	Head of Inspection on Juvenile Affaires	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(0216) 21 88 24
8. Semenkova Valerya	Defectologist of Orsha Habilitation Center for Disabled Children	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(0216) 24 03 62
9. Dubovick Ludmila	Leader of Social Foundation "Doverye" ("Trust")	Small Grant Coordinator in Orsha	(029) 8143397
12.10 - 13.10			
Meeting with traine	rs and participants of	Parenting Training P	rogram (school #20)
1. Metlitskay Tatiana Nikolaevna	Teacher of school #20	Parenting course	8029 513 83 88
2. Grechulina Svetlana	Foster mother	Participant of the Parenting Course	25 21 60
3. Mager Olga	Foster mother	Participant of the Parenting Course	
4. Zhilinskaya Zhanna	Foster mother	Participant of the Parenting Course	593 95 34
5. Sitkevich Svetlana	Foster mother	Participant of the Parenting Course	217 55 84

Teacher, school #20	Parenting Course trainer	
Teacher, school #20	Integrated playgroup trainer	
Teacher, school #20	Integrated playgroup trainer	
Social Pedagogic Center	Parenting Course trainer	
Social Pedagogic Center, psychologist	Integrated playgroup trainer	
-	0	
ogic Center/Shelter fo	r Children	1
Chief Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Orsha Executive Committee	Head of Community Advisory Board	(0216) 21 03 60
Methodologist of Education Department of Orsha Executive Committee	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(0216) 21 03 60
Director of Social Pedagogic Center and Children's Shelter	Local Community Project Coordinator	(0216) 23 11 46
Methodologist of Orsha Social Pedagogic Center and Children's Shelter	Trainer on Life Skills Program	(0216) 23 11 46
	Participants of Life Skills Trainings in Shelter	
	Teacher , school #20 Teacher , school #20 Social Pedagogic Center Social Pedagogic Center, psychologist <b>pants of Life Skills Pr</b> <b>ogic Center/Shelter fo</b> Chief Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Orsha Executive Committee Methodologist of Education Department of Orsha Executive Committee Director of Social Pedagogic Center and Children's Shelter Methodologist of Orsha Social Pedagogic Center and Children's	trainerTeacher , school #20Integrated playgroup trainerTeacher , school #20Integrated playgroup trainerSocial Pedagogic CenterParenting Course trainerSocial Pedagogic Center, psychologistIntegrated playgroup trainersocial Pedagogic Center, psychologistIntegrated playgroup trainerpants of Life Skills ProgramFree ChildrenChief Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Orsha Executive CommitteeHead of Community Advisory BoardMethodologist of Education Department of Orsha Executive CommitteeParticipant of Child Protection Training ProgramDirector of Social Pedagogic Center and Children's ShelterLocal Community Project CoordinatorMethodologist of Orsha Social Pedagogic Center and Children's ShelterTrainer on Life Skills ProgramMethodologist of Orsha Social Pedagogic Center and Children's ShelterParticipants of Life Skills Trainings in

Name	Position	Role in the Project	Contact Information						
10.00-10.30 Meeting with Head of Education Department of Zhodino Executive Committee									
1. Samusevich Lidya	Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Zhodino Executive Committee	Local Community Project Coordinator	(01775) 3 75 64						
2. Gorid Evgeny	Head of Education Department of Zhodino Executive Committee		(01775) 3 38 92						
10.50 - 12.20									
General Meeting (tr	aining room school #9 	)							
1. Samusevich Lidya	Chief Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Zhodino Executive Committee	Local Community Project Coordinator	(01775) 3 75 64						
2. Malakhova Alla	Deputy Director of Social Pedagogic Center and Children's Center	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01775) 2 38 73						
3. Kutsepalova Irina	Director of Habilitation Center for Disabled Children	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01775) 3 44 27						
4. Gurko Marya	Head of Children's Polyclinic	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01775) 3 51 31						

5. Sushko Natalya	Deputy Director of Zhodino Secondary School № 9	Local Coordinator in School № 9	(01775) 2 38 74
6. Shumilova Yaroslava	Social Teacher of Zhodino Boarding School	Trainer of Health Training Program	(01775) 2 38 93
7. Belaya Tatiana	Center of Social Support	AA group coordinator in Zhodino	
8. Savich Tatiana	Zhodino Secondary School № 9	Volunteer Group manager	
12.20 - 13.00			
Meeting with Healt	h Education Program	Participants	
(training room sch	ool #9)	T	T
1. Children participating in the Health Education Program			
2. Gibadulina Tatiana	Teacher of Zhodino Secondary School № 9	Trainer of Health Training Program	(01775) 2 38 94, (01775) 2 38 74
3. Zhebina Elena	Teacher of Zhodino Secondary School № 9	Trainer of Health Training Program	(01775) 2 38 94, (01775) 2 38 74
4. Sushko Natalya	Deputy Director of Zhodino Secondary School № 9	Local Coordinator in School № 9	(01775) 2 38 74
5. Samusevich Lidya	Chief Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Zhodino Executive Committee	Local Community Project Coordinator	(01775) 3 75 64
6. Bitiay Tatiana	Teacher of Zhodino Secondary School	Trainer of Health Training Program	(01775) 2 38 94, (01775) 2 38 74

<u>№</u> 9

13.10 - 14.10						
Zhodino Boarding S Children participating in Life Skills program and workshops	chool					
1. Samusevich Lidya	Chief Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Zhodino Executive Committee	Local Community Project Coordinator	(01775) 3 75 64			
2. Shumilova Yaroslava	Social Teacher of Zhodino Boarding School	Trainer of Health Training Program	(01775) 2 38 93			
4. Melnikova Marina	Social Teacher of Education Department of Zhodino Executive Committee	Trainer of Life Skills Training Program	(01775) 3 75 64			
15:30-16:30						
Meeting in Zhodino 1. Samusevich Lidya	Habilitation Center for Chief Child Protection Specialist of Education Department of Zhodino Executive Committee	Local Community Project Coordinator	(01775) 3 75 64			
2. Kutsepalova Irina	Director of Habilitation Center for Disabled Children	Participant of Child Protection Training Program	(01775) 3 44 27			
Parents participating in CCF-Belarus programs						

## Appendix C: Performance Results Chart

#### **DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ORPHANS IN BELARUS\***

#### BASELINE AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS

\* Total number of children at risk reported by targeted communities at the beginning of 2006 was 1238. By the end of 2006 the reported number of children at risk is 1185.

