Draft

Child Care System Reform Efforts

Examples from South East Europe
This compilation presents examples of recent efforts made to reform child care systems in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, UNAP Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Turkey. Information has been collected through various sources, including governments, UNICEF Country Offices, Save the Children UK, EveryChild, and others. The compilation is part of background documentation for the South-East Europe Consultation "Reform of the Child Care System - Taking Stock and Accelerating Action", 3-6 July 2007, Sofia, Bulgaria. The event is organised by the UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS, in collaboration with the Bulgarian government and the World Bank.

The compilation was prepared by Séverine Jacomy in collaboration with the UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS. This is a work in progress and its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of UNICEF.

Documents noted as annexes are available in the CDRom of the consultation.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Community Care Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPO/CPU</td>
<td>Child Protection Office/Unit</td>
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<td>CSW</td>
<td>Centre for Social Work</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>DCC</td>
<td>Day Care Centre</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>United Kingdom Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DI</td>
<td>De-institutionalisation</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>GDSAPC</td>
<td>General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Protection</td>
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<td>MoLSP</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Social Policy</td>
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<td>MoLSAEQ</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities</td>
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<td>NAPCR</td>
<td>National Authority / Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
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Protecting children in the context of Poverty Reduction, Social Inclusion, and Decentralisation

Albania: Decentralizing capacity for implementation of children's rights

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO)</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
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**Objectives:** To strengthen institutional capacities at national and regional level to facilitate and monitor realization of children's rights in the framework of the national plan of action for children by:
- Facilitating the legal reform, and mechanisms to implement it;
- Ensuring the inter-institutional coordination at central, regional and local level to implement child’s rights policies;
- Promoting local government participation in child’s rights policy-making and implementation;
- Establishing a comprehensive data collection system, based on children’s social welfare indicators, especially those that indicated the risks for children;
- Advocating for children’s rights to increase the participation of civil society and citizens in the decision making process.

**Background:** In 2004, UNICEF began to support the government of Albania in the development of a National Plan of Action for Children. The Child Rights Unit established in the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (Technical Secretariat of Children) under the supervision of the Department of Equal Opportunities became responsible for coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the NPA. This unit is a permanent government structure with the following mandate:
- To monitor implementation of national and local policies that protect children’s rights.
- To coordinate inter sectoral and inter ministerial activities on policies affecting children’s issues.
- To report to the inter-ministerial committee on realization of children’s rights.

Child Rights Units were also established at the regional level, within the administration of 4 Regional Councils. One to three specialists per region (depending on the size and resources of the region) are trained to monitor the implementation of the National Strategy and the National Plan of Action as well as the realization of child rights at regional level.

**Positive factors and challenges:**
- A chance for systemic monitoring of the National Plan of Action for Children at the national and regional level, and for influencing relevant policies.
- Changes in the public administration and financial decentralization are a challenge for continuity.
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Childhood poverty and economic justice project

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>Save the Children</td>
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<td>Annex</td>
<td>Children and Poverty: Report of a Round Table and Save the Children Comments and Recommendations on the PRSP</td>
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**Objectives:** To ensure respect of children’s rights within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), elements of the strategy are analysed for its impact on children. To influence the PRSP drafting process and outcomes the UNICEF Country Office, Save the Children UK and the office of the PRSP Coordinator joined forces in a number of activities including: a study on the impact of macroeconomic policies on the situation of children and children’s rights, consultation with children on their experience of poverty, the articulation of child-centred comments on the PRSP and a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) of privatisation of public utilities (2007-2008).

**Background:** The Interim-PRSP outlined some of the reasons for poverty in BiH, such as limited economic activity, corruption, and inadequacy of social protection systems. The PRSP process had identified several links between poverty and children, in particular: the high risk of poverty for single parent female-headed households, lack of access to education and social protection for returnee children, and special risk factors for Roma children, including low school enrolment and lack of state action to promote inclusion.

An analysis of the budget for social and child protection revealed that BiH spends less on social care for the vulnerable population than any other country in the region – emphasizing the need for radical interventions in order to promote equality and reduce poverty. The allocations for social and child protection in 2000 were 1.1 percent of GDP in the Republika Srpska (RS), and 0.7 percent in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). Neither of the entities supported social protection allowances from the entity budget, while only four of the 10 cantons in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had allocated funds for this purpose.

