

SELECTED NGOs — DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

ADUKATAR

Youth association Adukatar was founded in the spring of 1999 in Vitsebsk. The main goals of Adukatar are to make secondary and high education more democratic, to contribute to educating and instilling values in youth, to contribute to legal awareness and to build a civic society in Belarus.

The association currently has 12 members, who have a higher and specialised secondary education — including law students and lawyers. Members are actively engaged in various political parties and social associations and participate in mass meetings and seminars.

The association has conducted and participated in training courses on law, local government, negotiations, leadership in social organisations, co-operation, human rights and the “School of Modern Political Techniques.” Members have also volunteered as public observers in election districts during the deputy elections to local Councils, members of

the election commission for the presidential election, public defenders in court proceedings concerning the removal of the Suworov bust by V. Pleshenko. Moreover, association members have distributed information by O. Karach and L. Chernusava.

Adukatar co-operates with various organisations in Vitsebsk Region: Vitsebsk branch of the L. Sapieha Foundation, the Vitsebsk Youth Initiative Centre “KONTUR,” the Vitsebsk branch of the Human Rights Centre “VIASNA,” the Vitsebsk branch of the Belarusian Association of Students, the Orsha Youth Centre “PERSPECTYVA,” Navapolack organisation “KROK RAZAM” and other youth organisations.

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HOMEL ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Homel Association of Children and Youth (ASDEMO) is a non-profit and non-governmental organisation registered on November 14, 1996.

ASDEMO is based on principles of voluntary work and desire in order to actively participate in the life of society. The association helps children and young people of Homel and the Homel region in fulfilling their potential and in the process of socialisation through conducting informational and educational activities and various developmental programs. All ASDEMO members are volunteers, including the organisation's director and board.

The main principles of activity are democracy, equality, and freedom.

The mission of ASDEMO is to provide youth an opportunity to express themselves and contribute to society.

The main areas of activity are:

■ Environment.

ASDEMO grants assistance to activities aimed at improving the level of environmental culture within the population, developing a public movement in the sphere of environment protection and ensuring ecological human rights. Within this area, the association has conducted the following activities:

- Environmental education for children and youth;
- Promotion of alternative sources of energy;
- Annual international environmental camps (since 1997);
- Independent eco-laboratory for monitoring the environment. The basic task is monitoring the quality of drinking water and natural reservoirs in Homel and the Homel region;
- Conducting environmental-based seminars.

■ Leisure time activities.

- Sports clubs and competitions between them;
- Environmental education and sources of alternative energy.

ASDEMO hopes to establish a youth centre in one of the most densely populated districts in Homel. There is a significant need for such a centre as the few state youth centres that exist in Homel are inadequate for a city with a population of half a million people.

■ Anti AIDS activities.

Unfortunately, the Homel region is famous for having the highest level of AIDS in Belarus. ASDEMO is planning to open an independent AIDS Centre. ASDEMO is currently conducting the following activities in this field:

- Sex education for children and youth, particularly in regard to preventive measures against AIDS and drug addiction;

- Annual charitable cultural youth project on the 1st of December, the World Day against AIDS. Begun in 1996, and now widely known and very popular with the youth, "Fight AIDS" includes exhibitions of drawings and pictures made by children and youth, professional medical consultations and a much loved concert of rock bands.

■ Helping refugees.

This is a new area of activity for the association. There are more than 1500 refugees from all over the world in the Homel area. Most of them come from Afghanistan, Tadjikistan, and Chechnya. ASDEMO is launching a project that will lead to opening a social information centre for refugees. The centre is to assist in finding employment for the refugees and organise leisure activities.

Other activities:

- Supporting public initiatives for peace, democracy, and human rights;
- Hosting charitable meetings for schoolchildren, orphans, and the blind;
- Organising cultural exchange programs (festivals, exhibitions, concerts, competitions, etc.).

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"ASLONA" SOCIAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEFENCE OF TAXPAYERS AND CONSUMERS RIGHTS

The Social Association for Taxpayers' and Consumers' Rights Defence "Aslona" is a regional, non-governmental, non-profit organisation established in December 1995 through the initiative of deputies (lawyers, journalists, and businessmen) to the Supreme Soviet and the Municipal Council. The activity of the association is mainly conducted in the southern part of the Harodnya region ('oblast').

■ Goals:

- Promoting democratic reforms in the fields of human rights, local self-government, economics, and culture;
- Establishing a civil society;
- Increasing the educational level of residents of the Harodnya region in the fields of human rights, local self-government, economics, culture, and historical heritage;
- Promoting the ideas of democracy;
- Supporting the activity of social associations and social initiatives;
- Supporting the independent mass media and publishing activity.

■ Tasks:

- to provide and defend the legal rights of citizens in state, economic and social bodies and organisations;
- to conduct educational activities in the fields of human rights, local self-government, economics, culture, ecology;
- to assist in the development of a civic society, the observation of human rights and the rule of law;
- to support public initiatives;
- to support NGOs.

■ Methods:

- counselling to organisations and private individuals in the fields of human rights and taxpayer and consumer rights;
- holding meetings, seminars, lectures, conferences (regional, national and international);
- organising educational activities in the fields of human rights and taxpayer and consumer rights for residents of the Harodnya region;
- publishing advertising and information materials.

Activity.

The social association "Aslona" is actively engaged in the defence of human rights and education for the residents of the southern part of the Harodnya region. The association also provides counselling, informational and practical assistance in the fields of human rights, labour rights and taxpayer and consumer rights. The Information Centre for Human Rights Defence operates on the basis of the social association "Aslona." Chambers for legal defence have been established in Vaukavysk and Slonim which grant counselling and practical human rights defence assistance to the residents of the region. The social association "Aslona" provides technical, material, informational, and counselling assistance to non-governmental organisations in the region and functions as a resource centre for them. "Aslona" also publishes the human rights bulletin "Viestki."

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VITSEBSK BRANCH OF THE BELARUSIAN ORGANISATION OF WORKING WOMEN

Through educational activities among women the Belarusian Organization of Working Women assists in raising social consciousness and establishing democratic institutions in Belarus. The basic objective of the Vitsebsk branch of the Belarusian Organization of Working Women is to unite women

in order to protect their social, economic, labour and other legal interests, their families and children.

■ General areas of activity:

- Granting legal assistance to women in order to protect their rights and interests;
- Vitsebsk Legal Centre;
- Hosting meetings with lawyers for women from other social organisations;
- "Hotline" for legal questions on the pages of the information bulletin "Women's Herald" ("Жаночы вiеьнік");
- Informing women about the development of the women's movement in Vitsebsk region ('oblast'), Belarus and other countries;
- Establishing and maintaining contacts with other women's organisations;
- Participating in national and international seminars, meetings, congresses;
- Granting assistance to large families and single parent families;
- Publishing the information bulletin "Women's Herald";
- Assisting young poets and writers through publishing their works in the cultural and educational newspaper "Pradslava."

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BUSINESSWOMEN'S CLUB

The Businesswomen's Club (BWC) in Berastsye is a municipal non-governmental organisation. The club was established in October 1993, registered in November 1995 and re-registered in September 1999.

BWC's primary goal is to increase the significance and role of women in society.

The organisation strives towards this goal through:

1. Getting women involved in social affairs as well as assisting women in professional development;
2. Conducting educational and training programs for women and youth;
3. Assisting women who have found themselves in a difficult situation;
4. Disseminating information regarding issues covered by BWC's activity;
5. Establishing a network of women's organisations in the Republic of Belarus.

The activity of BWC:

■ Social programs

- Sending Christmas presents to an orphanage in Yastrembel;
- Organising a series of charitable events "How is your service, son?" in the 38th brigade of mobile troops of the Republic of Belarus;

- Participating in the environmental movement "Women for Nature Protection";
 - Running an educational program on HIV/AIDS prevention entitled "Changing Sexual Behaviour (safe sex) in the Republic of Belarus";
 - Running a program of providing assistance to women in a difficult situation;
 - Conducting a project which involves working with women in prisons;
 - Holding educational seminars for unemployed women entitled "Economical Development of Women."
- Cultural and educational programs
- Organising the I Municipal Conference for Women under the banner "Women Will Make the World Better by the Year 2000";
 - Organising a youth peace and dream event entitled "Red Balloons Celebration";
 - Organising the "The World through Women's Eyes" exhibition;
 - Organising the "The Image of a Businesswoman" seminar;
 - Organising the "Monitoring Elections to Local Councils" seminar.

BWC is a member of the International Federation of Clubs for Business and Professional Women (IFBPW) 1997, and the Assembly of Democratic Non-governmental Organisations.

