

## SUCCESS STORY – August 2008

### NGO advocacy campaign results in city government making special provision for the disabled

As a result of an advocacy campaign supported by Counterpart's PRIDE project (Promoting the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities), the authorities in the Kazakhstan city of Karagandy have agreed to equip the city's main government building with a ramp for people in wheelchairs. It has also set up a commission to carry out the disability provisions of Kazakhstan's law on new and reconstructed buildings. The law stipulates that such buildings should be readily accessible for people with disabilities, but in practice it is often ignored.



The advocacy campaign in Karagandy was undertaken by Tirlík, a Karagandy-based DPO (Disabled Persons Organization), with a grant from Counterpart/PRIDE. In organizing the campaign Tirlík drew directly on advocacy training that PRIDE organized for it. Tirlík was one of fifteen DPOs that received the training. The training was conducted in Almaty in February 2008 and involved DPOs from various regions of Kazakhstan. It was organized by Counterpart/PRIDE and one of Counterpart's key NGO partners, ARGO (the Association for Civil Society Development).

Training topics included: how to plan an advocacy campaign and engage stakeholders, which mechanisms to use when channeling advocacy messages, and how to organize public hearings. The trainer was Kaisha Atakhanova, an experienced advocacy practitioner. The training was very well received. As one participant, Kairat Imanaliev, put it, 'The trainer provided very practical examples from the local context and referred to her personal advocacy experience. This helped enormously in getting a clear picture about the mechanism of channeling of advocacy messages to key stakeholders.'

According to Kazakhstan law, all new and re-constructed buildings should be accessible to people with disabilities. In Karagandy city Tirlík found that the law had not been put into effect in either public or private buildings. With Counterpart's support Tirlík mobilized other DPOs to organize an advocacy campaign aimed at encouraging the government in Karagandy to ensure that all new and rebuilt city buildings are accessible to people with disabilities. The campaign involved two public hearings attended by city officials, specialists and DPOs which called on the city government to uphold the disability provisions of the building law. Counterpart/PRIDE coordinated the provision of legal advice to Tirlík by other leading DPOs in Kazakhstan, including Zhan and Namys. ARGO gave consultative support to Tirlík when it organized the public hearing.

As a result of TIRLIK's advocacy campaign, the Karagandy city authorities allocated 1,500,000 Tenge (US\$12,500) to construct a wheelchair ramp into the main government building in the city. The authorities also pledged to build additional ramps, indicating that these would be the starting point of a major effort to apply the disability provisions of the building law. The city government also set up a building commission to monitor implementation of the law, and invited Tirlík's Executive Director Ms. Rosa Petrus to become a commission member.