The lack of co-ordination in the implementation of social and child protection was highlighted. Specific recommendations called for the establishment of child protection funds, monitoring of child protection benefits, elimination of legislative obstacles to the realisation of children’s rights, additional attention to children with disability, and the development and support of alternatives to institutional care. Existing policy frameworks in Bosnia and Herzegovina were analysed, including the State Plan of Action for Children, the National Plan of Action against Trafficking and a proposal for creation of a Council for Children. The analysis also found that more than 50 laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina needed to be amended to ensure compliance with international standards and the CRC.

**Positive factors:**
The round-table discussion of childhood poverty highlighted the importance of recognising that poverty is not only an issue of income but includes other dimensions such as social exclusion, limited access to services/resources, and denial of rights. Children have been found at greater risk of poverty than other groups, and particularly vulnerable to its effects. Therefore measures to reduce childhood poverty have been recommended as a priority. An effective Poverty Reduction Strategy should recognise that investments in children’s well-being directly impact state’s savings on well-being of adults, therefore informed choices about prioritisation of resources must be based on social impact analyses that predict the outcomes of proposed policies on children.
The identified groups at most risk of discrimination and exclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina included children from marginalized groups (Roma, refugees and returnees), children with disabilities and from families with low/no earnings, and others living in remote areas. The need for data, and participation of affected groups in data collection, as well as in monitoring the impact of the PRSP was considered as essential. Recommendations were articulated for government action regarding collection and public dissemination of data, provision of basic services for all children, special protection packages for different groups of vulnerable children, and ensuring equality and equity of social protection for all children in the country.

Discussion on fiscal policies for better outcomes for children noted the importance of targeting children in budget reform, the need for an analysis of child–related expenditures in budgets, areas in which expenditure could be reduced and reallocated to children, and the need for social impact analysis regarding proposed macroeconomic policies. Social policies and action for children's rights were also explored and recommendations put forward.

Children's perspectives on poverty were presented, both in their own words and through a study of the impact of poverty on children's perceptions of their future. Children spoke out on the quality of education and health care, their possibility to travel, do sports, engage in cultural activities. Children living in poverty on a daily basis witness their parents' or guardians' difficult fight for survival and the pressure to meet the basic needs for children's education, health care and the minimum conditions for their normal life.
**Bulgaria: Social investment in children**

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment</td>
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**Objectives:** Reduction of child poverty and social inclusion of poor families with children, to achieve:
- Reduction of school drop-out rate;
- Reduction of the number of children at risk;
- Reduction of the number of street children;
- Enrolling children from risk communities in pre-school education;
- Improving the health status of the children.

**Background:** The Social Investments in Children program was initiated by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy in response to evidence that family allowances were not being sufficiently used for children. Seven municipalities were included in the pilot stage from November 2005 to March 2006. Lessons from the pilot program informed amendments to the Law for Family Allowances for Children in 2006. The pilot program envisaged the possibility to replace family allowances with direct payments (from the Directorates for Social Assistance) to kindergartens for fees, school dining halls, and/or purchase of clothes, education materials and other goods needed by the children. The decision to introduce this change followed the assessment of 1752 cases covered in the pilot stage. Amendments to the legislation rolled out the program in all the municipalities.

**Positive factors and outcomes:**
- No additional expenditures required.
- Establishing a link between cash benefits and social assessment.
Objectives: To establish a market of social services and provide high-quality efficient social services, though:
  o Improvement of the quality of the existing social services;
  o Establishment of public-private partnerships;
  o Capacity-building of private service providers and civil sector;
  o Capacity-building of municipal administrations for contracting, management, monitoring and control of social services.

Background: The contracting of social services was initiated with amendments to the Social Assistance Act (SAA) and the Implementing Regulations for the SAA drafted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Pilot outsourcing of social services was initiated under donor programs, but was acknowledged by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) with the process of contracting out the social services established under the Child Welfare Reform Project (CWRP) in ten municipalities in the country.

A recommendation for this was made by the World Bank (WB) during a regular supervision mission for the CWRP in 2002. The process was supported by the independent efforts of other NGOs and international organizations (like USAID). The possibility for outsourcing social services to private service providers was introduced with the SAA and the IRSAA in 2003.

The contracting procedure is described in the Implementing Regulations for the Social Assistance Act (IRSAA). The decision on the outsourcing lies with municipal authorities. The outsourcing is a competitive public bidding procedure. Single source selection is allowed only in cases when one applicant is available. The selection is based on the quality of the proposal and the proposed budget. NGOs and entities under the Commercial Act are eligible. The contracts are signed between the mayor of the municipality and the service provider for a period determined by the municipal authorities. The financial and quality monitoring and control are performed by the municipal authorities.