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ASSOCIATION OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN HAVING CEREBRAL PALSY AND SPINAL PATHOLOGY

The Association of Families with Children Having Cerebral Palsy and Spinal Pathology was established in 1992. The basic objective of the association is to grant social and psychological assistance to disabled children and their families.

Members of the organisation include 310 families with disabled children having cerebral palsy and spinal pathology under 25 and living in Homel.

Activity.

- Humanitarian and material aid;
- Rejuvenation of disabled children in foreign countries and in Belarus;
- Organising activities (parties, celebrations, discos, going to a theatre or circus);
- Psychological assistance to disabled children and members of their families;
- Project "I Want to Know Everything," establishing a computer class for disabled children, English and German classes and

psychological counselling (sponsored by the American foundation "Counter Part");

- Holding roundtables for social organisations that work with disabled children with motor and spinal pathologies aimed at finding common problems and searching for ways to solve them on the state level.

The President of the Association is Yauhenya Mastavaya.

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KALINKAVICHI REGIONAL SOCIAL ASSOCIATION "CIVIC CENTRE"

The Kalinkavichi Regional Social Association "Civic Centre" was established in July 2000. The basic objectives of the association is to preserve and develop historical and cultural values of the Belarusian nation and to assist in the processes of bringing constitutional human rights and freedoms to fruition.

Activity:

- legal clinics granting help in legal issues;
 - supporting the teachers' association.
- The organisation co-operates actively with the Social Association "Public Initiatives"

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HOMEL REGIONAL PUBLIC ASSOCIATION "CIVIL INITIATIVES"

The Homel Regional Public Association "Civil Initiatives" sees its mission in assistance to democratic processes in Homel region in the field of human rights, economic reforms, science, culture and ecology, solution of the socially important problems and development of information space.

The activity is directed to:

- extension of public activity in Homel region;
- studying problems relating to public movement, interaction between non-governmental organisations and mass media;
- creation of informational network with the database on regional public organisations;
- development and support of NGOs and independent mass media.

The Association realises the following programs:

- "Partnership" (co-operation with the non-governmental organisations in Homel region)
The program aim — assistance in establishment, development and activity of non-governmental organisations in Homel region.

The program foresees:

- study and analysis of public organisations' activity and problems of public movement;
- granting material, organisational, and technical assistance to the regional public organisations, duplication of information materials, access to computers and other office equipment and communication means;
- conducting seminars, trainings and conferences on the problems of the third sector activity;
- granting consultations for citizens and public activists on the problems of the third sector activity;
- strengthening interaction between regional non-governmental organisations and mass media;
- working out and publishing periodicals and specific informational bulletins for non-governmental organisations.

- "Leader" (leadership in public organisations)

The program aim — training and consulting the leaders of non-governmental organisations and other active people in the field of management, establishing coalitions and influencing the government decisions.

The program foresees:

- conducting training seminars for the leaders involved in public activity;
- establishing training centres for public activists in Homel region;
- publishing brochures in management and organisational processes.

- "Youth"

This foreground program is directed on the assistance in establishment and development of youth non-governmental organisations and involvement of active young people in public life.

The program includes:

- educational and competitive projects for young journalists, economists and other kind of progressive youth;
- access to computers and modern means of communication;
- training seminars on actual problems of youth, conducted by professionals;
- counselling, technical, and methodological assistance to young organisations.

- "Publishing Centre"

Project goal — assistance in establishment and development of independent mass media in Homel

region, issuing different kinds of printed materials for non-governmental organisations.

Main directions are:

- education and consultations for editors and journalists from independent mass media in the region;
- advertising and other publications about NGOs' activity and independent mass media;
- assistance in publishing independent newspapers, NGO bulletins, works of local poets, writers, historians, artists and others;
- help in distribution of printing production.

Service.

The Resource Centre for Civil Initiatives is established on the basis of the Association. Its aim is the technical, counselling and organisational help to non-governmental organisations in Homel region.

The Centre provides the following service, which is free of charge:

- training seminars, consultations in actual problems of the third sector activity;
- translation of the necessary information;
- assistance in preparing the documents for registration of non-governmental organisations;
- technical assistance (copying machines, computers, means of communication, access to Internet, etc.);
- assistance in establishing contacts with partners in Belarus and abroad;
- putting the office at the disposal of non-governmental organisations (up to 20 persons).

Today the Resource Centre grants assistance to more than 60 NGOs in Homel region.

Perspective.

- Establishing a network of informational counselling centres for NGOs in provincial towns of Homel region;
- Designing the database of public activists in Homel region;
- Developing the weekly Discussion Club for young public and political activists;
- Establishing the Computer Class and Internet Centre for training young people in practical work with computers and modern means of communication;
- Improving the technical, publishing and communication base of newspapers and NGOs, issuing their bulletins;
- Extending the zone of distribution of independent mass media to areas outside of Homel;
- Developing and realising educational programs in human rights.

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KRYCHAU SOCIAL ASSOCIATION "CONTACT CENTRE"

The Contact Centre was established in March 1999 and registered on 23 February 2000. The organisation currently has 13 members and 15 regular volunteers. The mission of the organisation is to promote self-fulfilment within a true civic community in Krychau Region and thereby assist in building a new European Belarus.

Activity is concentrated in the following areas:

- Establishing common information network;
- Human rights (defending the rights and freedoms of the population in Krychau Region);
- Granting assistance to initiative groups and residents who live in the region;
- Publishing;
- Health, physical training and sports in the life of Krychau 's population;
- Environment protection;
- Culture and education.

Main forms of conducting activity:

- Organising clubs, hobby groups, workshops for local people;
- Running the Regional Human Rights Defence Chamber;
- Granting technical, professional, and methodological assistance to social organisations and public initiatives;
- Running the Regional Information Centre (Service);
- Granting assistance in conducting educational and cultural summer camps for youth in the region;
- Organising and conducting recitals, readings, meetings with writers, education courses, seminars, round and discussion tables, concerts;
- Informing the population about its activity by the means of mass media, including its own.

1. Activity of the Regional Human Rights Defence Chamber.

The Centre provides counselling and assistance for all residents of Krychau Region (Krychau, Klimavichi, Kastsyukovich, Mscislau, Cherykau). The "Krychau Human Rights Defence Bulletin" is published on the basis of the Centre.

2. Activity of the Regional Information Centre (Service).

A divaricate information network has been established. The purpose of the network is to collect and disseminate information about the political, economic, civic, and social life in the region (Krychau, Klimavichi, Kastsyukovich, Mscislau, Cherykau). A monthly periodical "Our Thought" ("Nasha Dumka") is published by the Centre.

3. Activity of the Social Laboratory "Pozirk."

This project includes monthly public opinion polls of the residents of several eastern Belarusian regions. Poll results are published in leading Belarusian media outlets.

4. Activity of the Regional Resource Centre for NGOs.

This project includes granting assistance to regional initiatives as well as conducting various youth, publishing and cultural projects. A youth oriented bulletin "Youth Courier" ("Maladziozhny kuryer") is published by the Centre.

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HARODNYA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS "COUNCIL-23"

The Harodnya Regional Council of Youth Organisations "Council — 23" is an apolitical, voluntary and independent association of social youth organisations in Harodnya region (oblast). The Council was registered in December 1996.

■ Goals:

- Increasing the effectiveness of activity conducted by social youth organisations through co-ordinating their work;
- Strengthening the role of young people in the process of establishing a civic community.

■ Activity:

- co-ordinating the work of association members in the region, the country and on an international scale in order to achieve common goals;
- representing the interests of local youth organisations in national and international forums;
- representing and protecting the interests of local youth organisations in state administrative bodies;
- educating leaders and members of social youth organisations;
- developing and sponsoring projects aimed at the realisation of statutory aims;
- collecting, maintaining and exchanging information;
- granting assistance in establishing and registering new social youth organisations in the Harodnya region.

■ Methods:

- Establishing an information centre;

- Establishing consulting centres with the aim of assisting social youth organisations in the Harodnya region to solve local problems;
- Granting legal, methodological, organisational and technical assistance to initiative groups while establishing and registering social youth organisations in the Harodnya Region;
- Conducting research programs, analysing the problems of organisations and activity of local social youth organisations in the Harodnya Region;
- Organising and participating in conferences, seminars, roundtables, educational courses and other similar activities;
- Preparing and conducting the "project fairs" for local social youth organisations in the Harodnya Region;
- Presenting organisational technologies to local social youth organisations in the Harodnya region;
- Co-operating with state and independent mass media, establishing informational bodies, conducting publishing activity.

In January 1997 Council — 23 conducted the educational seminar "Registration of Social Organisations and Document Preparation" in co-operation with the "VIT" association. As a result 5 new youth organisations in Harodnya Region were registered. Since February 1998 Council — 23 has been conducting a program aimed at supporting youth initiatives in Western Belarus.

