

## **LEVER Project**

**Voluntary culture as leverage of cultural activities in sparsely populated areas with added value for democratic participation and community bonding**

**Belarusian National Non-Governmental Organization "United Way"**

**Informational and Analytical Centre for Belarusian NGOs  
since 1995**

**Copenhagen 2016**

Belarus is a multiethnic and multiconfessional country.

According to the last population census, approximately 140 ethnic nationalities are represented in this country, among them:

- the Belarusians 87.3%
- the Russians 8.3%
- the Poles 3.1%
- the Ukrainians 1.7%
- the Jewish people 0.1%
- etc.

Also, as many as 25 confessions and trends exist in Belarus:

- Orthodoxy
- Catholicism
- Uniates
- Protestantism
- Judaism
- Islam
- etc.

The state must ensure preservation of cultural traditions and values which, together with the language, help to maintain national identity and national consciousness.

From this angle, culture may be treated as one of the basis of existence of the nation.

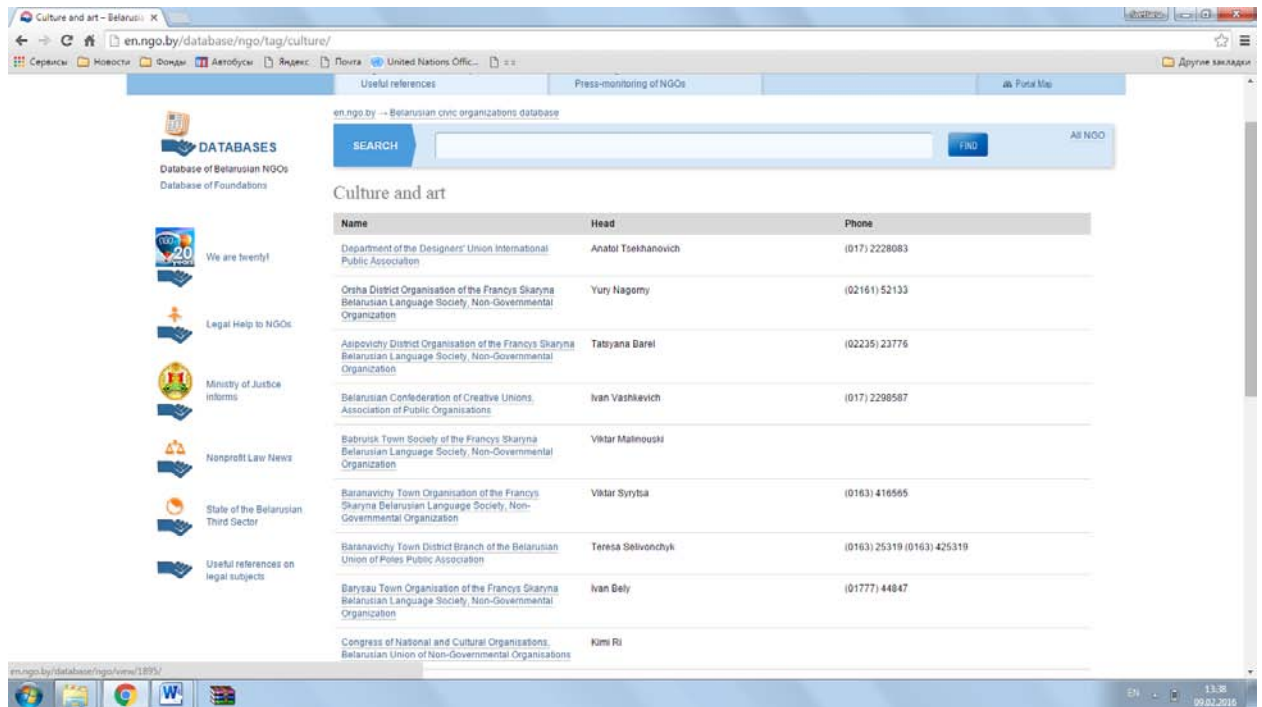
At present, the government lends more support to national cultures and national languages. Moreover, interest in the national identity, culture and traditions grows in the society.