The introduction of the outsourcing involved the following efforts:
  o Elaboration of relevant legislation – with the SAA and the IRSAA;
  o Development of guidelines – during the pilot outsourcing in several municipalities by the MLSP and under NGO projects;
  o Provision of training and technical assistance – under various projects of MLSP and NGOs;
  o Pilot contracting – the most significant were the contracting under the Child Welfare Reform Project of the MLSP and under a Counterpart International project;
  o Dissemination of experience – seminars, publications, etc.;
  o Elaboration of unified per capita financial standards for the state delegated social services – between the MLSP, the Ministry of Finance and the Agency for Social Assistance in 2006 and with the participation of the Association of Municipalities in 2007.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:

The outsourcing has gained speed and popularity among the municipal authorities who started to accept it as a possibility for improving the quality of the service and to unload themselves from some responsibilities. There are more than 20 municipalities who have contracted service provision. The process of outsourcing proved to lead to:
  o Better quality of the social services;
- Flexibility of service management;
- Municipalities could withdraw from day-to-day management and free capacity for strategic management;
- Municipal authorities focused on monitoring (of quality) of the services and improved their understanding of community-based services;
- The status and the role of NGOs in social service provision was reinforced;
- The child protection departments had to start working with real service providers and thus started to assume better the role of case managers and to abandon the role of service providers.

Restrains and shortcomings included:
- The outsourcing was inhibited by the structure of financial standards for most state-delegated services. The financial subsidy is based on standards which have two components – for staff payments and for operational costs. According to the legislation funds for staff can only be managed by municipal authorities, cannot be transferred to a private service provider in case of outsourcing and thus requires that the staff be employed by the Mayor of the municipality. In order to overcome this, the MLSP initiated the introduction of unified financial standards. In 2006 the CoM adopted unified financial standards for 5 social services. This process is planned to continue this year;
- Still the link between financing and quality of social services is not well established, which does not create incentives for the municipal authorities to chose to outsource service provision in order to improve quality;
- Municipal authorities are not a subject of licensing regime;
- Insufficient capacity at municipal level for management and monitoring social services;
- No quality standards for social services;
- Lack of trust in private providers by municipalities regarding;
- Insufficient capacity of the NGO sector for service management.
Turkey: Child poverty reporting and advocacy

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| Reference                      | UNICEF Child Care Reform internal document |

**Objectives:** To push the child poverty issue up the national agenda, and advocate for reform of the social services sector.

**Background:** Research on child poverty and on budgeting for children was done by UNICEF in 2006. It found out that despite the recent growth in government revenues, expenditure on education, health and other services for children had been relatively low by international standards in recent years, and that no significant increase was in sight. The findings were used to highlight the importance of addressing child poverty in national policies.

In June 2006 a National Conference on Child Poverty was held in Ankara with the participation of representatives of the European Commission, numerous government agencies, members of Parliament, media, the private sector, children, international experts, NGOs and academics.

**Positive factors and challenges:**

- Data and analysis was made available to decision-makers, to become more aware of the prevalence and impacts of child poverty.
- This research and advocacy work may have contributed to the adoption of a policy providing free health insurance for all children under 18.
- As several agencies are involved in a particular policy area, the budget alone cannot be used as a policy tool, especially since provinces vary in their administrative cultures in their level of development, and are sometimes unresponsive to central government policies.
- The World Bank has a limited role in the area of child poverty as the work is mainly supported by the European Development Bank.
- Public investment in social services and human development has not kept pace with economic growth; the budget for children has to increase.
Organising Statutory Services at the Local level

**Albania: Child Protection Units in Tirana, Kukes and other pilot municipalities**

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Municipality of Tirana and Kukes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment and Child Care Reform internal document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tirana.gov.al">www.tirana.gov.al</a></td>
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**Objectives:** The aim of a Child Protection Units is to ensure proper protection of children within their family environment, through:

- The creation of new services for children and families;
- Service referrals for children at risk;
- Setting up of database for children at risk;
- Improving quality of services already offered and increasing the number of new community day centres for children at risk;
- Transformation of existing residential institutions into community care centres.

