

# Barnahus in Belarus. Child-friendly Investigation: True Vs. Trauma. Keeping right balance

International NGO “Ponimanie”, Minsk, Belarus



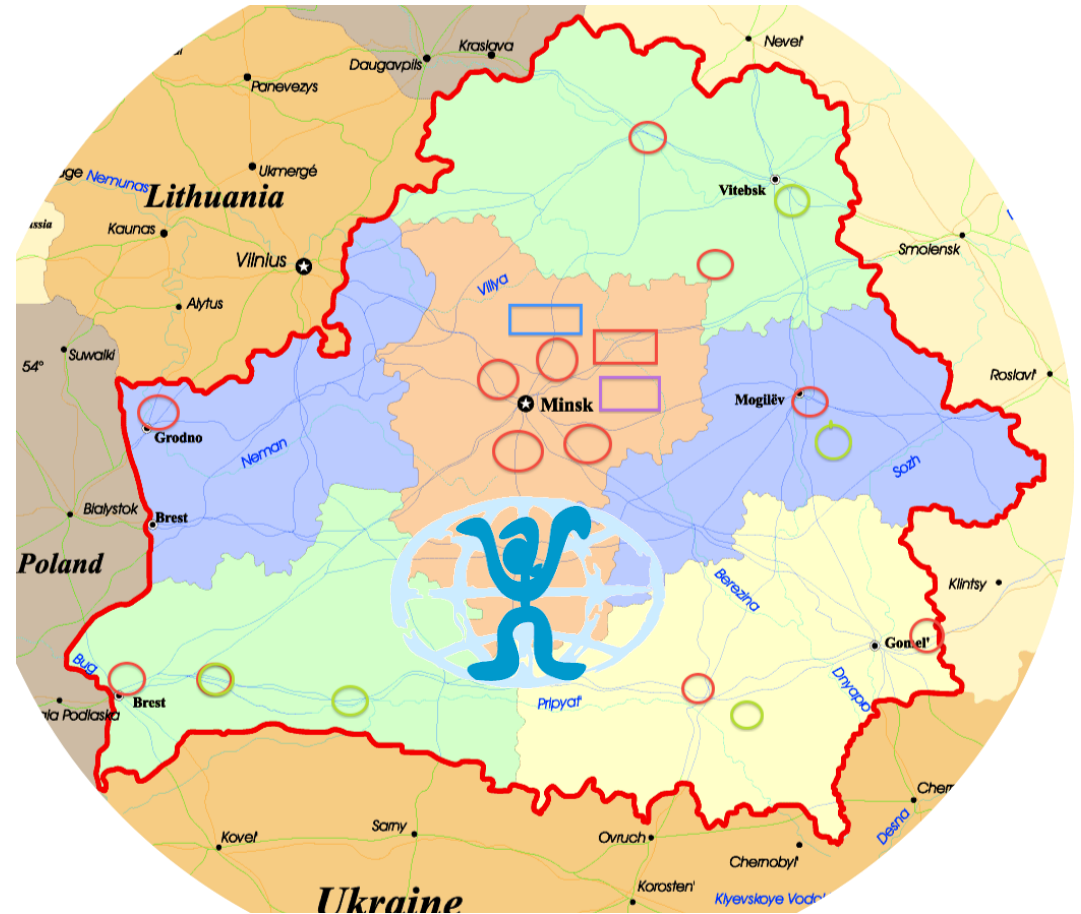
# Republic of Belarus

## General Data, 2012:

- Population: 9,46M
- Child Population (U18): 1,7M
- GDP/capita: USD 6450
- Budget for CP: USD 75M

## For kids-survivors of CAN, as to Sept, 1, 2013:

- Investigation Committee Units: 152
- Child Protection Officers: 171
- Child Social Shelters: 105
- Pro-CAC/Barnahus: 15
- 7/24 toll-free Child Helpline: Yes
- Treatment Facilities: 2
- NCMEC – Yes
- Trained Investigators: 146
- Trained Qualified Psychologists: 32
- Trained Psychotherapists: 26
- CAC/Barnahus National Center: **ABSENT!!!**