THE SOCIAL ASSOCIATION OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES "USYASLAV CHARADZEY"

The Social Association of Cultural and Educational Initiatives "Usyaslav Charadzey" (SACEI "Usyaslav Charadzey") was founded in Navapolatsk on 2 April 1998.

- **Goals of activity:**
 - the spiritual and cultural revival in Polatsk Region;
 - increasing the use of the Belarusian language and establishing it as the official language of the Republic of Belarus;
 - development of traditional handicrafts;
 - preservation and development of the ethnic, cultural and natural potential of the Belarusian lands and people.

Among the most interesting and important activities conducted within the community in the recent past were concerts of Belarusian minstrels, the celebration of the traditional archaic holiday "Kupalle," conducting studies at National University and establishing a new organisation, the "Philomateurs' Society" (Tavarystva Filamatau), etc.

SACEI "Usyaslav Charadzey" operates as a regional resource centre and provides technical, infor-

mational and methodological support to democratic and non-governmental organisations in the region. Moreover, most members of the association have considerable experience in developing and conducting various environmental programs and projects, due to the fact that they comprise the founding members of the ecological movement in Navapolatsk in the mid-1980s, which opposed industrial enterprises polluting the environment in the town and region.

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YASEP DRAZDOVICH EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

The Yasep Drazdovich Educational Centre is a non-governmental non-profit organisation engaged in arts related issues in Sharkaushchiny region of Vitsebsk 'oblast'.

Activity:

- conducting seminars, devoted to Yasep Drazdovich and Michas Raychonak;
- conducting exhibitions in Minsk, Polatsk, Vitsebsk, Braslau and other towns;
- organising a contest of children's drawings "Following Yasep Drazdovich";
- youth festival of regional studies, field trips;
- presentations of books, meetings with authors;
- preparing a film "The Soul Is Grieving Over Its People," devoted to the memory of Michas Raychonak;
- editing the newspaper "Batskaushchina";
- participating in the political life of Belarus.

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VITSEBSK YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION "EKAVITA"

Main activity:

1. **Education.** EKAVITA activists deliver lectures on environmental ethics and American environmentalism both for senior pupils and students. We designed special software (environmental training programs), which is now used in schools. We co-operate closely with secondary schools No. 1, 6, 34, 37, 40 in Vitsebsk, No. 1 in Lepiel, No. 6 in Navapolatsk, No. 3 in Salihorsk, ecological gymnasium No. 3 in Baranavichi, the ecological lyceum in Domzharychi and others.

2. **Research.** EKAVITA activists publish articles and abstracts in scholarly journals on environmental issues concerning the Belarusian Lake District.

3. **Information and Publishing.** EKAVITA members search, analyse and distribute environmental information originally placed on web sites by both Belarusian and other environmental organisations ("EkaSupraciu" ["EcoResistance"], "Khraniteli Radugi" ["Rainbow Keepers"], "Green Peace," EPA, etc.). Members also publish articles in the local press. ECAVITA is constructing its own web-site on the Internet.

4. **Politics.** The vast majority of members are also members of the Belarusian Popular Front, the Belarusian Democratic Hramada and other democratic parties and NGOs. Some EKAVITA activists participated in election campaigns as candidates and as observers.

The leader of the organisation and program director is Uladzimir Slabin.

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THE F. KMITA REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

The F. Kmita Regional Centre for the Support and Development of Democratic Reforms was established in Orsha in March 1997 by representatives of four Orsha-based democratic social associations.

The basic objective of the association is to support democratic reforms in Orsha region through strengthening the sector of social organisations and independent mass media.

Since its establishment, the F. Kmita Centre has assisted in establishing several NGOs in the region. These associations have already demonstrated an ability to work effectively. Since the summer of 1997, the F. Kmita Centre has published the municipal newspaper "Kutseyina."

Due to support provided by the Centre since 1997, the following newspapers were established: "Belarusian Collector" (Orsha), "RShA" (Orsha), "Stsyana" (Vitsebsk), "Zolak" (Kochanova), "Recha lukomli" (Navalukomi) as well as "Youth Step," the newspaper of youth associations in Vitsebsk Region.

The Centre holds educational courses, seminars, and lectures. In addition, it functions as a regional resource centre for regional NGOs.

The F. Kmita Centre hosted the Assembly of NGOs in the city of Orsha on July 2, 1998. In accordance with the decision of the Assembly, 11 NGOs were charged with supporting informational con-

tacts on behalf of the Assembly and the F. Kmita Centre.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

The Mahylou Social Association "Circle of Friends" ("Kola siabrou") was established in August 1994 on principles of democracy, openness, friendship, Belarusian sovereignty and values common to all mankind. Members support private and social initiatives, both independently and through partnerships. The objective of the Association is to establish a prosperous community in its environment and in society.

The association conducts activity in different spheres — information, youth, cultural, and humanitarian. The Women's Support and Self-Education Centre developed into an independent organisation. Circle of Friends maintains a library and hosts an Internet-club. The association was one of the founders of the Belarusian Association of Resource Centres (BARC).

Since its establishment, Circle of Friends has been actively co-operating with the Charitable Children's Foundation "Praposhask." During this period over 600 children from Mahylou Region were able to participate in a rejuvenation holiday abroad. Circle of Friends assists in providing channels for humanitarian aid (especially for the population of Slauharad District, hospitals, and homeless-shelters in the region).

Circle of Friends has succeeded in establishing a unified information network in Mahylou Region, which includes regional information centres. They collect and disseminate information concerning local events and primarily the activities of local civic organisations. Moreover, such information centres attract other local initiatives to co-operate and assist in their successful development. A series of joint projects has been conducted for leaders and activists of local organisations. As a result, members of the organisations obtained practical skills involving the use of computers, editing programs, e-mail and the Internet.

The Youth Centre "Ratusha" (on the basis of Circle of Friends) co-ordinates various youth initiatives. Eight regional youth organisations are part of the Centre. The Centre supported over 15 youth projects in 2000.

The cultural initiative of Circle of Friends involves conducting exhibitions, concerts, meetings with famous writers and assistance in promoting creative ideas.

The Women's Support and Self-Education Centre is very active. Young ladies and women can receive an education at the Individual Success School. Children can spend their free time at the Children's Recreation Centre. The Centre has established a library for women and conducts roundtable discussions.

Circle of Friends publishes a monthly bulletin "Nota Bene," which covers the activity of the civic organisations of Mahylou Region. Circle of Friends is one of the founders of the "Mahylou Weekly" newspaper, which informs people about life in Mahylou. The paper is distributed in all regional districts.

The Internet Club "Sadruzhnast" is a new direction in the Circle's activity, which was launched in 2000. The aim of this project is to inform citizens about Mahylou regional organisations, their activity and achievements. It has created an Internet-site (<http://krug.hypermart.net>), which includes analytical reviews, information from the "Mahylou Weekly" newspaper and the "Nota Bene" bulletin. This site provides information about 40 social associations and non-formal initiatives in the region. The forum allows visitors to discuss any problem.

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HALSHANSKI ZAMAK CLUB

The Halshanski Zamak (Halshany Castle) Club was founded in June 1999. The organisation's activity is concentrated on various population groups within a single locality — Halshany village (Ashmyany region, Harodnya oblast). Selected achievements and projects of the organisation are presented below:

- seminar "Experience in Patriotic Upbringing in Village Schools" (1997);
- training seminar "Leadership Problems in Youth Groups" (1997);
- fair dedicated to the 380th anniversary of the Catholic church and monastery in Halshany (1998);
- publishing the bulletin "Halshanski Zamak."

The Club co-operates with the K. Narbut Belarusian Society of Regional Studies and the organisation "Belarusian Perspective" ("Bielaruskaya perspektiva").

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HOMEL MUNICIPAL YOUTH CENTRE "HART"

The Homel Municipal Youth Centre "Hart" was founded in 1997, was registered in July 1998 and re-registered in October 1999. The basic objective of

the organisation is to raise the level of social activity among Homel youth by seeking out and supporting youth initiatives, organisations and establishing an independent youth-based media network.

Activity:

■ Supporting youth organisations

The Centre operates as a resource centre for youth organisations and initiatives. Several Homel youth associations use the Centre's facilities and office equipment, including the Organisation of Regional Studies "Talaka," Young Social Democrats, Journalist Club "Roskvit," "Roznyia-rovnyia," Amnesty International and others.

■ Developing a network of youth publications in the Homel region

"Hart" is participating in the development of an independent youth-based media network in the region as one of the fundamental components of a civic community. Such newspapers as "Ratusha," "Underground," and "Roskvit" were established with help provided by the Centre. The Journalist Club "Roskvit" works on the basis of the Centre.