**Background:** In 2000 the Municipality of Tirana undertook a very detailed needs assessment that revealed the importance of social services. Children were especially identified as a marginalized category. A special Child Protection Unit was established with 4 employees, 1 Head of Unit and three specialists: psychologists and social workers. After three years the mandate of the Unit changed, as the unit transformed into the Children and Family Unit and upgraded its capacity.

In Kukes, the Child Protection Office (CPO) was established in the framework of the project “Empowerment of community responses to child trafficking; increasing protection of children at risk to trafficking, exploitation and abuse in North-eastern Albania” implemented by the local NGO VMA-Kukes (Victims of Mines and Weapons Association) and supported by UNICEF as a two-year pilot (January 2005 –December 2006). Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the Office is jointly managed by VMA and the Municipality. One child protection officer was seconded by VMA and one by the Municipality. The office has established close relationships with the Section of Economic Assistance (SEA). Initially, CPO and SEA conducted joint home visits and other activities, however, this practice was gradually discontinued due to the high turnover in both SEA and CPO. Nonetheless, SEA seems to be the most appropriate place for CPO as the social administrators are responsible for the assessment of the economic situation of the families and the child protection officers can support identification, assessment, and management of cases. CPO and SEA have participated in training courses on child protection techniques and advocacy and lobbying conducted by the Multidisciplinary Centre for Management of Child Maltreatment.

A situation analysis on needs, roles and responsibilities in Kukes emphasized the need for a mechanism to discuss cases from the view of different professionals prior to sending them to SC for discussion and referral. As a result, a Case Management Team was established.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- The Municipality of Tirana has an organization chart, which facilitates solution of different social problems, and offers support for the implementation of social projects. The Child and Family Unit is appreciated and there is a good collaboration between the Unit and sub-municipalities in Tirana. Nonetheless, there is a certain lack of a personal work space and material equipment (computers, etc).
- Activities in Kukes contributed to a decrease in the vulnerability of children to trafficking and abuse in North-eastern Albania by establishing a local structure for identification, assessment, psychological support, referral and monitoring of cases.
- The project contributed to breakthrough in perceptions of children and child protection especially with regard to child abuse and exploitation.
- Initial resistance from the Municipality was overcome by increased knowledge about child protection concerns and their impact on children.
- Delays in the decentralization process and the lack of specific legal acts have slowed down the implementation.
- The ongoing activities (2005-2007) of Child Protection Units in 7 pilot municipalities (started in Tirana and Kukes, and later replicated in Korca, Elbasan, Pogradec, Fier and Gjirokastra) have increased capacity of local authorities to coordinate responses to protection issues. Difficult cases are presented to a multi-sectoral child protection committee on a monthly basis. Comprised of lawyers, doctors, psychologists, social workers, educators, local authorities and representatives from NGOs, the committee supports the social workers in referring cases to appropriate services, and attempts to mobilize resources to respond to the needs of the families on a case by case basis. The committees also have an advocacy function, liaising between beneficiaries and local authorities.
- The CPUs have mapped child protection services at the local level and published a resource directory for immediate use by social workers, and for decision makers and donors. UNICEF and partners are advocating for approval of local municipal councils to establish and resource the CPUs through allocation of regular budgetary sources.
- The pilot Child Protection Units have been evaluated and suggested as positive models for replication within the broader process of decentralization of social services. Partnerships between municipalities and NGOs are especially important for CP Units to carry out their mandates.
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Standard professional instruments for social welfare beneficiaries in Tuzla and other cantons

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reference:</td>
<td>Save the Children UK</td>
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**Objectives:** To decrease the number of children without parental care in residential institutions by developing alternative forms of care through:

- Demonstration of alternative forms of care for children without parental care.
- Promote the standardisation of services and improvements in policy and practice of the Ministry of Social Welfare and CSWs in relation to the protection of children without parental care.
- Promote long-lasting change in the policy and legislation at the level of Entity and Cantonal governments across BiH regarding child protection and support for children without parental care.

**Background:** The project was initiated jointly by Save the Children UK (SC UK), the Tuzla Canton Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Tuzla Canton Centres for Social Work. Child protection practice especially regarding children without parental care varied significantly in social work practice across CSWs and lack of guidelines and procedures. Uniform standard forms and instructions for use by CSWs were seen as an important tool to improve and standardise the practice.