This fact places the non-governmental sector before new challenges: to make a contribution to preservation of national culture and national identity.

On the other hand, it offers almost unlimited opportunities for civil society, social activities, NGOs, which are focused on support and promotion of national culture.

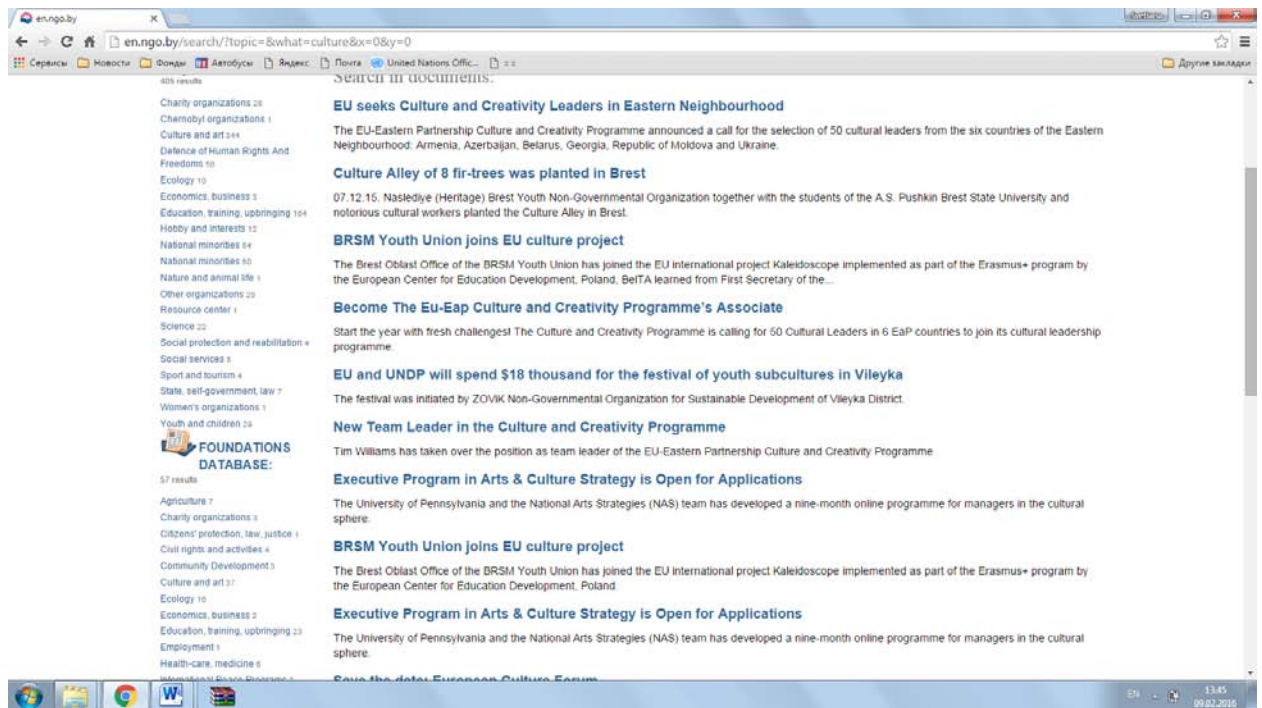
As the Informational and Analytical Centre for Belarusian NGOs, UWB works, inter alia, in the sector of voluntary arts and culture being engaged in planning of curricula and courses, culture surveys and reporting, rendering information services and wide scale dissemination.

**Database of Belarusian NGOs** on [www.ngo.by](http://www.ngo.by) Portal contains 344 Belarusian non-governmental organizations engaged in culture and arts of the total number 5000 Belarusian NGOs)



UWB has established partnership relations with a number of NGOs engaged in arts and culture.