■ Civil Education of Young People

In order to develop the youth movement, the "Hart" Centre operates the "Young Leader's School," where young people learn how to work effectively in social associations. The first students graduated in June 2000.

■ Political and Civic Education of Young People in the Homel region

The Centre conducted the following activities between August and December 1999 (within the project "Youth and Elections" and with support provided by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands):

- cycle of lectures in political science, economics, history, politics, etc. for the youth from Homel and Homel region;
- cycle of seminars with representatives of Ukrainian youth NGOs aimed at acquainting Belarusian activists with the broad spectrum of questions concerning democratic elections.

■ Development of the Youth Movement in Homel region

The "Hart" Centre organises field trips to different locations in Homel Region (oblast) for the purpose of finding the most active young people in order to educate them and establish regional youth NGOs.

■ Cultural education

In order to establish Belarusian national culture in youth circles "Hart" conducts the following activity:

- meetings with famous Belarusian writers and minstrels;
- contests of creative works in Belarusian history and culture among students in secondary schools, lyceums, colleges;

- field trips to cultural celebrations (Knights' Tournament in Rechytsa, Minstrels' Festival in Slavuchichi, etc.).

■ Information bulletin "Hart-inform"

The bulletin provides monthly information about the activity of "Hart" and other non-governmental associations in Homel region.

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HOMEL REGIONAL SOCIAL ASSOCIATION WOMEN'S "INITIATIVE"

The Homel Regional Social Association Women's "Initiative" was established in July 1998 as part of the Belarusian League of Women — Electors. After the League was disbanded, the association re-organised into the social association "Initiative" and was registered in September 1999.

Representatives from 9 districts of Homel region are members of the association.

The goal of the Homel Regional Social Association Women's "Initiative" is to unite the efforts of women to participate in social, economic, and cultural democratic reforms.

■ The tasks of the organisation are:

- to increase the participation of women from Homel region in the public movement for their rights;
- to develop initiatives aimed at improving the social status of women.

The association has conducted several activities in conjunction with social organisations. In particular, a campaign was organised to monitor the problems associated with the government's failure to realise its program on the social and legal protection of disabled people, roundtables were organised in order to discuss common problems and define a policy of joint activities for social organisations and their co-operation with state structures.

One of the main areas of the association's activity is education and specifically leadership training for women (participating in joint programs with the National Women's Educational and Consulting Centre, the Women's Non-State Institute "Envila" and the Belarusian Association of Women Lawyers).

■ The association is engaged in:

- unifying women's efforts for participating in democratic reforms;
- developing women's initiatives aimed at improving their social status;

- granting psychological and legal assistance to members of the organisation, protecting their interests;
- contributing to women's cultural and spiritual development, improving their educational and professional skills.

■ The association plans:

- to conduct educational seminars for women aimed at developing leadership skills
- to hold round tables, meetings, conferences, presentations
- to publish a quarterly bulletin for women that reflects the problems and perspectives of women's non-governmental associations
- to establish contacts with other women's organisations in Belarus and abroad
- to participate in activities for women, conducted by other social organisations, foundations, and associations

■ The association hopes for:

- broadening and strengthening the organisation through adding new members
- support for association activity by partners and sponsors
- attention to our problems and needs, assistance in achieving established goals
- co-operation with everyone whose activity is aimed at the consolidation of democratic circles in Belarus.

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YOUTH CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTRE "YARAVIT"

The Youth Cultural and Educational Centre "Yaravit" was founded in the autumn of 1996 and registered in April 1997.

■ Main objectives:

- to use and develop the intellectual potential of different youth for the purpose of self-fulfilment, thereby strengthening the Belarusian nation and state to become an important mover and shaker in international life;
- to increase experience and promote the ethnical and cultural heritage of Belarus;
- to develop and strengthen the usage of the Belarusian language and Belarusian intellectual circles;
- to study the social, cultural, environmental, demographic and other aspects of modern life as factors of determining the existence of the Belarusian nation.

■ Methods:

- organising and conducting scientific, cultural, artistic and other campaigns and activities (e.g., conferences, presentations, exhibitions, expeditions);
- distributing books, magazines, advertising and informational materials, periodicals and other printed information;
- providing access for interested organisations (libraries, archives, mass media, etc.) to information, printed materials, audio-video-photo materials on the Centre's conditions;
- conducting cultural exchange programs through organising exhibitions, concerts, meetings with professionals in the fields of culture and science.

■ Achievements:

- Since August 1996, more than 2000 books and magazines and over 200 Belarusian tapes were distributed in Homel and Homel region through the Centre's activity.
- April 1997 — a seminar with IDEE representatives in Homel.
- September 1997 — the Regional Forum of Youth Non-Governmental Organisations.
- January 1998 — literary and musical presentation by "EuroForum" and "Nasha Niva."
- Spring — summer 1998 — the international conference project "Belarus — Ukraine: Historical Ways and Perspectives. Youth Outlook, and publishing a collection of materials.
- May 1999 — "ARCHE" presentation; organising a concert of the Belarusian bands "Novaye Nieba" and "Ulis" (in conjunction with the Belarusian Students' Association in Homel).
- November 1999 — scientific conference "The Tradition of Belarusian Sovereignty. Lessons from the Past and Ways to the Future"; subsequent publication of a scientific book.
- Winter 2000 — the project "Educating Village Schoolchildren."
- March 2000 — the jubilee presentation of the Belarusian Historical Survey with the editor-in-chief H. Sahanovič at the History Department of F. Skaryna Homel State University.

Since the autumn of 1996, more than 40 people have become actively involved in social activity (including those joining other organisations through the Centre's activity). Several initiatives were supported. Since 1997, 15 seminars have been conducted. More than 20 people have received a thorough education through participating in large educational projects. Educational activities are conducted on a regular basis among students, teachers, businessmen and workers.

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LOYEV SOCIAL ASSOCIATION "KARANI"

The Loyev Social Association for the Preservation of the Environment and Cultural and Historical Heritage "Roots" ("Karani") is a district-wide non-governmental, non-profit association, registered on 6 March 1996 and re-registered on 29 October 1999.

The social association "Roots" consists of 14 members and 34 regular volunteers. Among them are teachers and engineers of Loyev schools, vocational schools and businesses. The director of the organisation is Mikalay Anisavets.

Objectives and goals:

Searching for effective ways and means of preserving the environment as well as the cultural and historical heritage; monitoring the environment; invigorating people; developing in people a solicitous attitude towards nature, cultural and historical heritage.

■ Methods of activity:

- seeking and implementing private initiatives; initiating and conducting programs and projects aimed at achieving the aims of "Roots";
- granting financial, consulting, informational and other assistance to organisations and private persons;
- conducting humanitarian, charitable, industrial and economic activity aimed at realising statutory objectives and goals;
- interacting with the mass media, publishing and distributing printed and other materials;
- organising and conducting meetings, seminars, conferences, lectures, exhibitions, public opinion polls, debating clubs;
- co-operating with educational establishments, enterprises and state structures in solving environmental problems and preserving cultural and historical heritage.

Activities:

"Roots" conducts activity based on various programs developed by the association's governing bodies. Several seminars have been conducted within the "Ecology" program, in which specialists from environmental laboratories participated. The seminars were devoted to the problems of monitoring the environment, environmentally appropriate technologies for cultivating potatoes on private land. Due to a "Roots" initiative, the Loyev District Executive Committee adopted and conducted the Comprehensive Program of Preserving the Environment in the Loyev

area during 1996 — 2000. A system of gathering environmental information was established.

The program "Preserving Cultural and Historical Heritage" included a number of seminars devoted to legal, political and economic topics. The members of the association have also conducted research connected with evaluating and preserving local historical and cultural memorials. The reference book "Monuments and Memorials in the Loyev Area" was published as a result of this work. Members have also compiled and published a poetry collection of local poets entitled "Songs along the Dniepr" ("Piesni nad Dniaprom"). The monthly informational bulletin "Roots" ("Karani") has been published since March 1999.

"Roots" is currently preparing a musical folklore festival "Our Heritage" (Nasha Spadchina) and a collection of "Studies in Loyev Area History" ("Narysy historyi Loyevshchiny"). The association also conducts activities connected with defending human rights.

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THE VITSEBSK CENTRE OF YOUTH INITIATIVES "KONTUR"

The Vitsebsk Centre of Youth Initiatives "Kontur" is a social association of the youth in Vitsebsk region. The Centre was established in 1998 as a result of the activities of several activists from youth non-governmental organisations in Vitsebsk region. Democracy, freedom of speech, national culture and the history of Belarus are considered the most important values of "Kontur." The Centre unites the most committed youth in the local area.