Initially, existing instruments and practice of CSWs in Tuzla Canton were assessed and compared to similar instruments in other countries, including UK, Norway and some countries of former Yugoslavia. Initial formats were tested in BiH conditions and over the period of several years, professionals from Tuzla Canton and Brcko District CSWs, Cantonal MoSW, and SC UK worked on the development of standard forms and instruments. Some forms, in particular those relating to innovative services such as those for victims of violence, were tested by NGOs. Professionals including social workers, lawyers, psychologists and pedagogues were engaged in several working groups to develop standard forms. The new standards also required adjustments in relevant legislation. The development of standard instrument was complemented by training for social work professionals on contemporary social work approaches and methods. Once finalised for application in Tuzla Canton, instruments were presented to wider professional audience in BiH and prepared in electronic form. Currently, the standard instruments are being adjusted undertaken for use in other parts of the country, in cooperation with the Entity and Cantonal MoSWs. Formal endorsement of news standards is also being sought.

The project is implemented in Tuzla Canton, but it is now expanding to Republika Srpska, Una-Sana Canton, Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.

**Positive factors and outcomes:**

- Standardisation of social and child protection services through the development and dissemination of **standardised professional instruments** (forms and instructions) for use by CSWs in BiH for all categories of social and child protection beneficiaries is an essential step towards establishment of modern statutory services. The instruments contain planning and monitoring tools, such as individual care plan and review of placement format, as well as a comprehensive set of tools relating to foster care, such as registration of interest, assessment tool, etc. The standard forms also promote and incorporate users' participation, including participation of children.
- Improved quality of protection provided by statutory services: The instruments enable uniform approach to services, more systematic and efficient work of CSWs, less time spent on administrative tasks and more time on the rendering of professional services, more comprehensive and quality case documentation and data, and participation of users.
- Improved social and child protection capacities of CSWs: Through the development and application of standard instruments, capacities of statutory services were advanced, especially with respect to adequate planning and monitoring of protection, users' participation, and IT equipping and skills.
- Interest and potential for application and adaptation of standard instruments and standardization of services in other parts of the country: In some cases, the Ministries are choosing to endorse a set of key
instruments, rather than the entire developed set, thus ensuring appropriateness to local conditions and feasibility of application. In total, 50 out of 143 CSWs in BiH use the SC UK-developed standard professional instruments. The consulted CSWs in Tuzla Canton report that the instruments have greatly improved their work, and stated that ‘work without standard professional instruments is unimaginable’.

Advantages
- Strong involvement and ownership of statutory services in development of instruments appropriate for BiH usage.
- Instruments appropriate for usage by both statutory and NGO sectors.
- Instruments appropriate for both manual and electronic use.
- Participation of user groups enabled within the developed instruments.
- The instruments provide professional guidelines that are lacking.

Challenges:
- The administrative structure of BiH makes formal endorsement complicated and demanding (for example, adaptation as far as legislation is required for each entity/canton - 11 adaptations in total).
- Without endorsement the instruments are not mandatory for CSWs.
- IT equipment and staff skills in CSWs in BiH are not sufficient for full application of instruments.
- The instruments require professional knowledge of CSW staff and time for undertaking adequate assessment.
Montenegro: Multidisciplinary teams for the protection of children from abuse and neglect

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare, Montenegro</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Snezana Mijuskovic, Deputy Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF country office</td>
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**Objectives:** The project aims to ensure quick reporting and data exchange on child abuse and neglect, risk evaluation and reaction to emergencies for the protection of victims, establishment of direct contacts with the child and his/her family, determination of urgent measures, continuity of work towards the full protection of the child, professional support to child victims and families; advocacy on the removal of perpetrators from their family home, reporting, monitoring child protection capacity in police, prosecutor's and court's hearings, in schools and in health centres, preparation of the child and family for court procedure, coordination with other services involved in child protection, monitoring and control of the child's security and evaluation of needs to continue/close the case.

**Background:** Despite the extensive social protection infrastructure system – the Montenegrin system was not equipped to identify cases of violence, abuse and neglect and to protect children. Upon the initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of the Republic of Montenegro and in cooperation with UNICEF and UNHCR, local Centres for Social Welfare in 7 Montenegrin municipalities have established Multidisciplinary Teams for the Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect. The teams are composed of professionals, representatives of judiciary, police, education, and social welfare and NGOs. The basic teams’ functions are:

- Establishment of an efficient municipal/community based child protection system of reporting/registration and response in cases of child abuse and neglect/violence against children.
- Establishment of standards, procedure and mechanisms of identification and follow up in cases of child abuse and neglect.
- Establishment of a Government Commitment for the creation of national policies and strategies to address child abuse and neglect.
- Enhancement of inter-sectoral work and holistic approaches in the process of protection of children from abuse and neglect.

