

Project
'The Reform of the Child Care System in CEE/CIS:
taking stock and accelerating action'

International Organizations and Child Care System Reform in South East Europe

Final Report for UNICEF



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Table of contents

Table of Contents	ii.
Acronyms cited in text	iii.
Executive summary	v.
1. INTRODUCTION	1.
2. INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND THE MAKING OF SOCIAL POLICY IN SEE	3.
3. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CHILD CARE REFORM IN SEE: A SWOT ANALYSIS	8.
4. SOME BROAD CONCLUSIONS	19.
5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE	22.
BIBLIOGRAPHY	25.
ANNEX 1: IPA Indicative Funding	29.

ACRONYMS CITED IN TEXT

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIDA	Canadian International Development Assistance
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	The (UK Govt) Department for International Development
DSW	Department for Social Welfare
EIZ	The Institute of Economics, Zagreb
ESSD	Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development
EU	The European Union
EUF	EU Structural Funds
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IO	International Organization
IPA	Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance
JIM	Joint Inclusion Memorandum
LMIC	Lower Middle Income Country
m.	million
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MTDS	Medium-term Development Strategy (in BiH)
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NAP/Inc	EU national Action Plan on Social Inclusion
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSSD	National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development in Albania
OECD	Organizations for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OHR	The Office of the High Representative (in BiH)
OMC	Open Method of Co-ordination
PREM	Poverty Reduction and Economic Management
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS
RDPs	Refugees and Displaced Persons
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SDC	Swiss Development Co-operation
SEE	South East Europe
SIDA	Swedish International Development Assistance
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TA	Technical assistance
UMIC	Upper Middle Income Country
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commission for Refugees

UNICEF	The United Nations Children’s Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
USAID	United States Aid Agency
USD	United States Dollar
UNAP	United Nations Administered Province
UNDP	The United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This text analyses the work of different international organizations who work in partnership with national actors to support child care system reform in 10 South East European (SEE) countries and territories, namely: Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and the United Nations Administered Province of (UNAP) Kosovo. It served as a background paper for discussions and inputs to the South-East Europe consultation within the project ‘Reform of the Child Care System: taking stock and accelerating action’ held in Sofia from 3-6 July 2007, and forms the basis for further dialogue on the role of international actors in reform. The study aims, through a SWOT analysis of the EU, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, DFID and SIDA, to identify key potential areas for enhanced co-operation and to make suggestions on how to take these forward.

2. The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness clearly states the need to align aid with partner countries’ priorities, improve accountability, and simplify procedures. Over time, there has been a move from support primarily through projects, time-limited, often quite short-term, individual inputs leading to limited outputs; via programmes, a series of connected projects seeking to work at and between levels and scales; and, now, to strategies, operating in terms of a direct engagement with, and support for, the policy level. A range of international organizations operate at each of these levels, promoting redistribution, regulation and rights.

3. SEE countries have experienced a triple transition, from communism, through war, and, often, in terms of ‘new’ nation state building. The countries exhibit a variable geometry regarding EU membership and accession and World Bank loan conditionality, in the context of their economic wealth, human development, and political stability, which help to explain the amounts, sources, and types of aid flows received. The nature and content of the relationship between the European Union, the World Bank and the UN agencies is important in terms of ‘steering’ social policy, social protection and child care reform. The recent communication from the European Commission on the “urgent need for a comprehensive EU strategy to increase the scale and effectiveness of EU commitments to improve the situation of children globally and to demonstrate real political will at the highest possible level to ensure that the promotion and protection of children's rights get the place they merit on the EU's agenda” is important in terms of the possibility of a comprehensive children’s rights strategy reflected in EU strategic support, programming and funding in SEE.

4. All agencies have made a broad commitment to promote an inclusive, client-centred approach to child care policy in which a range of community-based services are provided by a range of licensed state and non-state providers, working to agreed quality standards. Within this, there is some recognition that institutional care needs to be transformed, to cover fewer beneficiaries, for a shorter time, more closely linked to a range of preventive, respite and rehabilitative services. Alongside individual and family-oriented case planning, local social planning and community-based responses to social problems are at the heart of a reformed system, with professionals more accountable in terms of their role in empowering individuals, families and communities. There is, perhaps, less agreement on how to approach the reform in terms of co-ordinated steps to align legislation, procedures, institutions, budgets, standards, and skills, through strategic support, fiscal incentives, technical assistance, capacity building,

5. The ability of UNICEF and other IOs with a focus on children’s rights to work with either the EU or the World Bank or, in some cases, with both, on the theme of child care system

reform, is somewhat variable. This variation relates, of course, in complex ways to the country's status in terms of the PRSP process and EU accession; the visibility and seriousness of the problems of the current child care system; and the nature, level and focus of 'steering' by key governmental bodies, be they Ministries or particular designated agencies. In addition, of course, involvement of diverse IOs are constrained and framed in terms of their mandates and mission statements in the region and the overall Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats which frame their involvement in child care reform.

6. Notwithstanding the efforts of IOs and their national partners, it is still the case that external assistance has at times contributed to a fragmented, inconsistent, badly sequenced, and short-term reform agenda. The gap between rhetoric and reality is of immense importance analytically and practically. The following seven key problems emerge from the case studies of countries and agencies and represent, in a sense, the tentative conclusions of this study:

- 1) Other reforms fail to consider impacts on child care and/or have unintended negative consequences for child care system reform.
- 2) Reform efforts are often piecemeal and un-coordinated, rather than carefully planned, synchronized, and with a clear and agreed division of labour.
- 3) International assistance is rule bound and there are time lags between assessment and implementation.
- 4) International organizations have tended to prioritise working with 'champions of change' at the expense of ensuring wider buy in.
- 5) The 'passion for pilots' has, sometimes, proved to be unsustainable and has created false positives.
- 6) New agencies have been created which compete in a crowded arena for the leadership role in reforms.
- 7) The fiscal aspects of the reform have had less attention paid to them than legislative and procedural changes.

7. Based on the general points made above, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions from the preliminary study, which can be formed into a series of recommendations for action. These could form a basis for discussion amongst the stakeholders in the conference.

One: Child mainstreaming

All stakeholders need to ensure greater emphasis on child mainstreaming and child care system reform in key documents on poverty reduction, social exclusion and national development strategies.

Two: The Cautionary (Do No Harm) Principle Should Apply

All policies which might potentially have implications for child care system reform should address, explicitly, these issues and ensure the minimisation of negative consequences (a 'do no harm' approach) and, wherever possible, include a component specifically addressing child care reform.

Three: Government Leadership in Reforms

Leadership in reforms should be taken by national Governments based on multi-stakeholder consultations. Wherever possible, a clear reform blueprint document should be agreed and revised and updated regularly. Where a new agency is created to 'steer' reforms, its mandate should be clear and agreed by all. Where a co-ordination body is established this should work to this blueprint and ensure feedback to donors and other international organizations on the priorities for programming, technical assistance, and other modalities of assistance.

Four: The Principle of the ‘Three Ones’

Donors should implement the principle of the three ones, as a basis for strategic development, efficient use of resources, and results-based management in terms of:

- **One** agreed Action Framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners.
- **One** National Coordinating Authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate.
- **One** agreed country-level Monitoring and Evaluation System.

Five: New Strategic Partnerships Are Needed

The clear potential complementarities between efforts in reforming cash transfers and efforts in terms of reforming services suggests the need for pro-active interface between agencies working on the former (including the World Bank) and those working on the latter (including UNICEF). In addition, the EU’s focus on social inclusion allows for more efforts on the provision of adequate housing and assistance in seeking employment for young people leaving care, support for children from minority groups and children with disabilities. All three organisations need to meet and exchange information and best practice experiences regularly.

Six: New Accountabilities

There is a clear need for international organization to be more responsive and accountable to national stakeholders. Wherever possible, programmes should involve joint assessment and joint evaluation missions. Even more importantly, technical assistance to ensure that national stakeholders are able to make timely and appropriate requests for assistance is needed. In addition, the transparency of international assistance needs to be raised.

Seven: Mutual Learning

The EU’s model of the Open Method of Co-ordination can be developed both in the wider region and in the SEE sub-region through exchange programmes, and clear discussion of best practice.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document reports on an analysis of the role of different international organizations who work in partnership with national actors to support child care system reform in 10 South East European (SEE) countries and territories, namely: Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and the United Nations Administered Province of (UNAP) Kosovo. It served as a background paper for discussions and inputs to the South-East Europe consultation within the project 'Reform of the Child Care System: taking stock and accelerating action' held in Sofia from 3-6 July 2007, and forms the basis for further dialogue on the role of international actors in reform. The study aims, through a SWOT analysis of key international organizations (the EU, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, DFID and SIDA), to identify key potential areas for enhanced co-operation and to make suggestions on how to take these forward.