The Centre of youth initiatives comprises representatives of various youth organisations and groups. The main criterion for selecting new members is their professionalism and commitment. "Kontur" members are specialists and professionals in their respective fields.

The mission of the Centre of Youth Initiatives "Kontur" is to support youth initiatives in Vitsebsk region, assist in the development of national culture and education for the purpose of establishing democracy and a civic community in Belarus.

■ Tasks:

- information exchange;
- educating young journalists;
- organisational and counselling assistance to youth NGOs in Vitsebsk and Vitsebsk region;
- stimulating and granting assistance in registering new NGOs;
- co-ordinating NGO activities;
- training leaders and activists.

Activity:

Since May 1998, "Kontur" has issued "Sciana," a public and political newspaper for young people and rendered qualified technical and counselling assistance to NGOs in their journalistic and publishing activities. CYI "Kontur" held several lectures devoted to political science in the summer of 1998 and organised study course devoted to basic economics as well as the Belarusian language and history in the autumn of 1998. With the support of the Centre several concerts by leading Belarusian rock groups were held in Vitsebsk in January 1999. During 1999, "Kontur" held a number of seminars for leaders and activists of youth NGOs in Vitsebsk and Vitsebsk region devoted to the following topics: leadership, management in social organisations, publishing activity, fundraising and organising summer camps. The independent regional information agency "Kontur-Info" was founded in December 1998 with the assistance of the Centre.

Members of the Centre are continually seeking and developing new directions of activity.

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CENTRE FOR THE SUPPORT OF PUBLIC INITIATIVES "KRYVICH"

The Centre for the Support of Public initiatives "Kryvich" was established in August 1999.

Tasks:

- Information exchange between independent public organisations.
- Informing the public about political processes in the region, Belarus and abroad.
- Assisting (organisational, methodical, technical and consulting) NGOs in Orsha and Orsha region.
- Promoting and assisting in the establishment and registration of new NGOs.
- Co-ordinating NGO activity.
- Training NGO leaders.
- Supporting and developing independent media.

Basic activity:

Informational, educational, consulting and publishing work with NGOs of Orsha and Orsha region. Seeking, processing and distributing information among the population and NGOs concerning public affairs in Belarus and abroad. Training leaders and members of NGOs. Assisting public organisations in the registration process and in publishing bulletins, newspapers and magazines.

- Since August 1999 "Kryvich" has rendered technical and consulting assistance to the following organisations:

- Kohanava Youth Association «Kram»;
- Orsha City Club of Taxpayers;
- Orsha Association of Belarusian Students;
- Orsha Youth Organisation for Women «Roskvit»;
- Union of Women in Baran;
- Orsha branch of the Belarusian Language Society;
- Orsha branch of the Association of Belarusian Schools;
- Orsha branch of the All Belarusian Voters' Club;
- Orsha branch of "Youth Social-Christian Union";
- Baran Local Historical Club.

- The following literature is published with the support of "Kryvich":

- "Demarsh", published by the Council of Democratic Forces of Orsha;
- "Orsha-Info", published by the Council of Democratic Forces of Orsha;
- "Z'viaz", published by Orsha organisation "Z'viaz";
- "Youth Step," published by «Kryvich» Centre;
- "Zalik," published by the Orsha branch of the Association of Belarusian Students;
- "Zolak," published by the Kohanava regional organisation of youth «Kram»;
- "Taxpayer," published by Orsha Club of Taxpayers;
- "Words for Women," published by the Orsha branch of the Belarusian League of Women.

- The "Kryvich" Centre has participated in organising the following seminars:

- "Communication in Organisations";
- "Leadership and Management";
- "Journalistic Skills, Genres of Journalism, Types of Journalism";
- "Working in Groups, Psychological Aspects of Journalism".

- Future plans of the "Kryvich" Centre include:

- Sociological research involving the local population;
- Regular «Oxford» debate concerning the most urgent problems for youth;
- Intellectual competitions in educational institutions.

THE YOUTH SOCIAL ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGIONAL STUDIES "NIERUSH-CENTRE"

The Youth Social Association of Environmental and Regional Studies "Nierush-Centre" was established in November 1996.

The main goals of the association include:

- Collecting information about the environment;
- Conducting environmental, historical, social, and political research;
- Disseminating ecological information as well as establishing an Environmental Library;
- Organising lectures, seminars, training courses, summer camps and exhibitions;
- Publishing ecological ("Nierush") and historical ("Altanka") information bulletins.

The activity of the "Nierush-Centre" is involves conducting environmental, social and historical programs, which are supported by other social organisations (the Regional Development Agency "Varuta," the Lutskevich Brothers' Foundation in Baranavichi, the Centre for Social Initiatives "Viezha" in Berastsye as well as the International Association of Humanitarian Co-operation in Minsk), educational establishments and individuals who are interested in the environment, its condition as well as the nature of Man and Society.

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THE OTAN HEDEMAN BRASLAV SOCIETY OF REGIONAL STUDIES

The Braslav Otan Hedeman Society of Regional Studies (BSRS) is a regional social organisation established in 1989 on the basis of the Braslav Museum of Historical and Regional Studies (since 1998 — the Association of Museums in Braslav). In 1998 the Society was named after Otan Hedeman. Otan Hedeman (1887 — 1937) was an outstanding scientist in local history and folklore, the author of several treatises in the history of the Braslav area and one of the founders of Regional Studies Organisation in Braslav, which existed between World War I and World War II.

Members of the Society are museum workers, teachers, and scientists, who study the history of the Braslav area.

The basic objectives of BSRS are to conduct and assist in conducting thorough and impartial historical research of Braslav region, to promote historical heritage and to co-ordinate the students' movement in regard to regional studies.

- Areas of BSRS activity:

- Scientific conferences on regional studies;
- Publishing activity;
- Methodological assistance for teachers and students;
- Field trips;

- Archaeological excavations.
- Main achievements:
 - Participating in the organisation of scientific conferences on regional studies "Braslau Readings" (Braslauskiya Chytani — 1989, 1991, 1994, 1997). Publishing a collection of articles from the conferences.
 - Publishing 14 newsletters and brochures devoted to regional studies, including "The Braslau Lakes" (Braslauskiya aziory — 1989), "Castle Hill in Braslau" (Zamkavaya hara u Braslave — 1994) and the teachers' manual "Our Land — Braslau Area" (Nash kray — Braslaushchina — 1993).
 - Participating in preparation of the historical chronicles of Braslau District "Memory" (Pamiat' — 1998).
 - Publishing 3 issues of the historical periodical "Braslau Notebooks" (Braslauskiya Sshytki" — 1996, 1997, 1999).
 - Organising a humanitarian summer camp "Ratsyunki" (1999).
- The Braslau Society of Regional Studies
 - would like to co-operate with everyone interested in historical research and the region's past
 - would like to establish contacts with organisations that have similar interests
 - provides historical information about the Braslau area
 - grants assistance in arranging field trips around the region

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PAKHODNYA

The Harodnya Municipal Historical and Cultural Social Association "Pakhodnya" was the first social organisation in Harodnya region. Its basic objective is to unite people devoted to their Motherland.

Activity:

- participating in preparing the Vitsebsk region against floods and Palessye from melioration;
- advocating the removal of missile troops from Belarus;
- restoring the traditions of Kupalle, Kalady, Dzyady in Harodnya;
- establishing boy scout troops;
- establishing the church choir;
- taking part in saving architectural monuments, conducting archaeological excavations, cleaning Harodnya's graveyards and the F. Bahushevich House in Kushlany, assisting in

- erecting several monuments in the Harodnya region;
- participating the ecological movement.

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THE STUDENT SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION "PALADA"

The Student Scientific Association "Palada" (SSA "Palada") was established by students from the Baranavichy branch of the Belarusian Law Institute, for the purpose of educating students in the fields of Law and Economics, conducting independent scientific research as well as motivating students to learn new things, analyse what they had learned and draw conclusions and to check and — if necessary — to contradict the acquired information. The society began its activity in September 1999 as a non-governmental, non-profit and apolitical organisation.

The basic fields of SSA's activity include:

1. Debate club
 - discussing urgent problems
 - reading reports
 - conducting excursions and field trips
 - issuing a newsletter
2. Laboratory for social research
 - preparing and conducting public opinion polls and social research, analysing and publishing results
 - developing scientific programs with a social and economical character
 - preparing and publishing scientific articles
 - participating in scientific conferences and seminars

The society has established contacts with the Youth Centre for Human Rights (Pinsk), the Baranavichy branch of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, the Regional Development Agency "Varuta" and others.