**Outcomes:** The project is contributing to improvements in inter-sectoral cooperation and division of responsibilities among professionals, better organization of work on determination of protection measures and better monitoring of implementation of provided protection measures.
Romania: Upgrading capacity of local authorities to fulfil new responsibilities

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights</td>
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**Objectives:** To increase the capacity of local authorities to fulfil their new responsibilities as required by the law on “protection and promotion of the rights of the child”

**Background:** In order to support the decentralization process, in 2005, the National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights decided to train social workers nation-wide. The Law 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of child’s rights had entered into force in January 2005. With this new law the Romanian government translated the UN Convention into national law and created the framework required to develop a new approach to children and their families.

To support the implementation of the provisions of the new law, including the improved quality of services for children and families training sessions were carried out in each county of Romania. During 2005 – 2007 4300 social workers and 47 trainers took part in capacity building process.

Various interactive training materials were developed for social workers and guidelines were produced for joint work of county and local authorities.

Training of social work professionals was accompanied with an educational campaign on child rights for other professionals (medical staff, teachers, policemen, judges and prosecutors, priests) as well as for children and parents.

**Positive factors and challenges:**

- Close partnership with the National College for Social Workers and with the General Departments for Social Assistance and Child Protection.

- The number of participants and the number of days allocated to these training sessions were limited in comparison with the training needs.
**Serbia: Joint program implementation in the area of social welfare strategic planning at local level**

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Ministry of Labour and Social Policy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
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<td>Reference:</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment</td>
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**Objectives:** The aim of the program is to provide coordinated support to the local level in strategic social welfare and child protection planning, so as to build their capacity for the development, commissioning and financing of social services that are in the mandate of local governments, and consequently provide adequate care for social welfare beneficiaries, including children in need.

The established Joint Committee at central level has been tasked with a) selection of municipalities to avoid geographical overlapping between three programs and therefore the confusion in these municipalities and b) coordination of programs with extracting lessons learned and good practice and sharing them. Therefore, the objectives are to:

- Produce social welfare strategic planning programs at local level in the majority of municipalities in Serbia;
- Develop plans in line with National Social Welfare Development Strategy;
- Harmonized planning methodology in line also with national level reforms;
- Compile and use lessons learned by the MOLSP for policy changes.

**Background:** During the past several years in Serbia, many (mostly donor funded) projects have been implemented in the area of strategic planning at local level. Although many projects aimed at assisting municipalities to produce (and to some extent implement) comprehensive local development strategies, the majority did not include the component of social protection and child protection. Recognizing the need to address this gap, some donors (UNICEF, DFID, Government of Norway) started providing assistance to local governments in developing social welfare and child protection strategic plans and action plans, through the form of pilot projects.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in its Social Welfare Development Strategy states the need for assisting local governments in planning and commissioning social welfare services that are in their mandate. Since donors expressed interest to continue providing assistance in this area (DFID, Government of Norway and UNDP) and upscale their interventions, the Ministry invited the donors to join efforts and provide assistance to local governments in a coordinated manner, with clear leadership from the Ministry.

For the purpose of coordinating the ongoing programs and harmonizing the methodologies in the area of social welfare strategic planning at municipal level, the MOLSP established a Joint Committee for the selection of municipalities that will be participating in the following donor funded programs:

1) Support to the implementation of the Social Welfare Reform Strategy, supported by the DfID and the Government of Norway in 24 municipalities in Serbia. The project includes the component of local strategic planning and implementation;
2) UNDP/EAR supported program that will provide assistance in drafting strategic social welfare plans in 80 municipalities in Serbia;
3) Tools and mechanisms for local development in 10 small and under-capacitated municipalities, supported by the Government of Norway and implemented by the Center for Liberal Democratic Studies (CLDS) and Standing Conference for Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) for developing local strategic social welfare plans.

The Joint Committee consists of the following institutions/organizations: MOLSP, MPALG (Ministry of Public administration and Local Governments), Ministry of Finance, Poverty Reduction Strategy
Implementation Focal Point (PRS IFP), Social Innovation Fund (SIF), Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Civic Initiatives, Center for Liberal Democratic Studies (CLDS), DfID and UNDP.

