The Girls' Group:
Northern Caucasus, Russian Federation

"This is our story. Our wish was to sing with Makka Mezhieva [a famous Chechen singer]. [When we performed] there were people there, people with disabilities and people without disabilities. They were all crying. And we learned about other people with disabilities – we met them. It was very pleasant for us to know them, and to know their type of disability and problems. When I come to the event and I see there are persons with disabilities, I feel like I am not alone. And when see other [non-disabled] people there, I feel equal.

"Through sign language we understand each other. The girls without disabilities learn things and us too. We can have a common language through these sign language classes. We also use phones, we text and we write notes to communicate with each other. We really like drawing. We think about things and everything that we think about, we show in our pictures. We also really like to play different types of games. It is important to us that people are listening to us. Sometime people don't pay attention to our opinions."

"These are our ideas that we would like to see in the future.… The first one is [making] pictures, drawing together. The second one is fun sketches that we can do together. We would like to meet with some girls at a café or a place for just girls with and without disabilities – just girls, without adults. This picture [below] shows sign language classes. We would like sign language lessons. These girls can teach us. We already know a bit, because my sister

has a hearing disability. [We like to play] the crocodile game. In this game there are two groups. One person from one group is shown a word, and she uses signs to show this word. The rest of the team has to guess what word this is. This picture [below] illustrates the joint dances. These two photographs are my classmates. We would like them to join us and participate in these activities. We will need some paper and markers … a space to meet … transportation."

Photo: Posters prepared by The Girls' Group – "Our story" and "Our ideas" © IRC