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THE HARODNYA REGIONAL SOCIAL ASSOCIATION "RATUSHA"

The Harodnya Regional Social Association "Ratusha" was established in May 1996 by 15 prominent figures from the fields of culture, education, science, politics, journalism, and business. The association is a non-profit, independent, non-governmental organisation.

The mission of "Ratusha" is to assist in the establishment of a civil society in Belarus through supporting social initiatives.

■ **Goals:**

- Simulating the process of establishing new public initiatives
- Strengthening the network of already existing non-governmental organisations
- Developing humanitarian education, culture, independent mass media, international relations and co-operation

■ **Tasks:**

- to co-ordinate, support, and promote the activity of social organisations in the region;
- to instil professionalism in NGO activity;
- to maintain dialogue among various social groups, and among Belarus and other countries;
- to promote the development of culture as well as national and historical consciousness;
- to support independent regional and local periodicals;
- to defend human rights and freedom.

■ **Achievements:**

- Providing services to 76 non-governmental organisations in the region;
- Establishing the Co-ordinating Committee "Initiative of Harodnya" (Haradzenskaya Initsyatyva) — an association of 32 democratic parties, social organisations and trade unions in Harodnya;
- Hosting two Assemblies of Democratic Non-Governmental Organisations of the Harodnya region (oblast);
- Initiating human rights defence in the Harodnya region (oblast);
- Supporting 32 regional independent periodicals in Western Belarus;
- Providing free Internet access to third sector activists.

Structure of "Ratusha"

■ **Public Initiatives Support Centre**

- Informational, technical, fundraising, and legal service for non-governmental organisations and independent newspapers in the region, searching for partners;
- Conducting training courses and seminars for third sector activists;
- Conducting social polls;
- Sponsoring children and youth contests and festivals;
- Hosting scientific conferences.

■ **Regional Human Rights Defence Centre**

- Managing the Regional Human Rights Defence Chamber;
- Publishing a monthly bulletin "I Have a Right" (Mayu prava);

- Monitoring human rights in prisons, the rights of journalists and minority groups;
- Human Rights School.

■ **Publishing Centre**

- Publishing fiction as well as literature on law and regional studies;
- Technical and financial support of local and regional independent newspapers.

■ **Internet Club**

- Teaching activists from social organisations how to use the World Wide Web and how to create Web-pages;
- Internet access for non-governmental organisations;
- Computer School.

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THE CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL "REGIONAL BELARUS"

The Co-ordinating Council "Regional Belarus" was founded in May 2000. The basic goal of the council is to co-ordinate the activity of democratic regional NGOs.

Activity:

- analysing and developing common approaches to reacting to events in Belarus;
- co-ordinating the activities of regional political and social associations in regard to elections.

The Chairman is Syamyon Domash.

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LIDA LITERARY ASSOCIATION "RUN"

"Run" is a creative association of literati of Lida and the region. The association was established on the basis of the educational cultural group with the same name, which was founded in 1998. The basic objective of the newly established literary association is to publish a regional literary and artistic magazine. The first issue of the magazine, titled "From the Walls of Lida" ("Ad Lidskikh murou"), appeared in the summer of 2000. In November 2000 the magazine was officially registered in the Belarusian Press Committee as a literary, artistic and cultural journal. The association receives support for its publishing activity from the Harodnya Oblast Social Association

"Ratusha" and the Information and Education Centre "Heneratsiya."

The association has more than forty members and is registered with the National Social Association "Supolnast."

In addition to the association's publishing activity, members of the association conduct various cultural, educational, literary and artistic activities, hold meetings with writers and poets in schools and enterprises, give lectures and conduct excursions to places of historical and literary interest in Belarus (in conjunction with the Sport and Tourism Centre "Vitaut" and the local branch of the F. Skaryna Belarusian Language Society).

"Ad Lidzkich murou" journal:
<http://www.angelfire.com/jazz/lavrech>

THE VITSEBSK BRANCH OF THE SOCIAL ASSOCIATION "THE LEV SAPIEHA FOUNDATION"

The Vitsebsk Branch of the Social Association "The Lev Sapieha Foundation" (VBSA "The Lev Sapieha Foundation") was founded in December 1993.

VBSA "The Lev Sapieha Foundation" is a regional branch of the Lev Sapieha Foundation. The governing body is the Regional Council is comprised of 9 people. The Chairman is Christafor Zhelapau.

The goals of the Lev Sapieha Foundation are:

- Assisting in the reform of local self-government
- Developing civic community structures
- Promoting democracy

VBSA "The Lev Sapieha Foundation" works in the following areas:

■ Local Self-Government

Deputies of local councils, officials and active politicians study the systems of local self-government in European countries at seminars, participate in joint projects with partners from Sweden, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Ukraine. The organisation has also started implementing the development program for bodies of local self-government.

■ Development of Non-Governmental Organisations

VBSA "The Lev Sapieha Foundation" is a resource centre for the Regional Assembly of Democratic Non-Governmental Organisations. More than 120 NGOs receive information, counselling and technical assistance. NGO leaders participate in training sessions in management, fundraising, and leadership.

■ Information

An Internet Club for NGOs has been established.

VBSA "The Lev Sapieha Foundation" published 3 bulletins "NGO Herald" (Viesnik NDA), "Vitsebsk Union" (Vitsebski zviaz), "Free Word" (Svobodnaye slova).

VBSA "The Lev Sapieha Foundation" supports, through technical assistance, the publication of 26 non-governmental organisations' bulletins.

Dozens of distributors receive free informational materials from Vitsebsk NGOs for distribution to towns and villages in Vitsebsk region.

■ Support for Democratic Structures

The Co-ordinating Council of Democratic Organisations in Vitsebsk realises its activity on the basis of VBSA "The Lev Sapieha Foundation."

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RECHYTSA MUNICIPAL SOCIAL ASSOCIATION "SLAVUTSICH"

The Rechytsa Municipal Social Association "Slavutsich" was founded in May 1998. Among the organisation's achievements are:

- organising three rallies in Rechytsa (environmental, 14th Anniversary of the Chernobyl Tragedy, March for Freedom on October 8);
- organising free legal counselling for the residents of Rechytsa region;
- conducting activities for disabled children and other social groups;
- election monitoring;

The organisation co-operates actively with other social organisations in Homel region (the Homel Regional Social Association "Public Initiatives" and its branch in Rechytsa, as well as Rechytsa branches of the Belarusian Organisation of Working Women and the Belarusian Popular Front "Revival").

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SMARHON SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Smarhon Society for Human Rights (SSHR) is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, founded in 1996.

The society's interests are focused on teaching, promoting and protecting human rights within 33 primary and secondary schools and in the curriculum as well. The goal of the society is to promote and co-ordinate human rights education in the youth sector.

- The major guiding principles of SSHR's education policy are as follows:
 - the international dimension and global perspectives in education in all its forms;
 - understanding and respect for all nations, their cultures and values, way of life;
 - ability to communicate with others;
 - understanding for International solidarity and co-operation;
 - readiness to participate in solving community, country and global problems.
- Major activities:
 - Conducting annual competitions among 10000 students in drawings, posters and essays in the field of human rights (in conjunction with UNICEF).
 - Seminar for teachers, social workers on teaching and protecting children's rights (in conjunction with the "Human Rights in the Curriculum" UK).
 - Workshop for youth leaders in human rights education, social activities, campaigns, using participatory and interactive methodology.
 - Roundtable discussion for local officials and teachers on human rights issues (in conjunction with OSCE mission in Belarus).
 - Relevant youth-oriented materials on human rights, issues of justice, local and global co-operation and solidarity with NGOs from all over the world.
- Recent events organised by SSHR:
 - One year experiment in human rights education, democratic values, and International Humanitarian Law (in conjunction with the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Belarus);
 - Radio and TV broadcast concerning education in human rights;
 - Roundtable discussion on the protection of human and children's rights (in conjunction with local police officers);
 - Manual for social workers and teachers in human rights education, pedagogical innovations, and new methodologies.
 - International project connecting students and youth leaders from Smarhon region with students from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in order to establish a community for human rights.
 - Organising exhibitions, peer education in human rights issues, Human Rights Day, concerts, quizzes about children and human rights.

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BABRUYSK SOCIAL ASSOCIATION "OWN BUSINESS"

The Babruysk social association "Own Business" ("Svaya sprava") is a non-governmental social organisation founded in January 2000. The activity of the association is concentrated on educational problems and disseminating information among various social groups (mostly youth, handicapped, and members of other social organisations).