The three programs will jointly have a geographical coverage of 75% of the total number of municipalities in Serbia, i.e. 120 out of 150 municipalities will be included in local social welfare planning exercises.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:

- MOLSP is leading the process and coordinating donor assistance;
- MOLSP will become more involved in the reform process at local level and will be in the position to "react" in a timely manner with policy and if necessary legislative changes;
- Local governments and other stakeholders will receive systematized support in the area of social welfare and child protection;

A potential restraint is the lack of capacity of the MOLSP and Joint Committee members to be fully involved in the implementation of the donor funded programs due to the dynamics of project implementation that often require time-consuming engagement of key civil servants leading reforms and who as a rule, have a heavy workload. There will be a need for close cooperation between the management units of the programs, the Joint Committee and MOLSP leadership in order to take full advantage of the synergy effect.
Family Substitute Services

**Albania: National family placement system**

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Every Child Albania</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Suzana Sakiqi, Executive Director</td>
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<td>E-mail address:</td>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>EveryChild and UNICEF Country Assessment and Child Care Reform internal document</td>
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**Objectives:**

To develop a framework proposal and blue print for the establishment of a national family placement service in Albania and preparatory work to assist the MOLSAEO (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) with the preparation of relevant Ministerial Decrees.

The National Family Placement Service will systematise the initiation of temporary foster care; the reintegration of children in the biological or extended family; or alternatively (if other possibilities have been explored), the adoption of the child, with the aim to:

- Ensure continuity of care and education to the child in a substitute family environment;
- Provide care and development for the child in difficulty in accordance with his / her age, individual needs and minimum quality standards;
- Facilitate the socialization and (re)integration of the child in the biological, extended or adoptive family, or in the community;
- Monitor the child’s situation in the period before and after (re)integration

**Background:**

In 1998, EveryChild together with the central and local government began to introduce foster care services as an alternative for children without parental care, placed in residential institutions. The pilot project focused on preventive activities for families with more than 5 children living in extreme poverty. As the programme expanded the following activities were undertaken:

- Extension of preventative services, ensuring effective support in the form of information and advice to parents.
- Specialised support to the local government in providing training for parents, couple support, home visits, as well as training on legislation (Family Code);
- Public awareness campaign on foster care as the best alternative to institutionalization.

The foster care service was implemented through several steps: recruitment of foster carers, assessment, matching and placement of the child in a foster family; monitoring of placement and consolidation of foster carers’ skills and competences to provide a qualitative services in accordance with foster care service’s objectives.

In Tirana, foster care is the joint responsibility of EveryChild Albania, the Municipality of Tirana, and the Social Services Delivery Project financed by World Bank.

In Shkodra there is collaboration between EveryChild and the “Institution of children wellbeing”. The selection of foster families is made possible through three-phases process which ensures the best possible preparation and matching of foster parents and children.

At present there is still no formal or State system for family placement of children. Since 2006 UNICEF in partnership with EveryChild, has been facilitating a multi-disciplinary group of experts from relevant ministries and NGOs to develop a National Strategy on Family Placement Services, at the request of the MoLSAEEO. The strategy will include legal and administrative regulations, infrastructure and human resources needs, as well as costing assessment. It represents a significant step towards increasing community-based care options for children without parental care.
Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:

- Collaboration between central and local government structures, the community and the NGOs
- Work with families, communities and statutory structures to implement the new care system for children
- Foster care standards following the principle of the best interest of the child
- The program is cost effective
- The lack of a legal framework (regulations,) is contributing to keeping the services limited
- The lack of local capacities is a challenge to expanding the foster care services throughout Albania. At present services are concentrated in big cities.
Croatia: National media campaign “Every child needs a family” in favour of foster care

Contact: UNICEF Country Office, Croatia
E-mail address: info@unicef.hr
Reference: Every Child Needs a Family project description by Premisa Communications Management, 2005
Annex: Foster Care Media Campaign Material

Objectives: The project “Svako dijete treba obitelj” (Every Child Needs a Family) was initialized with the aim to promote the importance of family environment for children, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to raise the awareness of the general and professional public about the problem, and to educate them about the role of the family and family environment in the life of the child. Additional challenge was to raise the funds for the development of fostering, as a minimum of 2 million HRK were required for a detailed work plan and foster parenting educational and field support.

The approach focused on developing and carrying out a complete campaign, which included developing a name and logo for the action, creative solutions for messaging and event marketing, that would motivate different audiences and cognitive and emotional level. The first phase of campaign stressed education and motivation, while the second phase put a stress on fundraising.