1.2 Essentially, the methodology employed here is that of a secondary literature review, based on a close reading of a number of documents especially prepared by UNICEF country offices, detailing UNICEF's involvement in Child protection; Country policies and strategies; and Other International organizations' key strategies and policies¹. The review of these documents has been complemented by a study of other material generated by key agencies and also a reading of a critical scholarly and policy-oriented literature. In addition, the author brings to the study extensive experience as a researcher, consultant, and policy advocate, regarding the role of international actors in social policy and, more specifically, in child care reform in SEE as a whole (see Stubbs, 2001; Gerovska Mitev and Stubbs, 2005; Deacon and Stubbs (eds.), 2007) and in a number of countries in the region (Bošnjak and Stubbs, 2007). The author has undertaken a number of studies, evaluations, and strategic reviews for UNICEF in the region which also inform this work (Stakić, Stubbs, and Wosner, 2002; Stubbs, 2004; Joshua and Stubbs, 2007)².

1.3 Section 2 of the report serves as an overview regarding international actors' roles in social policy and social protection in the countries of SEE, seeking to combine conceptual clarifications with an understanding of the frames of reference within which key international organizations approach SEE. Section 3 deals briefly with the configuration and roles of international organizations in each country, showing some of the similarities and differences in the approach of different international organizations in different SEE countries, before moving on to a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the support provided by the most important international organisations, namely: the EU, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, DFID and SIDA. Section 4 draws out the major conclusions and Section 5 makes a series of broad recommendations.

1.4 The study faces a number of limitations which should be noted at the outset. Firstly, the country studies produced by UNICEF did not include Albania, Bulgaria or Croatia and were somewhat limited regarding UNAP Kosovo and Turkey. Secondly, the author is far more knowledgeable regarding reforms in BiH, Croatia, Serbia and UNAP Kosovo than regarding other countries. Thirdly, no original research has been undertaken to triangulate the information received with the perceptions of key stakeholders and/or with more rigorous evaluations of projects, programmes and strategic support. Fourthly, a large number of key

¹ These are listed in the references at the end of the text.

² The author is immensely grateful for comments and suggestions received from Gordon Alexander, Vesna Bošnjak, Laurie Joshua, Reima Ana Maglajlić Holiček, Judita Reichenberg and Walter Wolf, many of which have been incorporated in this text. Responsibility for the text is, of course, mine alone.

international actors, including Foundations, INGOs and International Consultancy Companies, are not included in the study. In the end, steering a middle ground between the generally positive presentation which external agencies provide of their own work and a more critical research literature, on the one hand, and between the general, in the form of sweeping generalisations, and the specific, in the form of the minutiae of case examples, on the other, has not been easy. This middle ground is, however, crucial in terms of building on the examples of good practice which do exist and maximising, as far as possible, the potential for complementarities, collaboration, synergies, and strategic partnerships which are so necessary in what is a very complex system reform.

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2. INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AND THE MAKING OF SOCIAL POLICY IN SEE

2.1 Studies of social policy reform in particular national settings have tended, either, to ignore the role of international organizations completely or, conversely, to see such actors as all-powerful, able to transmit their policy prescriptions, advice and preferred outcomes virtually automatically. More recently, an emerging literature has pointed to the need for a more complex, contextually-rooted, understanding of the interactions within and between international and national organisations and actors, at the heart of processes of policy change. (Deacon, 2007). Increasingly, international actors themselves have sought to gain greater understanding of the reasons why intended policy reforms which they support have a range of unintended, sometimes perverse, and often unexpected, results, as in a recent literature on the importance of structural, institutional and individual ‘drivers of change’ (Warrener, 2004; Stubbs and Zrinščak, 2006).

2.2 An emerging global development consensus seeks to channel streamlined, co-ordinated and appropriate development assistance responsive to, owned by, and accountable to, national and local counterparts, partners and stakeholders, particularly, but by no means limited to, the state and its agencies. In particular, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Paris, 2005) represents a clear statement of the need to align aid with partner countries’ priorities, improve accountability, and simplify procedures. Over time, there has been a move from support primarily through **projects**, time-limited, often quite short-term, individual inputs leading to limited outputs; via **programmes**, a series of connected projects seeking to work at and between levels and scales; and, now, to **strategies**, operating in terms of a direct engagement with, and support for, the policy level. Nevertheless, in a crowded and still sometimes competitive, development arena, the gap between grand commitments and practices on the ground, notwithstanding important examples of best practice, still remains quite large.

2.3 In line with much recent work on ‘global social policy’ (cf. Gough, 2001; Stubbs, 2003; Deacon, 2007), it is possible to consider social policy in one country as a product of inter-relationships between the state, market, civil society and household structures at national and supra-national levels. Hence, a full picture of the making of social policy in SEE would have to address the role of remittances from abroad³ and of international migration processes, both of which are transnational processes which impact, directly and indirectly, on child income and well-being. Whilst this is beyond the current study a recent report on Latin America has noted that “even though remittances associated with migration flows tend to improve the income dimension of recipient households’ overall welfare, it is also true that migration often imposes important costs on family members who are left behind, and especially on children who have to grow up without the presence of one parent and, in some cases, both parents” (World Bank, 2006). This is, of course, beyond the scope of this study. Oversimplifying, somewhat, it is possible to divide international organizations influencing social policy in the countries of SEE into six broad categories, thus:

1. **Supranational Agencies** which operate on a global level including the UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and so on) and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs),

³ Taking only official remittances recorded through banks, a recent study suggests that these are significant, amounting to 22.5 per cent of GDP in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 17.2 per cent of GDP in (then) Serbia and Montenegro and 11.7 per cent of GDP in Albania (Sengenberger, 2006; 21).

particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These organizations work with a range of counterparts in developing and funding programmes, throughout the world, particularly in less developed and transition countries, providing loans and credits (in the case of the IFIs) and offering technical assistance, according to their specific mandates. The UN agencies have specific roles based around particular UN conventions including, of course, most importantly for our purposes here, UNICEF in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. **Regional Agencies** such as the European Union and Council of Europe whose member states reach binding agreements, and who offer a range of programmes and assistance to member states, prospective member states, and more widely. Here, it is possible also to include more properly **Sub-Regional Organisations** such as the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe which is now transforming into a South Eastern Europe Co-operation Council with a Secretariat in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Regional and sub-regional processes have been seen as immensely important in terms of the possibility of setting joint goals and sharing best practice in social policy (cf. Yeates and Deacon, 2006; Deacon, Ortiz and Zelenev, 2007).

3. **Bilateral Organizations** such as DFID, SIDA and USAID which are, respectively, the aid agencies of the UK, Swedish and USA Governments. Whilst channelling some funding through supranational and regional bodies, most developed country governments also have direct aid and development programmes offering funding in transitional and developing countries, based on a diverse, and changing, set of priorities. The nature and extent of bilateral assistance varies over time, in terms of specific regions of the world and in terms of which bilaterals are most active.

4. **Foundations and Trusts** which are very varied but, also, increasingly important globally in terms of the provision of development assistance. In SEE, the George Soros backed Open Society Foundation is, perhaps, the most important example of a private grant-making and programme oriented body. In addition, the German political party foundations continue to have a role in building capacity and commissioning action research in the region.

5. **International Non-Governmental Organizations** which are, also, many and varied both in terms of their size, spheres of interest, sources of funding, and nature of their operations. Of course, of particular interest in terms of child care are those specialist children's NGOs including the various Save the Children organizations, which have a very long history, and those child rights NGOs which were formed specifically in order to act in parts of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe.

6. **International Consultancy Companies and Individual Consultants** who are private contractors competing for funds to undertake particular projects and programmes and which, whilst increasingly important in SEE, have not received significant research scrutiny (cf. Stubbs, 2003).

2.4 As noted above, this study addresses only the role of the first three kinds of international organizations since these are the key donors and, also in policy terms, the key partners in steering international activity in the region. Our emphasis on the World Bank, the EU, UNDP, UNICEF, DFID and SIDA, misses out a number of important agencies even within these three categories, but these can, in a sense, be taken as both the most important and, also representative of others (SIDA's interventions, for example, are perhaps more

developed but, on the whole, not unlike other Scandinavian bilateral agencies). One serious omission, perhaps, is the role in social policy of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in BiH (see Maglajlić Holiček and Rašidagić, 2007), and of the UN Mission in UNAP Kosovo (UNMIK) (see Cocozzelli, 2007), which are, themselves, complex, country/territory specific international governance arrangements (cf. Stubbs, 2005).