Activity is realised through:

- publishing the bulletin "My Town" ("Moy horad") and supplements for the newspapers "Worker" ("Rabochy") and "Worker of Babruysk" ("Rabochy Babruyska");
- conducting the educational project "My Belarus — Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow";
- education activity conducted interactively;
- organising a youth summer camp (in conjunction with the young social democrats of Babruysk);
- technical and informational assistance for local social organisations.

The organisation actively co-operates with other social associations both in the region and on the national level.

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CREATIVE ASSOCIATION "SVYATLITSA"

The Social Organisation "Creative Association Svyatlitsa" (SOCA "Svyatlitsa") is a non-governmental organisation associating creative people from Baranavichy. It was founded in August 1996, registered in February 1997 and re-registered in November 1999.

The organisation provides all possible assistance to artists in order to help them in developing their creative potential as well as assists in the development of culture and art and popularises them among people.

- The goals of the organisation include:
 - bringing together the people of the arts in order to assist them in developing their creative potential as well as organising their spare time activities according to their interests;
 - cultural and educational activities directed to children, youth and adults for the purpose of developing a taste for art and all-human values.
- Activity:
 - Holding weekly creative discussions with "Svyatlitsa" members;

- Regular appearance of "Svyatlitsa" members at educational and cultural establishments, concerts, festivals, competitions as well as on local radio and TV;
- Publishing literary works and articles about culture and art in newspapers and magazines;
- Exhibitions of works by local artists;
- Providing artists with informational and organisational assistance;
- Participating in seminars for non-governmental organisations;
- 1997 — publishing the first edition of the Baranavichy literary collection "Svyatlitsa";
- 1998 — publishing a volume of selected Belarusian 1980–1995 poetry, "Ahledziny," and distributing it in Belarusian libraries in all towns, as well as in schools of higher learning and vocational arts establishments;
- 2000 — publishing the second edition of the Baranovichy literary collection "Svyatlitsa" and the book of poetry "Razluki vyrayovya" by Ivan Lahvinovich.

■ Plans:

- Publishing further editions of the literary collection "Svyatlitsa";
- Publishing books by local poets and writers;
- Editing a local cultural newspaper;
- Organising exhibitions of works by local artists both in Belarus and abroad as well as exhibitions of works by foreign artists in Belarus;
- Publishing a catalogue of artists from Baranavichy;
- Producing souvenirs and publications that promote Belarusian culture, patriotism and democracy: souvenirs, posters, calendars, booklets, badges, etc.;
- Releasing audio tapes of local musicians, rock groups, folklore bands and minstrels;
- Establishing a music studio, organising music performances;
- Establishing a photo studio and a slide studio for the purpose of creating photo chronicles on the lives of artists and on different cultural events;
- Establishing an amateur drama company, organising theatre festivals and performance tours;
- Establishing a non-governmental independent cultural centre in Baranavichy; collecting and disseminating information on culture and art; conducting "round table" meetings and cultural events; rendering technical and informational counselling as well as legal assistance;
- Conducting the "Belarusian Style" project — production of clothes using elements of Belarusian national dress, ornaments and symbols, adapted to the modern fashion.

- Making films about the local art and cultural life, historical and national heritage; creating a video database and disseminating information contained in it;
- Conducting seminars entitled "People of Art and Society," "People of Art and the Arts";
- Co-operation with creative people and organisations, NGOs and foundations in Belarus and abroad, cultural exchange.

"Svyatlitsa" actively co-operates with other social organisations and takes an active part in the public movement.

The President of SOCA "Svyatlitsa" is Ales Bokach.

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HOMEL YOUTH SOCIAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL STUDIES "TALAKA"

The Homel Youth Social Association of Regional Studies "Talaka" was founded in April 1986 during the wave of democratic changes in the mid-1980s. The association was registered in 1994 and re-registered in 1998 and 1999.

■ The goals of activity are:

- studying, preserving, and promoting Belarusian national culture and history among youth;
- regional studies as one of the factors in the national Renaissance in Belarus and establishing a democratic society.

■ Tasks:

- collecting and systematising materials in regional studies and traditional culture of Homel region;
- developing educational programs and introducing them to the education system.

"Talaka" members include graduates, students from Homel and young teachers. At its weekly meetings members of the organisation study history, folklore and the ethnic heritage of the Belarusian people, learn folk songs, dances, and games, prepare theatre performances for ethnic and national holidays.

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HARODNYA SOCIAL ASSOCIATION OF LITHUANIANS "TEVINE"

The activity of the Harodnya Social Association of Lithuanians "Tevine" (Motherland) includes:

- establishing Lithuanian social associations and Lithuanian Sunday schools in Radun and Lida;
- organising and conducting celebrations and holidays, celebrating historical events from Belarusian, Lithuanian, and Polish history;
- filming historical and cultural monuments;
- conducting excursions for visitors to the town, region and 'oblast'.

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THE THIRD SECTOR CENTRE

The social association Informational Support Centre for Public Initiatives "The Third Sector" is a non-governmental, non-profit social organisation, which was established in February 1997 by a group of journalists and public figures from Harodnya. The association was registered in September 1997 and re-registered in September 1999.

The basic objective of the Centre is to assist in the creation of the necessary conditions for establishing a civic community and open society.

The activity of the organisation is concentrated in the following spheres: informational support for non-governmental social organisations and initiatives in the Harodnya region and educational activity in the field of journalism.

- Since its establishment, the Third Sector Centre has achieved the following results:
 - The Centre has published 20 issues of the informational bulletin for social organisations "The Third Sector." In 1999 the bulletin was transformed into a magazine. The magazine contains information about the activity of regional NGOs as well as the useful information for social organisations.
 - The Centre has participated in organising and conducting training seminars for public leaders in Berastsye, Harodnya, Pinsk, and Navahradak (1997), Minsk, Harodnya, Lida (1999), Babrujsk and Barysau (2000).
 - The Centre has participated in organising the Young Journalist School in Harodnya. The school has provided an education for more than 70 people in the past three years. YJS graduates are now working for all non-governmental newspapers in Harodnya.

- The Centre granted assistance in publishing the first issue of the Belarusian — Polish cultural revue "Apostrophes" ("Apostrafy"), 1997.

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THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY "VARUTA"

The Regional Development Agency "Varuta" is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, which operates in the region of Baranavichy. Its main goal is to assist in strengthening and developing democratic ideas as well as to establish a civic community in Belarus and particularly in the Baranavichy region.

The Regional Development Agency "Varuta" was founded in Baranavichy in 1998 and registered on 28 October 1999 as a local public organisation. Among the founders of the organisation are people who have vast experience in working for the third sector, education, journalism, science as well as business and politics.

- The activity of the organisation includes:
 - Supporting NGO activity in the Baranavichy region.

This part of activity consists in training NGO leaders and activists, providing legal assistance to active and newly established organisations and groups, providing informational and counselling support for these organisations and groups and developing a program of technical assistance for public initiatives.

- The Program of Co-operation with Mass Media.

Activity in this field includes training programs for journalists, providing assistance in searching for partners for the mass media as well as creating a wide network for the purpose of collecting information about the activity of the regional NGOs. "Varuta" develops joint projects with independent newspapers, which are directed at developing a civil society, studying historical heritage and propagating the eternal values of the region's inhabitants.

- Modern history researches in the Baranavichy region.

This part of the organisation's activity involves collecting information about the life of public activists, events in national life and the activity of national organisations in the Baranavichy region during the 20th century as well as publishing a series of brochures about the historical events and prominent individuals in the national movement in the Baranavichy region.

- Compiling a development plan for the Baranavichy region.

Activity in this area includes conducting scientific research in the fields of economics, politics and sociology as well as developing procedures aimed at the more effective economic development of the Baranavichy region and at developing the cultural and political systems.

- Co-ordinating the activity of NGOs, mass media and trade unions in the Baranavichy region.

This part of activity involves collecting information about the activity of NGOs, mass media and trade unions, their needs, plans and ideas. In addition, activity in this field includes: arranging regular meetings and round tables to discuss issues regarding expansion of activity, mutual aid, working out joint programs and programs of "cross-sector co-operation"; organising educational and counselling programs involving inter-organisational co-operation; assisting as mediator during negotiations.

- During last year the Regional Development Agency "Varuta":

- Held more than 14 training seminars for 238 activists from 42 organisations from the Baranavichy region;
- Arranged and held 116 consultations for 179 representatives from 140 organisations on the topics of NGO activity as well as inter-organisational and inter-sector co-operation;
- Held more than 23 meetings for activists engaged in public initiatives from the Baranavichy region with NGO representatives from other regions and countries of Central and Eastern Europe;
- Arranged 7 meetings between NGOs and representatives of foundations, which conduct programs in Belarus;
- Granted technical support to NGOs;
- In conjunction with other organisations, held 9 internships for NGO public leaders and educational establishments in Minsk, Kiev, Ivano-Frankivsk, Prague, and Warsaw.
- Began publishing the "Region" magazine — an informational and analytical publication for regional Belarusian NGOs;
- Organised and assisted in conducting a round table meeting of NGOs, trade unions and the mass media — a unique structure of inter-sector co-operation between pro-democratic organisations.