# Belarus: Legal and Normative Basis for Child-friendly Investigation

1. UN CRC (1989), Law on Children's Rights (1994)
2. Penal Code (2002), Penal Procedure Code (2002), incl. art 62 "Specialist", art 219 "Audio and Video Recording"
3. UN ECOSOC Resolution (2005)
4. CoE Lanzarote Convention (2007)
5. CoE CM Rec(2009)10
6. The Strategy of Prevention of Child Abuse and Support to Abused Children in Belarus following to CoE CM Rec(2009)10 - (2009, in redaction of 2012)
7. Decision of Belarus Govt. #216 (2012) adjusting National Plan of Action towards Child Protection for 2012-16, art 55
8. Plan of Cooperation of Ponimanie and Investigation Committee to implement National Plan of Action towards CP Decision of Belarus Govt. #651 (2013) on Commission on Juvenile Affairs under the Council of Ministers (Government)
9. Methodical Recommendation of Investigation Committee to conduct investigation of crime against sexual innocence of children (2013)



# Barnahus in Belarus: Child-friendly Investigation and Treatment

- 15 pro-CAC/Barnahus child-friendly facilities for Forensic Interview and Rehabilitation, all-national coverage - in every of 7 regions of the country:
  - 1) 12 facilities placed in Social-Pedagogical centers, 1 – in Correction-developmental center for disabled children, 1 – in the courthouse, and 1 – in State Forensic Examination Committee. Legal basis lies in frames of current legislation and new methodic recommendations of Investigation Committee
  - 2) Equipment and resources: 30 cameras, 15 microphones, 15 PC with 30 widescreens, necessary furniture and tools; premises provided free-of-charge by local Governments
- 2 CPU/Treatment facilities in Children's Hospitals under development:
  - 1) Legal basis and draft SOP are developed, Plan of Action between Ponimanie and the Ministry of Healthcare signed
  - 2) Equipment and resources: interviewing room/observation room/waiting room, forensic medical examination room with colposcopy, 2 places in hospital, 4 places in day-stay department, 10 places reserved for long-term outpatient therapy



# Barnahus in Belarus: Child-friendly Investigation and Treatment

- Child Forensic Interviewing Protocol:

Translated into Russian, Adapted, and Verified 10-Steps NICHD-based Protocol by Thomas D. Lyon (USCLA, USA) – on the basis of Author's permission to translate, adapt, verify, use for training, and disseminate among Russian-speaking professionals

Training Toolkit is developed and disseminated in Belarus, Russia, Rep. of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Training done in Belarus – in-depth, Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova – both introduction.

- Treatment Protocols:

TF-CBT, DST, Jungian Sand Therapy, Psycho-Drama, Classic Freud Psychotherapy for O18, Groups for Youth and Family, MTFC, Pharmaceutical Protocols for PTSD.

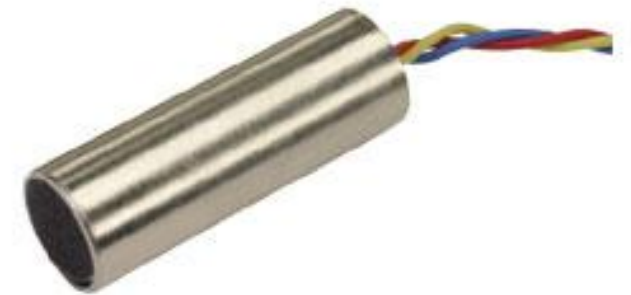
Equipment to record forensic interview,  
cost USD 230, plus PC and 2 widescreens USD  
1500, furniture USD 720, total cost is **USD 2500**



Logitech AF Sphere



Genius wide cam 1050



Microphone Шопоx -3

Internet-technology is used to have an opportunity to translate the interview in the Courthouse on-line



Pro-CAC/Barnahus  
Observation Room

Courthouse



# Testimony Vs. Trauma

- Preparation for the interview plays very important role in minimization of secondary trauma. When children and their non-abusive parents KNOW what procedure they will pass, who will talk to them, when, about. Meeting of Investigator and Psychologist gives mutual confidence and allows to tailor strong structure of the interview.
- Instructions before the interview starts are included in the 10-steps Protocol also empower children and make them more self-confident
- There are two different expectations from the interview – of investigator and psychologist. Investigator is aimed to get quality and reliable evidence, and psychologist is aimed to keep child's psyche as less traumatized as possible. To have an investigator on our side psychologist ever explains that right questions, asked taking into account child's development and experience, helps INVESTIGATOR to get reliable evidence

