

BELARUS OFFICE: Private Sector funding \$51,927.28 – Added to Education Thematic SC 149905

1. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:

To ensure a long-term sustainability of its programme results, the CO over the last couple of years started to cultivate relationships with the private sector. The CO works both with businesses on CSR as well as with individuals. Outreach to individuals has developed over the last couple years to include both leveraging of funding through individual ATM and electronic banking donations, but also through fundraising events such as the CO's annual "Gala" for Child Rights. In October 2017, the CO hosted its Second Gala with "Black and White Tie" theme. This GALA was dedicated to benefiting children with disabilities. In this capacity, the evening provided information outreach about the situation of children with disabilities and at the same time provided a means for the general public to become directly involved in supporting children's rights. The 2017 GALA raised a record \$40,000 USD which was the "bulk" of the individual funding added to the funding source, SC 149905 (education thematic). These initiatives not only increased financial resources for child rights but established 'channels' for outreach about child rights to different groups across communities. Through these activities, UNICEF has served as a convener for broader engagement on child rights.

The funding raised (and which was added to the education thematic source) focused on supporting inclusive education within Belarus. In the 2018 Gala, the CO reported to its supporters about the work conducted with the resources raised in 2017.

2. SITUATION:

Despite Belarus' efforts to promote the rights of children with disabilities (CWD), these children and their families continue to face multiple institutional, attitudinal and structural barriers in obtaining their human rights. Communities at large fail to understand that most families with children with disabilities could enjoy good health, education and social protection, if given adequate support. Government policies are based on a medical model of disability that does not address complex societal and other barriers that children with disabilities face. Lack of data and coordination across sectors results in state programmes failing to address effectively their needs.

The country's political commitment to continue reducing IMR rates drives the efforts to increase the survival rates of children with extremely low birth weights, but in turn contributes to higher risks of children having special education needs and/or disabilities. At the same time, early identification of developmental risks in younger children also contributes to the rising rate of children with special education needs (176,000 of all children at the beginning of 2018).

With Belarus' ratification of the UNCPRD (October 2016), UNICEF continually supported the MOE to build an understanding for inclusive education by introducing General Comment #4 and supporting implementation of the national concept of the inclusive education and its action plan. 2017 was the year of research and development of new services, when UNICEF supported the Belarusian State Pedagogical University to introduce a new course on special pedagogy for inclusion into pre-service training of all teachers. At the same time, UNICEF supported the establishment of a Republican Resource Centre on Inclusive Education within BSPU, providing training outreach and face-to-face as well as online mentoring.

3. ACTIONS WITH RAISED FUNDS (\$51,927.28)

In line with SDG 4 on education and the Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), Belarus' MOE has recognized the need for inclusive education and has committed to advance inclusive education through its National IE Concept as well as the country's Concept on a National Strategy for Sustainable Development by 2035.

In 2018, UNICEF played a catalytical role, partnering with MOE, to strengthen the MOE's system response to integrate inclusive approaches into mainstream schools. Specifically, UNICEF developed a plan with MOE to expand the four-year piloting process to include pre-school and primary schools, with the incorporation of Estonian expertise; as well as established in partnership with MOE regional (oblast) inclusive education resource centres to provide on-going methodological support and supervision to schools on transitioning to inclusive classrooms. The development of the 6 regional IE resource centres were conducted using the private sector funding raised in 2017.

These resources centres were created within the existing network of Correctional Developmental Centres at the regional (oblast) level that currently provide methodological support on diagnostics as well as development of individual learning/rehabilitation plans to similar centres at the district levels. In turn, these district centres work with children with disabilities of varying degrees who currently are not able to be integrated into mainstream school settings without support to mainstream teachers. In the creation of the new role for these regional centres, UNICEF facilitated with the MOE and the regional (oblast) centre directors the drafting of a resolution to establish inclusive education resource centre as well as strategic workshops with these colleagues to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) that can foster knowledge currently in these centres to be transferred to education professionals in mainstream schools. In this manner, the regional (oblast) centres become the bridge to provide on-going methodological support for schools in their transition to inclusion. In this capacity, the CO initiated the normative provisions for establishment of inclusive education resource centres, while also providing methodological and diagnostic resources to facilitate their new role.

Inclusive education is a strategic intervention with the CO's overall programme responses. The leveraging of the private individual support contributed to broader system change that will have long-term sustainable results for children, striving to obtain greater social inclusion for all children.