The Regional Development Agency "Varuta" actively co-operates with those who, in the future, want Belarus to become a highly developed European country — an economical, political and cultural centre of Eastern Europe. Partner organisations include NGOs from Belarus and Europe, educational establishments, mass media from the Baranavichy region and Belarus as well as other organisations.

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VITSEBSK YOUTH GROUP "VIERAS"

The Vitsebsk Youth Group «Vieras» was founded in 1999. The organisation's activity is primarily conducted in Vitsebsk, Belarus, where it attracts nationally conscious youth, promotes Belarusian culture and the development of a democratic society by actively working in several areas.

Cultural activity: through the efforts of members of the youth group 6 computer programs have been belarusified; a booklet of collected poems of young Vitsebsk poets has been published; programmers created a computer Belarusian-Russian and Russian-Belarusian dictionary and are working at its Internet-version; VYG «Vieras» was an informational sponsor of an important cultural event, the publication of the first video-collection of Belarusian feature and historical films;

Publishing activity: since the beginning of 2000 the organisation has been publishing "Vieras," a monthly public and political bulletin, which is distributed free of charge;

Educational activity: the seminar «A Look Into the Belarusian Past» for Vitsebsk is scheduled to be conducted in the near future and a newly-established discussion club, «Vieras,» is to soon launch activity;

Public and political activity: members of the organisation participate in the political activities of democratic organisations and parties; the youth group promotes Belarusian culture and the development of a democratic society by printing its own newspaper;

Informational activity: in addition to the newspaper (its electronic version can be found on the organisation's web-site), VYG «Vieras» maintains its own news e-mail-list.

VYG «Vieras» is a member of the Belarusian Assembly of Democratic Non-Governmental Organisations.

The Vitsebsk Youth Group «Vieras» assists in organising various activities in Vitsebsk and Navapolatsk, the principal aim of which is establishing democracy in the republic and developing Belarusian culture through:

- providing interpreters (Belarusian, Russian, English, Polish, German, Esperanto);
- providing local organisers' service;
- designing and placing official web-sites on the Internet;
- advertising;
- others.

The Vitsebsk Youth Group "Vieras" always all forms of co-operation.

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BERASTSYE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR PUBLIC INITIATIVES "VEZHA"

The Berastsey Regional Centre for Public Initiatives "Vezha" (Tower) was founded in November 1997 and registered in January 1998. The organisation has 23 members, which include students, young specialists and leaders of social associations from the Berastsey region.

The Centre is part of the Assembly of Democratic Non-Governmental Organisations in Belarus. It is also the founder of the Belarusian Association of Resource Centres (BARC).

The main goal of the Berastsey Regional Centre for Public Initiatives "Vezha" is to establish a civic community in independent Belarus through mobilising residents of the Berastsey region using the principles of humanism, freedom, and democracy.

■ Goals:

- to increase the intellectual potential in the region and the civic activity of its residents;
- to support dialogue between different social groups as well as between Belarus and foreign countries;
- to establish cultural and national consciousness;
- to support society on its road to market economy;
- to support initiatives, which assist in protecting human rights and freedoms.

The Centre "Vezha" co-operates with registered social organisations, non-formal groups, citizen initiatives and independent publishers.

The activity of the Centre is aimed at:

■ Informational support

- publishing the bulletin "Kaliva";
- granting consultations concerning registration issues and legal spheres of NGO activity, fundraising and public relations;
- library, newspaper subscription;
- information about new programs and contests run by various foundations and organisations;
- Internet;
- database on partnership contacts between NGOs in Belarus and abroad.

■ Technical support

- providing access to computers;
- publishing centre: type-setting, bread-boarding, copying, providing facilities for publishing activity;

■ Educational support

- seminars and training courses;
- language courses;
- computer courses;
- courses for Internet users.

The Centre conducts the "Legal Clinic" program. The goal of this program is providing practical education for students through granting free legal assistance to citizens without social security as well as people from other social groups. Between April 1999 and May 2000, 92 people received assistance from the Legal Clinic.

In order to consolidate different groups of society in Berastsey, the Centre holds "round table" meetings with NGOs regarding the most important directions of their activity. As a result of these meetings, new organisations and Co-ordinating Councils were established. The Council for National Organisations operates on the basis of regular meetings of minority group representatives.

In order to support dialogue between third sector representatives and foreign countries/organisations, special meetings are held with members of foundations and organisations from Poland, the US, Slovakia, Sweden, Germany, and Denmark.

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SOCIAL ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS "VIT"

The Harodnya regional social association of young scientists "VIT" is a non-governmental youth organisation. The association was founded in November 1995 by a group of young scientists. The activity conducted by "VIT" primarily has an educational character.

The basic objectives of the association are as follows:

- Granting assistance in the scientific research of young scientists in the spheres of law, history, culture, sociology, political science and education;
- Analysing and solving problems connected with establishing a civic community and the place and role of youth in post-totalitarian countries;
- Granting assistance in the process of reforming the educational system in Belarus;
- Establishing contacts and exchanging information with youth and other social organisations in Central and Eastern European countries.

The social association "VIT" is currently engaged in the following projects:

■ **Civic Education**

Since 1997, the association has conducted several seminars and training courses for youth organisations, aimed at finding and supporting youth initiatives. Since 1998, "VIT" has established an exclusive long-term educational course for youth in social management — "Democratic Leadership School." The school curriculum comprises theoretical and practical elements. The latter includes the participation of academic trainees in youth social organisations in order to bolster theoretical knowledge. More than 40 young people completed the course since it was first conducted and are now members of democratic youth social organisations.

■ **Legal Education**

The association has conducted a number of educational seminars on fundamentals of the law for the representatives of youth social organisations. As a result, a manual of methodological assistance entitled "Individual, Society, State: Game Directive" was published. Since 1998, "VIT" has conducted the "Street Law" program in Belarus. This program has also resulted in the publication of the "Street Law" textbook for secondary schools. Since 1999, "VIT" has co-ordinated the "Street Law" educational clinic for law students in Harodnya State University. The program has expanded into other regions of Belarus through conducting training courses and seminars for non-governmental organisations and representatives of educational establishments. Since 1999, "VIT" has conducted a long-term educational course for youth in the fundamentals of the law — "Legal Education School." Every year 30 students obtain theoretical knowledge and practical experience in various areas of law and human rights.

■ **Global Movement for Kids**

The social association "VIT" is co-ordinating this project within the Harodnya region (oblast). The project is conducted in conjunction with the UNICEF representative office in Belarus and the Union of Children's Social Organisations "Belarusian National Youth Rada." The aim of the project is to solve the problem of inactivity and indifference children and youth in the Republic have toward social life. The Information Project Centre for the Harodnya region has been established on the basis of the association. The Centre conducts seminars and meetings for committees and operates the information exchange on the project. In November 2000 the association sent a delegation of 15 children to represent the Harodnya region in the Belarusian Children's Summit.

The social association "VIT" is a member of the Assembly of Democratic Non-Governmental Organisations in Belarus and the Association of Civic Education.

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THE "WILL FOR DEVELOPMENT" SOCIAL ASSOCIATION

The "Will for Development" Social Association is a non-governmental, non-profit, inter-regional social association, established in 1995. The basic goal of the association is to promote the idea of an open society (i.e., a social system where the government does not oppress society and the individual has all opportunities for true self-fulfilment).

The activity of the association is concentrated in Slonim and the Slonim Region as well as in the Dzyatlau and Zelva regions.

Activity is conducted in the following spheres:

- local self-government;
- human rights;
- co-operation with trade unions.

Since the beginning of 2000, the association has operated as a regional resource centre. In September 2000, the youth club "Svyatlitsa" began conducting its activity on the basis of the "Will for Development" Social Association. "Svyatlitsa" unites five hobby groups.

The Chairman is Michas Varanets.

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THE SHKLOU VOTERS' CLUB "ZYALONY AHUROK"

The Shklou Voters' Club "Zyalony Ahurok" was founded in 1993.

Activity:

- supporting the newspapers "Shklou News" ("Shklouskiya naviny") — AIREX and "Shklou for Youth" ("Shklouskaya maladzyovaya");
- organising demonstrations;
- establishing the Human Rights Defence Centre — support for the unemployed;
- conducting the environmental project "Clean Dniapro."

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