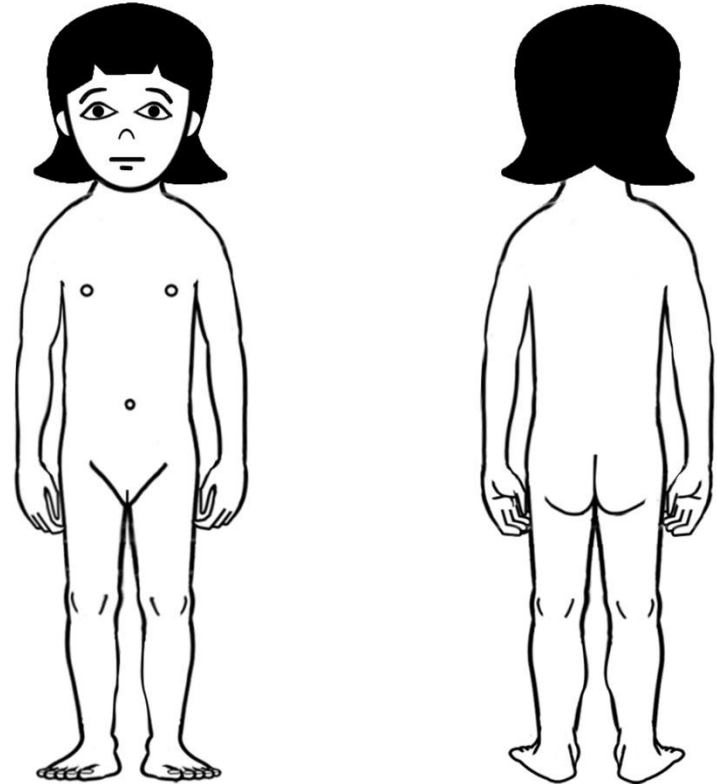




# Testimony Vs. Trauma

- Use Interviewing in children 3+

The youngest child who was given proven testimony in Belarus in conditions of CAC/Barnahus is 2 years and 9 month old. This is rare exclusion from the common rules. Usually children over 3 and even 4 meet difficulties in testifying because of their level of brain development. As to our opinion, anatomic drawing is the most appropriate way to facilitate testimony of younger children.





# Testimony Vs. Trauma

- Take into account the level of brain development of a child:
  - a) How children encrypt, keep, and reproduce the data
  - b) How children forget, keep or change facts
  - c) How children determine the source of information (saw, heard, somebody told...)

Age	Who?	What?	Where?	When?	What happened?	How that was?
3						
4-6						
7-8						
9-10						
11-12						



# Testimony Vs. Trauma

- Striving to just one single interview. It still might be 3. We accept maximum 2, only because Criminal Procedure in Belarus is divided into 2 parts – pre-investigation finalized by open file/reject complain, and after the file opened investigation starts. Interview must be conducted during each part of the process, and in 3<sup>rd</sup> time – in the Courthouse. We continue lobbying of unite Investigation Procedure...
- 3<sup>rd</sup> time is avoided after Plenum of Supreme Court in September 2012 recommended to call a child to testify in front of Judge only if evidence is critically not enough. Record of the interview conducted as to the 10-steps Protocol was recommended to be accepted as an evidence by a Judge. Gender specifics of Judges, and accusing accent of the Trial in contemporary Belarus – on our side. We work to prepare investigators and psychologists to protect interview in really competitive Trial.



# Testimony Vs. Trauma

- Working Solution – Methodical Recommendation to hold Investigation (2013). It recommends investigators to conduct interview of a child just once on pre-investigation stage in Child-friendly conditions of Barnahus with specially trained psychologist, and to record the interview. After the file opened, investigator invites a child and ask just couple of formal questions during 2 minutes:

- “Did you tell yesterday to psychologist everything what happened?”
- “”Yes””.