2.5 International actors may be understood as acting, in important and diverse ways, to influence what have come to be known as the ‘3 Rs’ of ‘global social policy: **redistribution**, in terms of changing the outcomes of economic activity, usually to render them more equitable; **regulation**, usually seeking to ensure that activities of actors abide by certain rules and take the social consequences of their actions into account; and **rights**, which seek to guarantee through legislation and practice, certain standards and indivisible rights. Whilst traditionally, these are the concerns of social policy in one country, regional groupings such as the European Union involve mechanisms of redistribution across borders (through the European Social Fund and other mechanisms; European wide regulation (on health and safety for example); and a statement of European wide rights (based on European treaties). In more political terms, a struggle or, perhaps, debate is occurring globally and regionally, between (and sometimes even within) international organizations regarding: **equity and social justice**; **citizenship rights**; **universal rights** in the context of **diversity**; appropriate **welfare mixes** (the balance of state and non-state provision); and the nature and quality of **care arrangements** (Deacon, 2007; ch. 1).

2.6 There is a vast literature on the influence and impact of international organizations on social policy in the ‘post-communist’ countries of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. A new book on International Organizations’ influence in SEE (Deacon and Stubbs (eds); 2007) builds on this literature, suggesting that the familiar aspect of ‘post-communist transition’ was cut across by wars and humanitarian interventions and complex processes of ‘new’ nation-state building. Throughout the region, the World Bank-EU nexus and relationship is crucial to social policy choices, with the UN agencies squeezed somewhere in the middle and seeking influence and position. The book notes the ‘crowded arena’ of strategy development, programme and project support, and partnership arrangements, with many new actors playing a variety of roles so that, sometimes, the outcomes in policy terms can be almost ‘accidental’ (Deacon, Lendvai and Stubbs, 2007).

2.7 In part, of course, the complexity is a product of the diverse nature of the countries and territories within SEE itself. Generalisations regarding SEE are fraught with dangers, covering countries and territories ranging in population size from 72.6 m (Turkey) to 685,000 (Montenegro) and, as Table 2:1 shows, ranging in per capita GNI from 1600 USD (UNAP Kosovo) to 8060 USD (Croatia). The countries exhibit a variable geometry regarding EU membership and accession⁴ and IBRD/World Bank loan conditionality⁵, in the context of their

⁴ 2 are member states, 3 have candidate states, 2 have a signed Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), 2 others are negotiating an SAA and UNAP Kosovo has a special Stability Tracking Mechanism. Member states qualify for EU Structural Funds (EUF), all the others now qualify for funding under the new Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Indicative IPA funding levels are shown in Annex 1. Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey, as candidate countries, qualify for assistance under five components: I Transition Assistance and Institution Building; II. Cross-Border Co-operation; III Regional development; IV. Human resources development (including social cohesion and preparation for Social Funds); and V. Rural development. All other countries and territories benefit from funding under Components I and II only.

⁵ According to the OECD/DAC classification for 2006 Lower Middle Income Countries (LMICs) are those with a GNI per capita of between 826 USD and 3255 USD and Upper Middle Income Countries (UMIC) are those between 3,256 USD and 10,065 USD. 7 SEE countries can borrow from the International Bank for

status in relation to economic/wealth, human development, and political/stability/sovereignty criteria, which help to explain the amounts, sources, and types of aid flows received. The Table below captures some of the complexity of this.

Table 2:1 Strategic classification of the countries and territories of SEE (adapted from Joshua, 2007 and Deacon and Stubbs, 2007a)

	EU Accession Status (funding)	GNI Per Capita US\$	OECD/DAC Classification	Lending Category	UNDP Human Devt Index Rank	UNDP HDI rank minus GDP rank
Albania	Signed and Ratified SAA (IPA)	2580	LMIC	IDA Blend	73	26
Bosnia Herzegovina	Negotiating SAA (IPA)	2440	LMIC	IDA Blend	62	16
Bulgaria	Member (1.1.07) (EUF)	3450	UMIC	IBRD	54	12
Croatia	Candidate (IPA)	8060	UMIC	IBRD	44	7
UNAP Kosovo	STM (IPA)	1600	LMIC	Grant	-	-
FYR Macedonia	Candidate (IPA)	2830	LMIC	IBRD	66	16
Montenegro	Signed SAA (IPA)	n/k	LMIC	IBRD	-	-
Romania	Member (1.1.07) (EUF)	3830	UMIC	IBRD	60	3
Serbia	Negotiating SAA (IPA)	3280 (includes Montenegro)	LMIC	IBRD	-	-
Turkey	Candidate (IPA)	4710	UMIC	IBRD	92	-22

2.8 Throughout the region, the nature and content of the relationship between the European Union, the World Bank and the UN agencies is important in terms of ‘steering’ social policy, social protection and child care reform. The nature of this steer, the degree of attention to children, and the complementarity between different kinds of steering documents, varies considerably however. Indeed, it is important to note that, whilst all countries issue Millennium Development Goal reports, these are less important than Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs, which have been produced in Albania, BiH, Serbia and Montenegro) and the EU’s Social Inclusion process (Bulgaria and Romania as member states will now produce Social Inclusion Action Plans (NAP/Inc); Croatia has signed a Joint Inclusion Memorandum; Turkey is negotiating a JIM and work on FYR Macedonia’s JIM will soon begin), not least because of the programme and project funding associated with these documents. The relationship between EU Accession strategies, JIMs, National Development Programmes, and PRSPs are extremely complex but important. Where several strategic frameworks co-exist, above and beyond the inevitable overlaps and contradictory priorities, the sheer volume of commitments can be overwhelming. It is not unusual for PRSPs, National Development Plans and EU Integration strategy documents to identify several hundred priority actions, objectives and measures, each with their own set of indicators but, rarely, properly sequenced or prioritised and, even more rarely, adequately costed, representing an

Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) but with no concessionary rates. 2 countries are eligible for International Development Assistance (IDA) concessional loans but, because of their credit worthiness, also qualify for IBRD loans (this is called having Blend status) (World Bank, 2007) These categorisations were revised on 1 July 2007 with Montenegro and Serbia now joining the group of ‘normal’ IBRD borrowers. UNAP Kosovo, as it is not a country, does not qualify for loans although some interim arrangements are in place.

impossibly inflated volume of policy commitments⁶. As noted in more detail in section 3, the extent to which child care reform is addressed in these documents, particularly in the JIMs and in the PRSPs, also varies greatly.

2.9 Of course, whilst the priorities, mandates and modes of support differ between the different organisations, recent years have seen, at least at the level of stated policy commitments, a much greater rapprochement, in terms of the importance of social protection and, indeed, children's rights. The recent communication from the European Commission on the "urgent need for a comprehensive EU strategy to increase the scale and effectiveness of EU commitments to improve the situation of children globally and to demonstrate real political will at the highest possible level to ensure that the promotion and protection of children's rights get the place they merit on the EU's agenda" (European Commission, 2006; 6) is important in terms of the possibility of a comprehensive children's rights strategy reflected in EU strategic support, programming and funding in SEE. Whilst there is nothing similar from the World Bank, and, indeed, "it is still not possible to give a definitive answer as to what is (World) Bank social policy" (Deacon, 2007; 37), recent conferences and publications suggest considerably greater sophistication in terms of social policy broadly conceived, seeking to balance equity with efficiency, tailoring programmes to country context, and a greater focus on child poverty alongside access to health and education (cf. World Bank, 2005a and 2005b), as well as increasing evidence, in SEE, of an attempt to channel lending towards supporting the EU accession process.

2.10 Child care reform is an issue on which a broad general consensus has emerged amongst the key international organisations in SEE, although some agencies do still fund projects which, if not exactly counter to the consensus, are, at best, tangential to it. Increasingly, however, a broad commitment has been made to promoting an inclusive, client-centred approach in which a range of community-based services are provided by a range of licensed state and non state providers, working to agreed quality standards. Within this, there is some recognition that institutional care needs to be transformed, to cover fewer beneficiaries, for a shorter time, more closely linked to a range of preventive, respite and rehabilitative services. Alongside individual and family-oriented case planning, local social planning and community-based responses to social problems are at the heart of a reformed system, with professionals more accountable in terms of their role in empowering individuals, families and communities. There is, perhaps, less agreement on how to approach the reform in terms of co-ordinated steps to align legislation, procedures, institutions, budgets, standards, and skills, through strategic support, fiscal incentives, technical assistance, capacity building, piloting the development of new services, and so on. Whilst much of the project, programme and strategic support have mostly been channelled towards these objectives, there have been different emphases in different places; with the mandates, modes of operation, and strengths and weaknesses of different organizations sometimes clashing. It is this complexity that we address below.