	Indicator	Definition & Unit of Measure	Commun ity	Baseline		Planned Performanc e Targets	Achieved Performan ce Targets
				Year	Value	2006	2006
	Overall project impact						
1	Number of children using alternative care	Number of children using alternative care as a result of community based prevention and rehabilitation services initiated by the project	Zhodino, Orsha, Kobrin	Feb 2006	335	340	561
1	# of children returned to biological family	Number of children returned to biological family as a result of community based prevention and rehabilitation services initiated by the project	Zhodino, Orsha, Kobrin	Feb 2006	125	130	101
	# of institutionalized children	Number of orphans and sheltered children	Zhodino, Orsha, Kobrin	Feb 2006	534	530	443
I V	percent of children prevented from being institutionalized	Ratio of children at risk officially taken off the register to the total number of children at risk in the community	Zhodino, Orsha, Kobrin	Feb 2006	n/a	n/a	n/a
1	Objective 1						
1 1	# of visits of community members including families, orphans, and children at risk for new prevention and rehabilitation services	Number of visits by target groups for new community based prevention and rehabilitation services that appeared during the period of CCF project implementation	Zhodino	Feb 2006	n/a	0	42
<u> </u>			Orsha	Feb 2006	n/a 5	35	45
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	33	150	191
1 2	# of visits by children and adolescents with disabilities for new education and social services	Number of visits by children, adolescents with disabilities, including related visits by their care-takers, for new education and social services that appeared in communities during the period CCF project implementation	Zhodino	Feb 2006	n/a	0	8
			Orsha	Feb 2006	n/a	0	9
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	n/a	40	128
1 3	# of community-based services provided in targeted communities	Number of community-based services by type provided in targeted communities	Zhodino	Feb 2006	20	20	22
•			Orsha	Feb 2006	21	21	22
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	21	21	25

1 4	# of orphaned children enrolled in life skills development programs.	Number of orphaned children enrolled in life skills development programs as a result of the project.	Zhodino	Feb 2006	n/a	0	0
			Orsha	Feb 2006	n/a	0	0
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	n/a	40	12
1 5	percent of enrolled orphaned children reporting improvements of specific knowledge and skills	Percentage of participants reporting improvements of specific knowledge and skills related to trainings topic.	Zhodino	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
	related to trainings topic.		Orsha	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
1 6	# community members including families, orphans, and children informed through informational and	Number of beneficiaries of community based prevention and rehabilitation services, which were informed through information and referral system	Zhodino	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
	referral system.		Orsha	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
1 7	# community organizations /services integrated into and using informational and referral system.	Number of community based organizations and services for families, orphans and vulnerable children, which are integrated into and using information and referral system in their work.	Zhodino	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
			Orsha	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
1 8	# Community Advisory Boards established in project targeted communities	Number of Community Advisory Boards established in project targeted communities. Community Advisory Boards will include variety of community stakeholders including authorities, specialists, parents	Zhodino	Feb 2006	0	1	1
		and youth.	Orsha	Feb 2006	0	1	1
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	0	1	1
1 9	# of community members participated in Community Advisory Boards work	Number of community stakeholders participated in Community Advisory Boards work. Community Advisory Boards will include variety of community stakeholders including authorities, specialists, parents and youth.	Zhodino	Feb 2006	0	5	13
			Orsha	Feb 2006	0	5	9
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	0	5	8

2	Objective 2						
2. 1.	percent of participants reporting improvements of specific knowledge and skills related to trainings	Percentage of participants reporting improvements of specific knowledge and skills related to trainings topic.	Zhodino	Feb 2006	0	85percent	85percent
	topic.		Orsha	Feb 2006	0	85percent	91percent
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	0	85percent	89percent
2. 2.	percent of participants reporting practical use of obtained knowledge and skills in services for family and children.	Percentage of specialists – training participants reporting practical use of obtained knowledge and skills in services for family and children.	Zhodino	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
			Orsha	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	0	n/a	n/a
2. 3.	# community members reached through public awareness events/ actions, publications and outlets.	Estimated amount of audience of public awareness events/ publications. CCF will calculate this amount using distribution lists records, number of copies of publication distributed.	Zhodino	Feb 2006	0	n/a	6471
			Orsha	Feb 2006	0	n/a	473
			Kobrin	Feb 2006	0	n/a	177
3	Objective 3						
3. 1.	# of the regulatory and methodological documents/ standards/ criteria developed.	Number of the regulatory and methodological documents/ standards/ developed by the Technical Assistance Task Group.		Feb 2006	0	n/a	1
3. 2.	Action Plan.	Action Plan, which is elaborated and agreed with project stakeholders and partners as a common framework for incorporation of developed documents into the practice.		Feb 2006	0	n/a	1
3. 3.	# of stakeholders reached through project's dissemination and replication activities.	Estimated number of stakeholders reached through project's dissemination and replication activities in targeted local communities and national wide.		Feb 2006	0	25	56

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