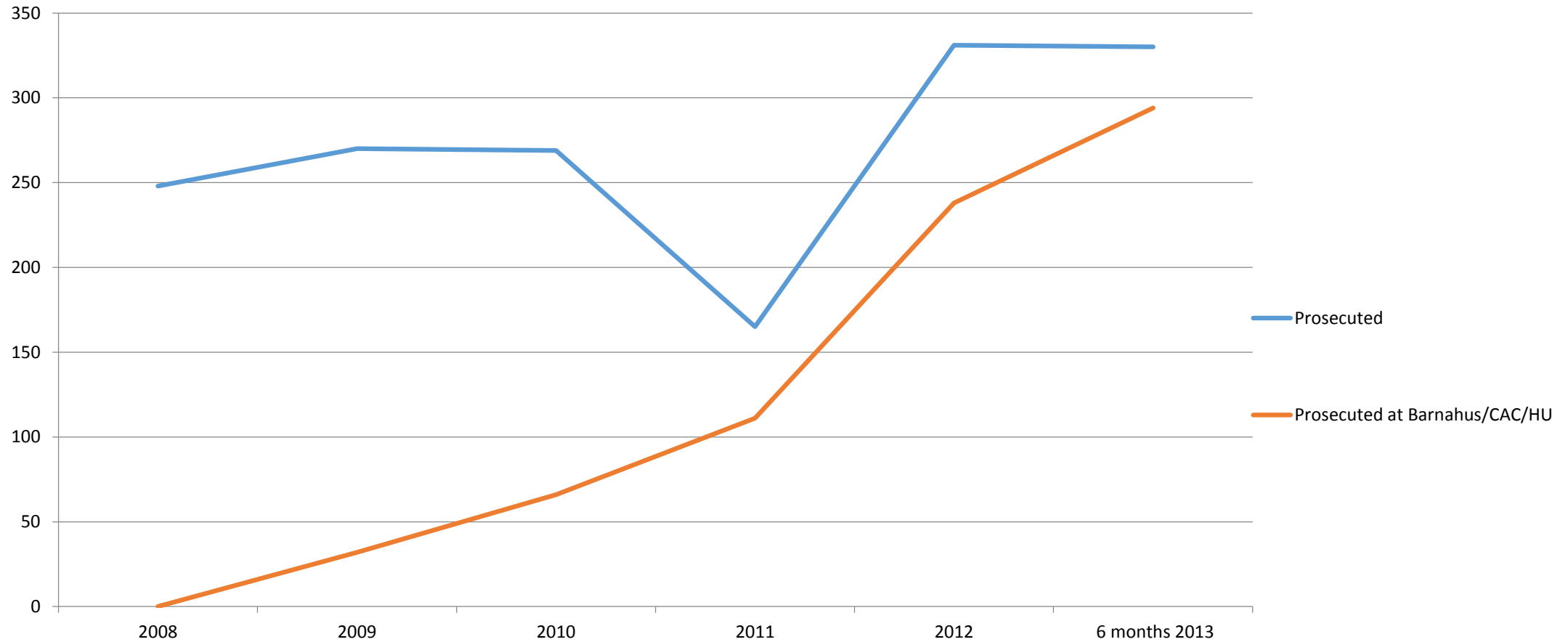
If a child is over 10 but under 14, the second question to be asked is:

- “Did you tell true?”
- “Yes”.
- “Parents please sign here to confirm testimony of the child”.

If a child is over 14 he/she can sign the testimony himself/herself and being informed about penalty in the case of false testimony given.



# Cases Prosecuted Total Vs. Prosecuted at Barnahus/CAC/HU, Belarus





# Achievements and Gaps. Perspectives of Development

- During the last 4 years with critically important support of World Childhood Foundation we established the system of Child-friendly Investigation and continue to secure its sustainability
- During the 2012-13 with critically important support of World Childhood Foundation we started to establish the system of Treatment of sexually abused children, and this efforts needs to be continued in frames of full-fledge project in 2014-16
- The most actual gap is absence of National CAC/Barnahus holding the same role like US National Children's Advocacy Center to secure permanent process of quality control, training, and promotion/lobbying the networking of pro-CAC/Barnahus in Belarus. This gap must be filled ASAP to allow full sustainability of modern system to protect children from sexual abuse in Belarus and enforce our influence on area of CIS to initiate and develop such action in other CIS countries.
- Quantitative stage of pro-CAC/Barnahus in Belarus is completed in the part of Child-friendly Investigation. Investigation part enters the stage of qualitative development, training support, control over quality of services, SOP control and further development, and legislation changes lobbying.
- Treatment of children-survivors, their families, as well as Prevention component is to be developed further and enforced in the next 5-7 years.
- Belarus National CAC/Barnahus is to be established in the next 2-4 years.



## Belarus National CAC/Barnahus.

- Construction Project is ready
- The land is provided free-of-charge by Minsk City-Hall
- We are looking for Social Impact Donor ready to invest Catalytic Capital into this project