⁶ I am grateful to Laurie Joshua for pointing this out. In the example he gave, in Albania the NSSD [local variant of the PRSP] identified 822 priority actions; the EU Integration Strategy identified 182 objectives and 415 measures; while the Government Action Plan identified around 700 measures. (Personal email communication 13 May 2007).

3. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CHILD CARE REFORM IN SEE: A SWOT ANALYSIS

3.1 This section represents the most substantive part of the paper, providing an overview of the roles and configurations of international organizations in each country in the SEE region, before aggregating this in terms of a SWOT analysis of the role of the World Bank, the EU, UNDP, UNICEF, DFID and SIDA in social protection and in child care system reform in the region. The text cannot, of course, go into detail regarding each country and, in this sense, should be seen as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, other background papers commissioned for the conference. For each country, in the Table below, I attempt to summarise key issues in terms of child care reforms and outline key roles of key agencies:

Table 3.1: Summary of International Organizations and Child Care Reform in SEE

COUNTRY	CHILD CARE REFORM	AGENCIES AND ACTIVITIES
Albania	Low GNI per capita; high educational drop out rates; persistent regional inequalities; but relatively low rates of institutionalised children. Concern re children with disabilities, minorities and trafficked children. Increasing concern with violence against children and with children left behind in in-formal care arrangements. Child care reform concerned with introducing holistic child rights framework.	UNDP work on MDGs EU work on Policy admin strengthening World Bank work on PRSP-National Development Strategy UNICEF focus on child rights Save the Children Albania – disability focus OSCE work on disability issues and on anti-trafficking Some joint working between agencies
Bosnia-H	Complex post-war governance/admin environment makes coherent reform difficult – connecting municipal-canton-entity-state levels. Medium rates of institutionalisation but concern re quality of care and for minorities, children with disabilities Foster care expenditures very unevenly developed NGOs face problems being integrated into system	Public admin reform a priority of UNDP, EU, World Bank and USAID Social policy planning introduced by DFID, UNICEF and others (SIDA, Norway, World bank), now has some OSCE involvement UNICEF and INGOs including Save the Children working on developing alternatives for children without parental care PRSP – MTDS has a social protection and child rights focus (World Bank and others) EU-UNICEF strategic partnership 'Social protection strategy for children's rights' Crowded field with attempts being made to co-ordinate
Bulgaria	Long-standing concern with high rates of institutionalised children, now falling slowly with alternatives being developed in context of more state steering Particular concern re children from minorities and those with disabilities Concern with street and homeless children	World Bank now less important EU – UNICEF – INGO concern with institutionalised children became more coherent in context of state bodies developing capacity (standards) Top-down meeting bottom-up reform to an extent EU accession process was important but political will needed (Sotiropoulou and Sotiropoulos, 2007)

COUNTRY	CHILD CARE REFORM	AGENCIES AND ACTIVITIES
Croatia	<p>Child-friendly policies slow to develop in context of generally stalled social protection reform</p> <p>Medium to low rates of institutionalisation but concern with children with disabilities and those leaving care</p> <p>More developed NGO provision inc community-based services but local planning still uneven</p> <p>Innovations in foster care recruitment but regional inequalities remain</p> <p>Some concern re social policy-health co-ordination.</p>	<p>World Bank-DFID-EU-UNDP involvement in reform not always consistent – cash and services; infrastructure; NGO development</p> <p>EU-JIM process important potential catalyst for change</p> <p>UNICEF work with Ministry on foster care and on child care services reform is bringing results</p> <p>Decentralisation and public admin reform (EU/USAID/World Bank) beginning to address social services</p> <p>SIDA support on social work training</p> <p>'Drivers for change' sometimes absent (Stubbs and Zrinščak, 2006)</p>
UNAP Kosovo	<p>Low GNI per capita; persistent regional inequalities; complex politico-admin-judicial environment; issues of majority-minority relations</p> <p>New legal, service and training infrastructure</p> <p>Low rates of institutionalised children but concern re children with disabilities</p> <p>General concern re child rights monitoring</p> <p>Decentralisation processes only just beginning</p> <p>Welfare mix undeveloped</p>	<p>UNMIK focus on rule of law</p> <p>World Bank limited because of lack of loans but</p> <p>World Bank/DFID social protection project – capacity building of PISG-MoLSA-DSW</p> <p>UNDP focus on MDG frame and regional inequalities</p> <p>EU slow to focus on child care services</p> <p>UNICEF concern with overall child rights framework</p> <p>Involvement of OSCE in social rights</p> <p>SIDA focus on Roma</p> <p>SDC concern with juvenile justice</p> <p>Some partnership working but co-ordination at the beginning</p>
FYR Macedonia	<p>Need to modernise child care system and facilities</p> <p>Complex admin divisions – concern re minorities</p> <p>Development of welfare mix not complete</p> <p>Medium rates of institutionalised children but concern re children with disabilities, Roma, and trafficked children</p> <p>Ministry seeking to steer reforms</p>	<p>EU has been active in promoting child care reform and JIM process may contribute more.</p> <p>Ministry – UNICEF – WHO memorandum on de-institutionalisation regarding children with disabilities</p> <p>World Bank with some involvement but no PRSP</p> <p>Many donors (including SIDA) concern with Roma</p> <p>Work on capacity building</p> <p>Co-ordination on some aspects more than others</p>
Montenegro	<p>Need to modernise child care system and facilities</p> <p>Concern re children in poverty</p> <p>Slow development of integrated community-based services</p> <p>Inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education</p> <p>Medium rates of institutionalised children – concern re Roma., also trafficked children.</p>	<p>World Bank – PRSP has a child rights focus in many parts</p> <p>EU – new strategic focus building on concern with IDPs, Roma</p> <p>EU – UNICEF and others partner on juvenile justice reform</p> <p>UNDP focus on MDGs</p> <p>OSCE work on trafficking and gender</p> <p>SIDA work on Roma, social work</p>

COUNTRY	CHILD CARE REFORM	AGENCIES AND ACTIVITIES
Romania	<p>Long-standing concern with high rates of institutionalised children, now falling slowly with alternatives being developed in context of more state steering</p> <p>Large number of NGOs slowly being integrated into welfare mix of services</p> <p>Concern with trafficked children; children with disabilities; minorities</p> <p>Juvenile justice reform is a priority – children in detention</p> <p>Attempts to promote integrated quality services</p>	<p>EU active in accession period and now through NAP/Inc process</p> <p>UNICEF-Govt partnerships for holistic policies</p> <p>UNICEF – EU and others involved in juvenile justice reform</p> <p>World Bank less involved in child care reform – some child poverty focus</p> <p>Some joint UN agency work</p> <p>SIDA focus on Roma</p> <p>Emphasis on strategic development and new agencies to steer reform</p>
Serbia	<p>Need to modernise child care system and facilities</p> <p>Concern with child poverty, especially amongst RDPs and Roma</p> <p>Ministry steering of reforms not always fully supported by IOs</p> <p>Concern with children with disabilities, Roma, juvenile justice</p> <p>Welfare mix not fully functioning (standards)</p> <p>Transformation of institutions and e-institutionalisation now a political priority</p>	<p>World Bank – focus on PRSP</p> <p>UNICEF has partnered with others (MoSA, DFID, Norway, etc) on social services reform</p> <p>UNICEF – key partner to the Ministry of Justice (SIDA funding) on juvenile justice system reform</p> <p>Local social planning programmes (DFID and others)</p> <p>EU less concerned with social policy thus far</p>
Turkey	<p>Long-term concern with poverty and growing regional inequalities</p> <p>Low rates of institutional care but little improvement</p> <p>No co-ordination of cash and care</p> <p>Concerns re juvenile justice</p>	<p>EU accession and JIM process is a lever for reform</p> <p>World Bank – focus on social policy issues</p> <p>UNICEF in critical partnership with EU on issues of child poverty in the JIM.</p> <p>UNICEF – key government partner for Juvenile Justice system reform</p> <p>IMF is powerful in terms of macro-economic policies</p> <p>Little coherence and co-ordination between agencies</p>

3.2 It can be seen, then, that the ability of UNICEF and other IOs with a focus on children’s rights to work with either the EU or the World Bank or, in some cases, with both, on the theme of child care system reform, is somewhat variable. This variation relates, of course, in complex ways to the country’s status in terms of the PRSP process and EU accession; the visibility and seriousness of the problems of the current child care system; and the nature, level and focus of ‘steering’ by key governmental bodies, be they Ministries or particular designated agencies. In addition, of course, involvement of diverse IOs are constrained and framed in terms of their mandates and mission statements in the region and the overall Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats which frame their involvement in child care reform. It is to this issue that I now turn, dealing, with the World Bank; the EU; UNDP; UNICEF; DFID; and SIDA.