The Database of press-monitoring maintained on [www.ngo.by](http://www.ngo.by) Portal within the program “Press-Monitoring of Belarusian NGOs” contains more than 11000 articles related to activities of Belarusian NGOs in the field of arts and culture.



UWB is connected by partnership ties with foreign organizations engaged in arts and culture.

A good example is the partnership with **the Residential Social Care Home DPS No 5 "PODGORNA"** from Lodz, Poland and organization of participation of Belarusian NGOs dealing with disabled persons in **the 18th International Every Fine Arts Festival of Disabled People and Seniors** and **the 12th International Art and Handicraft Exhibition** of art works /paintings, drawings and others / made by handicapped, physically and mentally disabled persons and seniors from different countries.



The 18th Every Fine Arts Festival of Disabled People, November 2015, Łódź (Poland)



Urszula Wasik director of 5Dom Pomocy Społecznej in Łódź and Teresa Grzelczak volunteer 60plus of 5DPS



UWB also participated in the implementation of partner projects and acted as an organizer of cultural events.

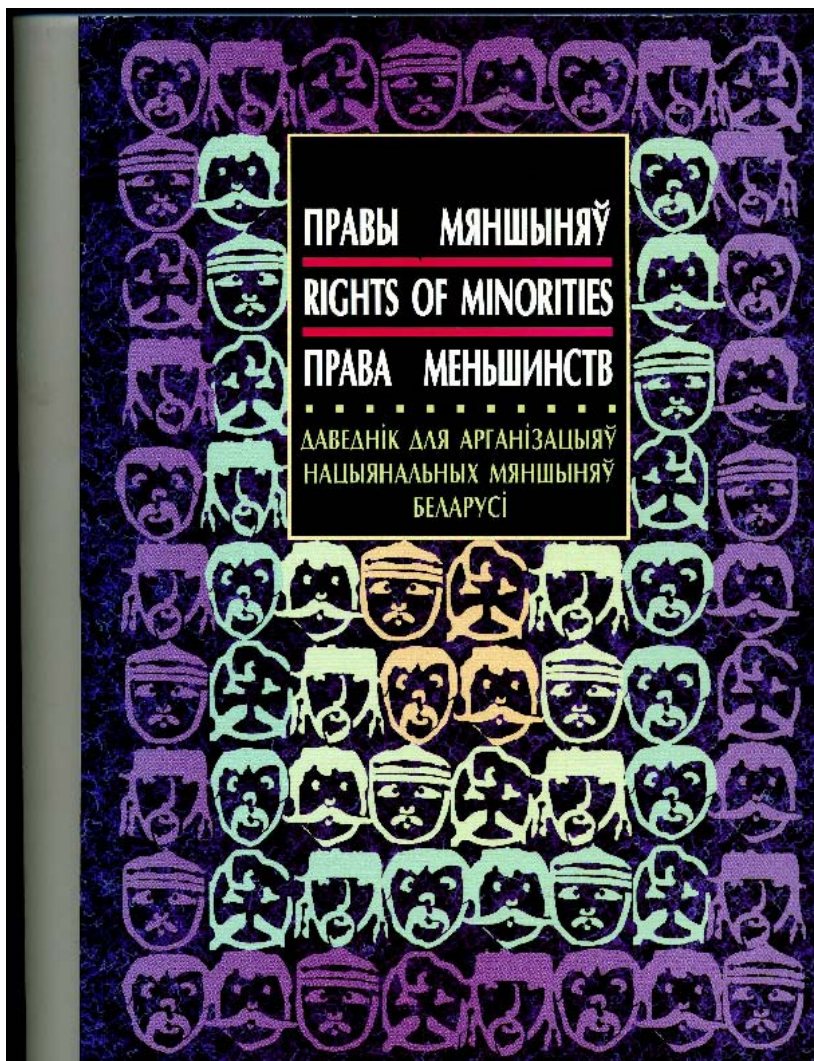


Meeting of members of ClubOK in the UWB office

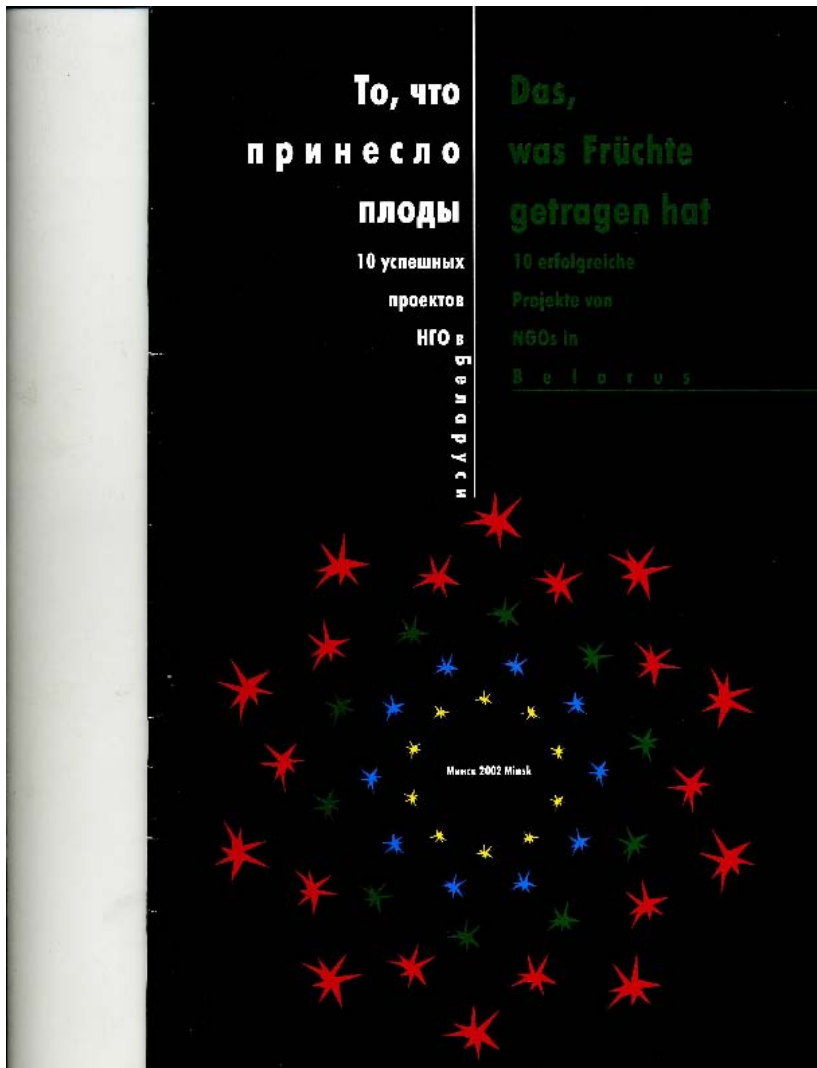


UWB information stand at the fair of cultural projects

Involvement of UWB in solution of cultural issues is also reflected in its publishing activity. The examples are as follows:



Rights of minorities. Guide for non-profit organization of national minorities in Belarus. 1998



Activities that have yielded fruit. 10 successful projects of NGOs in Belarus. 2002

The aforesaid evidences of the fact that being the Informational and Analytical Centre for Belarusian NGOs since 1995, the Belarusian National NGO “United Way” (UWB) has all organizational and informational capabilities to initiate and take the lead of the development of new methods and approaches and provide new examples of best practice in the mentioned field in Belarus, e.g.:

- initiation of cultural exchange between creative groups and individuals;
- public discussion on the issues of culture, language, national identity;
- monitoring and promotion of coexistence of national cultures

For this purpose UWB will involve its partners engaged in arts and culture;  
among them:

- Republican Center of National Cultures
- Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs
- F. Skaryna Belarusian Language Society
- Belarusian Voluntary Society for Protection of Monuments of History and Culture
- Assembly of Belarusian Democratic NGOs
- Center “Third Sector”