

THE RESULT

Successful implementation of the *Reuniting Children with Their Families* project will:

- reduce the number of children living in institutional care;
- enable more children to live at home and go to school under the care and protection of their parents or nearest capable relatives
- ease the burden of institutional care provision on the Social Services and Child Protection Agency;
- provide a model for social expenditure on child protection and support *within* the family environment;
- alleviate child poverty in 1,000 households of very low income.

FOR SPONSORS

Sponsoring the reintegration of girls and boys with their families is a direct way to reach out to the most vulnerable and excluded children in Turkish society.

Sponsors will benefit from the association of their brand with widespread media publicity for this important child protection issue.

As partners in a UNICEF campaign, sponsors will cultivate a socially responsible image while demonstrating how the private sector can play an important role in addressing complex social issues such as this.



BUDGET (US dollars)

Total:	6,200,000
4,650 dollars per family: (194 per month for 2 years)	4,650,000
Reunification Kits	260,000
Family Service & Assessment	520,000
Technical support	310,000
Project Support	460,000

Reuniting Children with Their Families

***Bringing children home
from institutions***

unicef 



THE SITUATION

Roughly 20,000 children in Turkey are living in residential care institutions run by the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK). The parents of 60% of these children are alive but living on very low income, which prevents them from meeting their children's welfare needs. The result is that these 'economic orphans' remain in institutional care as a matter of necessity.

Nevertheless, these children still need the parental role models and personal care that their families should be best equipped to provide. The situation of adolescents is especially urgent since they are at high risk of being inadequately prepared for adult life when they leave institutional care in their eighteenth year.

An estimated 12,000 of these children could be reunited with their parents or extended families if financial support were provided to support them at home. However, very little financial support is available to help families take their children out of institutional care.

Furthermore, roles and relationships need to be reestablished after time spent living apart so the process of settling the child back into family life can be difficult for all concerned. In this respect, families need support to improve knowledge and communication skills — especially with older children for whom adolescence can be difficult and challenging even in the most ideal circumstances.

THE SOLUTION

A new model for a sustainable system of child protection *within* low income families is needed. *Reuniting Children with Their Families* will demonstrate how the subsidy of child benefit expenses within the family obviates the need to provide institutional care for children whose parents or extended families are alive.

Reuniting Children with Their Families will use a similar strategy to the successful Conditional Cash Transfer scheme (CCT), which offered financial support to families who wished to send their children to school but could not afford to do so.

The care and protection provided by parents or nearest capable relatives in a family environment will be better suited to ensuring the sound physical, cognitive and emotional development of the children. For example, the family environment is a naturally stronger source of support for children while they attend school — their self confidence and study performance will grow as they benefit from increased personal care while living at home.

The burden of providing institutional care for the children will be removed from SHÇEK. SHÇEK will be better able to divert resources towards the care and protection of children who do not otherwise have caregivers.

THE ACTIVITIES

Reuniting Children with Their Families will support the reintegration of 1,000 children currently in institutional care with their families. The family reunification package will be administered through the Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund.

- Each family will receive \$194 per month for two years to cover the expense of supporting their child.
- An additional subsidy will help cover necessary school expenses such as clothes, notebooks, uniforms and sports equipment.
- Parenting education and family mediation sessions will aim to improve parents' ability to reintegrate their children into the home.
- Attendance at parenting education classes will be a condition of receiving child benefit through the family reunification package.
- Social workers will report regularly on the social and educational development of children in order to ensure their successful reintegration.
- The mediation skills of families will be assessed in order to ensure their child's healthy and happy return home.