3.3 A SWOT Analysis, used increasingly in the social development field in the past twenty years, originally derives from the field of corporate planning. Essentially, it is a strategic planning tool to enable a clearer picture of the relationship between an organization or, in this case, a number of organizations and the environment in which they operate. Strengths refer to the positive aspects of an organization in relation to the issue concerned and Weaknesses, of course, to the negative aspects. Opportunities and Threats are, largely, those factors outside the organization's immediate control but which, nevertheless, affect the meeting of goals in relation to the issue concerned. In participatory planning, organizations utilise a SWOT analysis to identify ways of building on their strengths, reducing their weaknesses, maximising the opportunities present in the wider environment, and minimising the impact of external threats (cf. Dräger et al, 2004; 15).

3.4 In this context, derived from the material available, the SWOT represents the author's subjective view of the key factors which impede or impel a more holistic progressive approach to child care system reform in SEE. Each Table is preceded by a brief overview of the mission of the organization and, where known, its stated priorities and modalities in SEE. As SWOTs always relate to a wider context, the tables below consider Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in relation to three levels of abstraction, themselves inter-linked and not always easily separable, indicated by different typefaces as follows:

Level 1: Relates to the organization's general approach and/or to general factors in the external environment;

Level 2: Relates to the organization's approach to social policy and/or to the social policy environment; and

Level 3: Relates to the organization's approach to child care policy and/or to the general child care policy environment.

The World Bank.

3.5 The Europe and Central Asia Division of the World Bank covers the transition countries of Central, Eastern and South East Europe and the former Soviet Union plus Turkey. Whilst the Bank's work in those transition countries which are member states of the European Union is now primarily focused on analytical and intellectual support, it is active in supporting reforms elsewhere in the region through loans, credits and grants and in terms of direct projects, capacity building and technical assistance. It is hard to find an important area of socio-economic life, or to find a reform agenda, where the World Bank is not involved, at least at some level, from major infrastructure investments through to small grants to women's or youth NGOs.

3.6 In terms of social policy issues, the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM) network of the Bank, and the Social development section of the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Section (ESSD) network are both involved. The Bank's social policy focus is linked to broader macro-economic reforms and is, primarily, concerned with issues of poverty, especially in those countries which draw up PRSPs. This means that issues of child care reform are not a major focus of concern although, sometimes, they become a focus of more general social welfare reforms and sometimes, project funding is obtained for joint work with other agencies, as exemplified in the World Bank-UNICEF 'Changing Minds, Policies and Lives' work (World Bank/UNICEF, 2003). The SWOT below addresses salient issues in the World Bank's roles in child care reform. Whilst many doubt the Bank's competence in the field, it is an important international actor, along with the IMF, in key aspects of social protection reform which have a significant impact on child care systems.

For this reason, engagement and dialogue with the Bank on these themes is necessary and relevant.

3.7 Table 3.2: SWOT ANALYSIS – The World Bank

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong country presence and credibility (mobilise significant resources, clear implementation procedures and strong TA capacity) 2. Increasingly tie assistance to EU accession process 3. <i>Increasing concern with and experience in Social protection reform</i> 4. <i>Strong analytical and statistical focus provides evidence base for social protection reform</i> 5. <i>Steering of country-led PRSPs (in Albania, B-H, Serbia, Montenegro) provides leverage for change</i> 6. Partnership with UNICEF ('Changing Minds, Policies and Lives') provides knowledge and practice base for reforms 7. Sophisticated approach to fiscal and governance issues crucial to child care reform 8. Increasing focus on minorities and on people with disabilities includes concern with institutional care 9. Poverty work increasingly recognises child and family poverty as a major challenge 10. Work in partnership with DFID and others in the region on social services reform, including child care reform 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approach can be over-technicised and rule bound/inflexible 2. Links with EU still under-developed 3. <i>Social protection work still dominated by 2 concerns: i) cash benefits and transfers and ii) costs.</i> 4. <i>'Social' dimension of work still subordinated to a macro-economic frame</i> 5. <i>Statistical work is not always value-free (cf. St Clair, 2006)</i> 6. PRSPs insufficiently child focused with almost no attention to institutionalised populations 7. Partnership with UNICEF not built on – rather, an isolated project in need of updating and refining 8. Full potential of partnership with DFID not realised 9. Top down and bottom up approaches to reform rarely meet
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Country strategies are regularly updated and can be influenced 2. Range of responsive funding opportunities still remains 3. Potential to mobilise expertise and lessons learning 4. Can 'pull weight' with key policy makers 5. <i>'Social' dimension of the work may grow in importance and influence</i> 6. Open to 'new' partnerships on 'new' themes, including child care reform 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited and reduced role in Middle Income and EU Accession countries 2. <i>Fate of the 'social' dimension of the work is unpredictable</i> 3. Limited expertise in child care reform

The European Union

3.8 The European Union is a regional bloc of member states which also has a series of relationships with non-member states, amounting to a series of complex, interlocking, redistributive, regulatory and rights-based mechanisms and approaches. The last two expansions of the European Union, of ten new member states on 1 May 2004, and of Bulgaria and Romania on 1 January 2007 have raised fundamental questions about the nature of the European Social Model or, perhaps more accurately, the social dimension of the EU, in the context of enlargement and inclusion of post-communist countries in transition (cf. Vaughan-Whitehead, 2003). As the countries of SEE join or aspire to join the EU, it is clear that the EU will become increasingly important in the transformation of the region. The modes of

engagement and patterns of funding, whilst at the moment best conceived as a kind of ‘variable geometry’ will also change, as resources are shifted away from short-term humanitarian assistance to more long-term capacity building and administrative strengthening in preparation for membership (Lendvai, 2007).

3.9 Whilst rules and regulations are important for member states and candidate countries, there is increasing emphasis on ‘cognitive Europeanisation’ as a kind of learning process through which EU ‘ways of doing things’ become “incorporated in the logic of domestic discourses, identities, political structures and public policies” (Radaelli, 2003; 30). This is the case in terms of social policy which fails, mostly, under the ‘soft law’ umbrella governed by the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC), which involves an innovative linkage between broad policy agendas, best practice, and mutual learning. The framing of the EU’s concerns in terms of an evolving agenda of social inclusion (cf. Marlier et al, 2007) is important, not least as the EU spreads this agenda to candidate countries through the elaboration of Joint Inclusion Memoranda (JIMs) and in the light of recent EU policy statements on mainstreaming child rights throughout its work. The EU influence produces statistical alignments, participatory processes, and best practice in these fields. In 2007, the OMC is focusing on child poverty and social inclusion of children as the major cross-cutting theme, and a Task Force of the Indicators Sub-Group of the Child protection Committee is working on producing new indicators on child well-being for use in the NAP process. In addition, EU partnership arrangements can respond to concerns from civil society and, as in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, issues of child rights were elevated above soft law to be key human rights accession criteria.

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3:10 Table 3:3 SWOT Analysis – the European Union

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear contractual, legal and financial frame governs SAA/Accession process – providing clear incentive effects 2. ‘Cognitive Europeanisation’ has long-lasting impacts on policy agendas 3. <i>European Social Model or social framework is robust and adaptable, providing clear obligations on member states in terms of social policy</i> 4. <i>Lisbon agenda commits EU to work on fighting poverty and social exclusion</i> 5. <i>Revised Lisbon agenda focuses attention on long-term care</i> 6. Recent clear statement on importance of child rights and child mainstreaming in EU's global policies 7. Strong recent focus on child poverty and exclusion 8. Evolving OMC on social exclusion includes goals, indicators, reporting and learning structures which includes attention to children 9. Lessons available from support to child care reform in old, new and very new member states (especially in Bulgaria, Romania and the Baltic states) 10. Evolving holistic approach to social protection and community-based services 11. Statistics increasingly sensitive to disaggregated child data and emphasising child well-being 12. EU continues to support European networks on children, disabilities, and minorities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment to implementation is too slow 2. Little commitment to working with the World Bank 3. Limited commitment to working with UNICEF/UN 4. <i>'Social' dimensions not core to accession process</i> 5. <i>Sub-contracted consultants in the social sphere can make TA 'a lottery' (de la Porte and Deacon, 2002)</i> 6. Absence of long-term strategic partnerships on children's rights 7. EC is a complex bureaucratic body which is hard to engage with, rarely speaking with one voice, and with frequent staff changes 8. Child rights NGOs do not have same status as disability and gender organizations
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New IPA funding structures can be influenced through advocacy and lobbying 2. Strategic partnerships with UNDP and ILO offer possibilities for others 3. Some new flexibility and innovation in funding structures 4. <i>JIMs and NAP/Incs provide specific leverage points for a more progressive social policy</i> 5. <i>Increasing focus on linkages between health and social services</i> 6. Child rights statement offers a window – new structures will be put in place, new networks created 7. Synergy effects of programme areas even more likely in future (e.g. work to include more child well-being indicators) 8. EU is open to strategic partnerships in this field 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expansion fatigue may limit incentive effects of all modalities 2. Disconnect between policies and programmes may increase 3. <i>Social Europe is challenged by some member states</i> 4. 'Mainstreaming children' could become tokenistic

The United Nations Development Programme

3.11 UNDP is the lead programme agency of the UN in most of the developing and transition world, supporting sustainable human development. Its work on development covers

grants aid, technical assistance, and capacity building in a large number of sectors, including social development. In recent years, UNDP has focused on questions of governance reform and on anti-poverty strategies. UNDP is the lead UN agency in terms of supporting and enabling countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets and to develop social policies to facilitate this. UNDP's Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC) serves 29 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, where it has worked since 1992. With its headquarters in New York, RBEC comprises 24 country offices and a Regional Centre in Bratislava.

3.12 Throughout SEE, UNDP has worked hard to steer the MDG process towards a more European agenda, working with national governments on national MDG reports and, increasingly, supporting work on the sub-national level in terms of the Human Development Index and the MDGs. In addition, regional work has focused on cross-cutting issues of gender, minorities including Roma (cf. UNDP, 2002) and people with disabilities. In some countries, UNDP is beginning to supply technical assistance to the EU Social inclusion process. Under dynamic new leadership both globally and regionally, and in the context of UN reforms including the much vaunted 'One UN/Delivering as One' framework, UNDP is likely in the future to be central to UN initiatives seeking to promote sustainable, pro-poor reform. Hence, whilst it has tended to defer to UNICEF on child care issues, one could conceive of new practices and strategic alliances emerging in the future on this theme. The 'value added' of UNDP's work rests less on its funding base, although it can exercise some leverage here, and more in terms of global networks of social protection experts.

3.13 Table 3:4 SWOT Analysis – UNDP

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to co-ordinate and mobilise all parts of the UN family 2. MDGs provide an umbrella in which social policies and child rights issues can be framed 3. Europeanisation of MDGs in SEE opens up new areas for partnership 4. Has a strategic partnership with the EU and increasing experience of working with the EU on social issues 5. Strong emphasis on policy development and governance so important in child care reform 6. Experience in Area-based development programmes could be utilised for meso-level planning of child care services 7. Human Development Reports provide an advocacy focus including on child rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sometimes dominates UN efforts at expense of other agencies' distinctive contribution 2. Rarely collaborates with the World Bank 3. MDGs too focused on basic health and education and less influential in transition contexts. 4. Strategic partnership with EU has not prioritised social issues 5. Social protection programming is too diverse and ad hoc 6. Limited expertise in child care reform issues
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One UN/'Delivering as One' offers chance of more streamlined and effective engagement (Albania is a pilot country) 2. Role of Regional office could become more important in facilitating learning 3. RBEC increasingly focused on social inclusion issues 4. More links with UNICEF likely in future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UN reform (including One UN) may lead to introverted focus 2. Trend to more rather than less technicised programming 3. 'Value added' of social policy interventions may be lessened in future 4. 'Turf wars' with UNICEF could develop

The United Nations Children’s Fund

3.14 For more 60 years UNICEF has worked throughout the world providing emergency assistance and promoting the human development and empowerment of children and women. Through pioneering directors such as James Grant, and with influential intellectual voices such as Sir Richard Jolly, UNICEF did more than any other UN agency to monitor and challenge the human costs of structural adjustment in the 1980s and ‘shock therapy’ in transition countries in the early 1990s. The Innocenti research Centre’s pioneering TransMONEE database and Social Monitoring Reports, under the leadership of Giovanni Andrea Cornia, played a crucial role in providing evidence that the transition was failing large numbers of vulnerable children and advocating for alternative policies.

3.15 Operationally, UNICEF has moved in the last fifteen years from a traditional humanitarian and sectoral focus to a greater concern with policy and advocacy, including an holistic focus on social protection and child protection, including an emphasis on child care system reform. Its regional office for the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, based in Geneva, serves 22 countries, all of which have also country offices/teams/programmes, including all the countries and territories of SEE.. UNICEF provides support to Governments and civil society in relation to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as offering expertise on child survival and development; health; education, participation; and child protection.

3.16 Table 3:5 SWOT Analysis - UNICEF

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong in-country presence with respect from partners 2. Increased focus on social protection including child care system reform 3. Strong intellectual and practical base enabling transfer of skills effectively 4. Increased focus on policies, institutions and budgets 5. Strong advocacy and campaign focus 6. <i>Recent concern with social policy reform builds on commitment to evidence-based approach</i> 7. Child rights mandate and expertise built around rights-based approach of CRC 8. Long-term partnerships with child rights INGOs 9. Increasing focus on strategic partnerships with World bank and/or EU on child care reform 10. Advocacy focus brings children’s voices into policy arena on child care reform issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relatively low levels of funding available – can be ‘spread too thinly’ 2. Still focused on traditional sectors 3. Still little experience of strategic partnerships with EU or World Bank 5. Tension between work with and criticism of Govts 6. Some element of competition with key child rights INGOs 7. Fiscal dimensions of child care reform not well understood 8. Child focus can distort wider social service reform
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional office keen to support mutual learning 2. EU strategic partnership is likely in future on social inclusion and child rights 3. One UN may provide more holistic attention to child rights issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May need to rationalise its presence in middle-income transition countries 2. One UN may erode distinctive child rights focus

The UK Government's Department for International Development

3.17 DFID (DFID) is the part of the UK Government that manages Britain's aid to poor and transition countries and works to eliminate poverty. As well as funding, and seeking to influence global and regional actors including the World bank and the EU, DFID works directly through country offices in parts of Central and South Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. DFID's overall budget continues to rise, from 3.8 billion GBP in 2004-5, to 4.5 billion GBP in 2005-6 and 5.3 billion GBP in 2006-7, with a commitment to reach 0.7% of GNI by 2013. Over time its commitment to Eastern Europe has declined in financial terms representing less than 10% of total aid expenditures.

3.18 In the last ten years, DFID has pioneered work on social policy reform in much of SEE, continuing to see it as one of its regional assistance priorities. This work, often alongside the World Bank, has focused on holistic social protection reform, linking bottom-up community-based planning with top-down adjustments to legislation and regulatory frameworks. A particular emphasis has been on partnerships between state and non-state actors. As noted in the SWOT, DFID's approach has been flexible and geared to changing circumstances. However, as is the case with many IOs, organization learning was not always maximised so that initiatives began under one DFID team were not always carried forward as staff changed. DFID remains, however, a key actor in social policy reform in the region.

3.19 Table 3:6 SWOT Analysis - DFID

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1. Flexible funder committed to combining theoretical and practical approaches to social development problems within longer-term funding cycle 2. Concerned with analysing local context and understanding 'drivers of change' 3. <i>Long-term focus on anti-poverty work converts to a significant emphasis on social policy and social protection reform in SEE</i> 4. <i>Partnerships with the World Bank have maximised synergies in terms of social policy reform</i> 5. <i>Reform agendas responsive to national and local concerns</i> 6. <i>Increasing focus on social inclusion allied to an EU agenda</i> 7. Funding transformation of institutions work in a number of SEE countries	1. Flexibility not always shared by consultants/implementing agencies 2. Intellectual fashions come and go relatively quickly within the organization 3. Decreased focus on SEE over time 4. <i>Social protection work has found top down – bottom up connections difficult to make</i> 5. <i>Pilots have created false positives</i> 6. <i>Partnerships with World Bank have, sometimes, squeezed out other initiatives</i> 7. Little direct focus on child care reform
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1. Number of projects and programmes are now in place and can be influenced 2. <i>Influence on EU frameworks can be increased</i>	1. Decline in funding will continue 2. Little interest in supporting UN agencies in a European context

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

3.20 SIDA is the main Swedish Government Development agency, accounting for about 55% of Sweden's total aid budget which in 2005 was some 14 billion SEK (almost €2 billion). In eastern Europe and Central Asia, Development programmes incorporate most countries of the former USSR and Yugoslavia, plus Albania and Turkey as well as the central Asian countries of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Activities in SEE seek to promote the EU integration process, with a switch from humanitarian assistance to longer-term development

partnerships covering a wide range of themes including gender equality, Roma rights, and social issues. SIDA is influential in its own right and in partnership with other Scandinavian donors and with DFID.

3.21 SIDA was one of the first bilaterals to incorporate children and children’s rights as an integral part of their development cooperation policies. The document *Shared Responsibility: Sweden’s Policy for Global Development* (Government Bill 2002/03:122 December 2003) legally mandates this commitment, and *The Rights of the Child as a Perspective in Development Cooperation 2001/02:186* (May 2002) is a government communication on how to integrate the rights of the child as a perspective which states SIDA’s four strategic priorities: social reform, education, health and inputs for disadvantaged children (cf. CIDA, 2006).

3.22 Table 3:7 SWOT Analysis - SIDA

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1. Flexible funder committed to combining theoretical and practical approaches to social development problems within longer-term funding cycle 2. Concerned with analysing local context and understanding ‘drivers of change’ 3. <i>Consistent support for social work training in SEE</i> 4. <i>Reform agendas responsive to national and local concerns</i> 5. <i>Strong gender component in all programming</i> 6. <i>Roma programme is concerned with social aspects of exclusion</i> 7. Funds UNICEF work on child care policy reform 8. Clear, legally mandated, commitments to child rights in all programming priorities	1. Strategic focus not well-developed 2. Little direct focus on child care reform
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1. Number of projects and programmes are now in place and can be influenced 2. <i>Influence on EU frameworks can be increased</i> 3. Possibility of strong partnerships and synergies for child care reform	1. Could become marginalised in context of EU funding

4. SOME BROAD CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Notwithstanding the efforts of IOs and their national partners, it is still the case that external assistance has at times „contributed to a fragmented, inconsistent, badly sequenced, and short-term reform agenda” (Bošnjak and Stubbs, 2007). The reasons for this gap between rhetoric and reality is, therefore, of considerable importance analytically and practically. Whilst by no means exhaustive, the following seven key problems emerge from the case studies of countries and agencies, albeit unevenly. These problems represent, in a sense, the tentative conclusions of this study regarding the cumulative negative effects of external assistance and, as such, need discussing and, wherever possible, action.

One: Other reforms fail to consider impacts on child care and/or have unintended negative consequences for child care system reform.

4.2 System reform is complex. The child care system is only one of a number of interlocking systems and is, often, not the top priority in terms of reform measures. Hence, other reforms, particularly those relating to social assistance and those relating to different forms of decentralization, deconcentration and devolution, can have negative impacts on child care reform. These are often the main concern of agencies that do not have child care reform as a major plank of their mandate. Whilst social assistance to families and children and social services are highly correlated in terms of policy (the inter-connection between cash and care), particularly in the context of developing and providing community-based social services including funding for foster carers and other informal carers such as family members, these are often treated as distinct reform areas. The way in which incentives in budgets are structured to facilitate a balance of service provision between residential and community-based services; and the manner in which finance for residential services and social assistance payments are often structured into the central budget, while community-based social services are delegated to local tiers of government, is also rarely considered in decentralization reform programmes.

Two: Reform efforts are often piecemeal and un-coordinated, rather than carefully planned, synchronized, and with a clear and agreed division of labour.

4.3 Notwithstanding efforts to ensure greater co-ordination following the Paris Declaration, the reform efforts supported by different international organizations have different histories, work to different timescales, and are not always based on a clear division of labour. In particular, strategy development with national counterparts, particularly Government, is often treated as a component within an external assistance project, rather than *a priori* the first step, and different organisations can treat different strategic documents as *the* reform blueprint. Whilst strengthening of preventive services has been a priority everywhere, this has sometimes meant the strengthening of existing institutional structures rather more than the development of alternative services, in part because investments in what already exists, and in bricks and mortar, are easier to provide than alternative services for which there is no precedent in country. In addition, strengthening preventive services *per se*, with no linkage to the transformation of institutional care, merely leads to net widening. The two key policy frames in the region, PRSPs leading to National Development Strategies and the EU Social Inclusion process are haphazard in terms of the extent to which they emphasize issues of child care and its reform. Sometimes, diverse interventions create parallel social welfare sectors with few incentives for dialogue or collaboration between, say, state and NGO providers.

Three: International assistance is rule bound and there are time lags between assessment and implementation.

4.4 International organizations have different rules, different time scales and varying amounts of room for manoeuvre and flexibility in the face of changing circumstances. Child care system reform is not only complex but also needs to be able to adjust to these changing circumstances. Requests for assistance which may be highly relevant at the time of initial assessment, become less so by the time a tender has been issued and consultants are on board. This is particularly the case with EU assistance programmes and, to an extent, with World Bank programmes. The willingness and ability of the consultants appointed, and the donor organisation, to then re-examine and request or allow changes in the terms of reference, also varies. The sub-contracted nature of a great deal of international assistance leads, it must be said, to too many pro-forma reports being filed in drawers and too many lock-in effects as all in a programme adhere to out-dated and sub-optimal terms of reference. The danger of too many foreign consultants, working to different agendas and understandings, should also be noted, not least because of the danger of undermining commitment to national ownership and leadership of reforms. International consultants can be high cost and supply driven, and have sub-optimal impact on facilitating capacity development because of a weak appreciation of underlying political issues, or an unrealistic expectation of the role that external advice can play in addressing systemic and structural challenges. Rules may make it difficult to engage the appropriate local consultants in leadership roles, also.

Four: International organizations have tended to prioritise working with ‘champions of change’ at the expense of ensuring wider buy in.

4.5 There is recognition that all reforms have supporters and opponents. However, there is sometimes a tendency to support individual or small groups of ‘champions of change’ who may not have the ability or power to really take system change forward. Support for lone ‘champions of change’ can, in fact, be counter-productive, actually strengthening a coalition to resist reform. Increasingly, there is an understanding that building a wider consensus for reform is crucial, ensuring the support of all stakeholders, including parents, those employed in the system, professionals, and wider publics, through awareness raising, campaigns, and educational events. Again, this is time consuming but vital, not least since the champions of change may themselves be marginalised members of marginalised Ministries.

Five: The ‘passion for pilots’ has, sometimes, proved to be unsustainable and has created false positives.

4.6 In part as a result of the modalities of external assistance and in part because of a well-intentioned commitment to ‘kick start’ reform through demonstration projects, a great deal of time and money has been invested in what have been described as ‘pilots’ which are, usually, small-scale interventions, in a municipality or in a single institution or new service, in which reforms can be ‘tested’ and, where successful, ‘scaled up’ to national level. Sometimes, however, pilots became an end in themselves and the issue of ‘going to scale’ was either not addressed or abandoned when faced with difficulties (cf Maglajlić Holiček and Rašidagić, 2007). At times, high profile projects received levels of external funding which were unsustainable and unable to be absorbed in the system. Indeed, when ‘pilots’ involved significant investments in NGOs, especially when this by-passed governmental bodies, then the end result was, sometimes, a worsening of already existing tensions and resentments between the governmental and non-governmental spheres, which added to the unsustainability of the project.

Six: New agencies have been created which compete in a crowded arena for the leadership role in reforms.

4.7 At the national level, a phenomenon which is similar to that in terms of pilots has occurred in which new agencies have been created, sometimes linked to external assistance projects and, sometimes, created through external funding, with a claim to lead the reforms. Sometimes, a number of agencies compete for the mandate to lead the reform, producing sub-optimal outcomes and, again, sometimes worsening existing tensions rather than achieving consensus. In any case, the relationship between new agencies and existing bodies is often not clear so that informal practices emerge within a sub-optimal division of labour. New agencies can, themselves, become dependent on external assistance, again, creating a kind of false positive. Where the salaries of staff in these agencies are covered by donors and, in particular, when working conditions are perceived to be better than those of career civil servants in Ministries, further mistrust and resentment can occur.

Seven: The fiscal aspects of the reform have had less attention paid to them than legislative and procedural changes.

4.8 The fiscal and budgetary dimension of reforms have not been addressed to the extent that is needed, in part because of the complexity of this and, in part, because the revision of cash assistance schemes has been more of priority. As noted above, in addition, the degree of fiscal decentralisation is, often, discussed with regard to what are seen to be more important services, including health and education, with less attention given to social services. Sometimes, wholesale decentralisation, in the context of unequal regional resources, can lead to horizontal inequalities in service provision. In the countries of the region, a strong legalism pertains so that changes in laws and procedures are expected to result in system change which is not always the case. Technical assistance programmes tend to focus on one piece of a complex jigsaw without noting the importance of wider reforms in terms, particularly, of budgetary frameworks, fiscal decentralisation, and so on. This leads to technicised and, sometimes, routinised, even 'cut and paste', reports which are unimplementable without a wider change on the country's political economy.

4.9 Overall, there is a need to recognise the examples of good practice which exist in the region, and to learn from these in terms of priorities for the future, rather than endlessly debating the problems of external assistance, some of which are structural and difficult to change. A cautionary note should be sounded, however, regarding co-ordination of assistance which is often argued for in documents of this kind. Of course, co-ordination is vital but this also needs a great deal of thought, effort, the building of trust, and ensuring that those who take part in co-ordination bodies can deliver within their own organisations. Building a new division of labour for reform involves recognising the strengths and weaknesses of different organisations, involves the need to work with, but stretch mandates, the need for innovation in terms of all aspects of assistance (funding, contracting, implementation and evaluation), and to recognise and build on expertise and existing good practice rather than continually 'reinvent the wheel'.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

5.1 Based on the general points made above, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions from the preliminary study, which can be formed into a series of recommendations for action. These form a basis for discussion amongst the stakeholders at the SEE consultation, and, hopefully, can serve as a basis for further dialogue beyond the event.

One: Child mainstreaming

5.2 Since key policy documents, notably PRSPs, JIMs and NAP/Incls, and National Development Policies show an uneven commitment to mainstreaming children and, even more so in terms of promoting child care system reform, the first recommendation is that all stakeholders need to ensure greater emphasis on child mainstreaming⁷ and child care system reform in key documents on poverty reduction, social exclusion and national development strategies.

5.3 Different countries and territories are at different stages of developing, reviewing, and evaluating these strategic documents. There is a need to consult with child care reform specialists, perhaps through UNICEF involvement, to advise on the need for clear guidelines, indicators, and benchmarks to ensure that these documents are supportive of child care system reform. This suggests the need for the World Bank, the European Union, and country partners, to consult with and, where appropriate, commission UNICEF or another children's organisation, to undertake studies and to recommend projects and programmes to redress the deficit. Good practice in BiH between the EU and UNICEF in this regard could be utilised as a model for the region as a whole.

Two: The Cautionary (Do No Harm) Principle Should Apply

5.4 Work on policy reform in key aspects of social development, particularly social assistance and cash benefit reform, on the one hand, and decentralisation of services, on the other, have not addressed the issue of child care system reform as central. Hence, the second recommendation is that all policies which might potentially have implications for child care system reform should address, explicitly, these issues and ensure the minimisation of negative consequences (a 'do no harm' approach, as advocated by Anderson, et al, 2004) and, wherever possible, include a component specifically addressing child care reform. Moving beyond the now common practice of social impact assessments to more specific 'child impact assessments'⁸ and the development of 'children's budgets' could play an important part in this.

Three: Government Leadership in Reforms

5.5 The study has shown how leadership in reforms, in terms of agencies and a clear strategic blueprint, are often absent or contested. Hence, the third recommendation is that leadership in reforms should be taken by national Governments based on multi-stakeholder consultations. Wherever possible, a clear reform blueprint document should be agreed and

⁷ Child mainstreaming is „the incorporation of children's rights into all horizontal and vertical policies and systems of governance, ensuring that children are an integral part of all public policy making and implementation. It suggests that the quality of policy, finance and budgetary frameworks, governance structures, and the institutional environment are crucial but that, without mainstreaming children, progress in each of these is not guaranteed to translate into irreversible progress and improvements in the well-being of children.” (Joshua and Stubbs, 2007)

⁸ Child impact assessments are „a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, strategy, programme, legislation, project or proposal may be judged as to its potential effects on a child/children and the distribution of these effects on a child/children“ (Sylwander, 2001; 21)

revised and updated regularly. Where a new agency is created to ‘steer’ reforms, its mandate should be clear and agreed by all. Where a co-ordination body is established this should work to this blueprint and ensure feedback to donors and other international organizations on the priorities for programming, technical assistance, and other modalities of assistance.

5.7 As noted above, co-ordination is, itself, fraught with difficulties and needs goodwill and trust as much as formal agreements. Establishing a ‘clearing house’ in which requests for assistance are matched with appropriate donors is one way of optimising external assistance. In addition, there is a need to build the capacity of national stakeholders and international actors to ensure mutual understanding of what is possible and desirable. Ensuring that ‘pilot’ projects do not stand alone but, rather, fit into an agreed overall plan, could also ensure a greater return on investments. Such a body could maintain a list of valued consultants who have worked successfully on aspects of reform.

Four: The Principle of ‘The Three Ones’

5.8 At the very least, synonymous with a multi-donor commitment in terms of on-the-ground responses to HIV/Aids (cf. UNAIDS, 2004), donors should implement the principle of the three ones, as a basis for strategic development, efficient use of resources, and results-based management in terms of:

- **One** agreed Action Framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners.
- **One** National Coordinating Authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate.
- **One** agreed country-level Monitoring and Evaluation System.

5.9 In this context, statistical alignment in terms of the development of a shared statistical methodology and data-base to provide high quality, consistent, and comparable trend-based data for analysing country performance is a particular must. The EU’s work on revised indicators for Social Inclusion should be the base of this statistical alignment.

Five: New Strategic Partnerships are Needed

5.10 There is a need to advocate ensuring that both cash assistance and care services are addressed together in major social policy reform programmes and in addition, to ensure that proposals on decentralisation of services are not dominated by the perception that health and education services are more important. There is a need for much more regional work on balancing supply and demand in child care services which could, potentially, be taken on board by reform projects and programmes. A key theme emerging from the consultation is the need for clarification and agreement on terminology since ‘policy transfer’ is itself, a complex process of policy translation (cf. Lendvai and Stubbs, 2007) so that clarifying what is meant by terms such as ‘statutory services’; ‘gatekeeping’; temporary legitimised mandates’; ‘money follows the deinstitutionalised client’, and so on, involves far more than merely literal translation.

5.11 The clear potential complementarities between efforts in reforming cash transfers and efforts in terms of reforming services suggests the need for pro-active interface between agencies working on the former (including the World Bank) and those working on the latter (including UNICEF). In addition, the EU’s focus on social inclusion allows for more efforts on the provision of adequate housing and assistance in seeking employment for young people leaving care, support for children from minority groups and children with disabilities. All

three organisations need to meet and exchange information and best practice experiences regularly. This is our fourth recommendation.

Six: New Accountabilities

5.12 There is a clear need, in addition, for international organization to be more responsive and accountable to national stakeholders. Wherever possible, programmes should involve joint assessment and joint evaluation missions. Even more importantly, technical assistance to ensure that national stakeholders are able to make timely and appropriate requests for assistance is needed. In addition, the transparency of international assistance needs to be raised. Regional exchanges and capacity building, favoured by a number of organisations, need to be built on, perhaps in the sphere of the SEE Co-operation process as it takes on more of the work of the Stability Pact for SEE. Partnerships with the Council of Europe and with the OSCE also need to be developed further.

Seven: Mutual Learning

5.13 The EU's model of the Open Method of Co-ordination can be developed both in the wider region and in the SEE sub-region through exchange programmes, and clear discussion of best practice. In this sense, the consultation process should be the start of a much more dynamic set of agreements, targets, indicators and benchmarks, rather than seen as an end in itself.

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ANNEX I

IPA, Instrument of Pre-Accession assistance 2007-2010 under Multi-annual Institutional Financial Framework, EU €million

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Croatia	138.5	146.0	151.2	154.2
Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	58.5	70.2	81.8	92.3
Turkey	497.2	538.7	566.4	653.7
Albania	61.0	70.7	81.2	93.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	62.1	74.8	89.1	106.0
Montenegro	31.4	32.6	33.3	34.0
Serbia	186.7	190.9	194.8	198.7
Kosovo	63.3	64.7	66.1	67.3

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