Concrete objectives were:
- Increase awareness of the issue across Croatia
- Increase the number of potential foster families by 200
- Collect HRK 2 million (approx. EUR 260,000) (USD 329,850)
- Mobilize the business community to participate/donate funds or sponsor the project

Key messages were:
- Family is essential for children
- Find out more about the possibilities of fostering
- You can become a potential foster parent
- Donate funds

The estimated value of the campaign was HRK 12,540,000.00 (approx. USD 2 million), however all the participants contributed their work on a pro bono basis.

Background: Fostering can be considered a traditional form of care in Croatia, which has existed ever since 1902, but it remains very limited and actually undeveloped. Since the Homeland War (finished in 1995), when foster care emerged as a spontaneous response to the need for care of child refugees, development of fostering has been systematic, but is still very limited in scope. The children in foster homes are mostly those without appropriate parental care, however, foster care varies greatly between regions, with northern Croatia leading in societal acceptance of fostering.

Nevertheless, institutions for fostering, protection, rehabilitation and education remain the dominant form of care for children without proper parental care. The causes for placements of children in institutional care include poor financial and living conditions of families, disrupted familial relations, the non-acceptance of the child and his/her special needs. Despite the scientifically proven facts of the negative effects of institutional care on child development, especially for the youngest children, there are still many children in Croatia who spend a number of years in institutions. At the end of 2003, over 130 children under 3 years of age were living in "state" homes and there were, many more children placed in homes not established by the state. A total of about 1500 children without parental care are living in institutions, while some 1200 of them live with foster families. On average, a child in institutions spends 4.5 years in such care.

De-institutionalization is still often rejected by the employees in the child-care system, due to lack of knowledge and awareness and a conflict with their personal interests (employment). It is important that
the state fulfils its accountability towards children without parental care by ensuring the type of care that is in the best interests of the child.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:

- Engage a single big Croatian company to participate in the action and donate substantial amount of money by making this project attractive and beneficial to a company that gets thousands of similar request.
- Convince the most influential media to support the campaign, provide free media space and cooperate and support the project containing warm and positive foster parenting stories, as opposed to the usual negative headlines.
- Find the appropriate way to communicate the problem to the general public through creative communications solutions that reveal the problem, alarm the public and at the same time motivate for action.
- Close to 300 potential new foster families received printed information to their home address and received many calls of licensed foster families waiting long time for a child to be placed. 110 new foster families were processed and licensed.
- HRK 2,850,000 / USD 460,000 were collected: Over 60,000 individual donors supported the project (63.64% of funds). High-visibility events (7.92% of funds). Major corporate philanthropy contribution (28.43% of funds).
- There was a good media coverage with 173 articles published in print media.
Croatia: Specialised foster family care for children with intellectual disabilities

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<th>Contact:</th>
<th>UNICEF, Country Office, Croatia</th>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@unicef.hr">info@unicef.hr</a></td>
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<td>Reference:</td>
<td>UNICEF Child Care Reform internal document</td>
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<td>Annex</td>
<td>Documentary video</td>
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**Objectives:** The long-term goal is the deinstitutionalization of residential care for children with intellectual disabilities called for by a change in the national family policy which foresees establishment of foster care agencies and services of continuous training for foster families, as a precondition to successful social inclusion of children. Short-term goal is developing specialized foster care to serve as a model for the development of strategy to implement family policy.

**Background:** In 2006-2007 UNICEF supported a project on mobile support services for children with disabilities placed in foster families. The implementing agency is the NGO Association for Promotion of Inclusion (API) in the City of Zagreb, Zagrebacka and Krapinsko-Zagorska counties. The multidisciplinary teams established by API (coordinators-special educators, social worker, psychologist and lawyer) provide continual professional support to the child and the foster family. Together with the family, the team sets goals and develops an individual plan of support for every child and conducts continuous training of foster parents on the specific individual needs and characteristics of the child. The coordinator monitors the child and delivers monthly progress reports to the team. The team also communicates with kindergartens, schools and other educational facilities with the aim of including the children into mainstream education. They also cooperate with the CSW and provide assistance to families in integrating the children in the local community. The team is working on deinstitutionalization of children with intellectual disabilities and their placement into foster families, as well as the initial training of the new foster families.

**Initial outcomes:**

- In this initial stage, the project beneficiaries are 18 foster families rearing 32 children with intellectual disabilities aged 5-17; 17 new foster families assessed out of which 7 received training and obtained license for fostering children with disabilities.

- Short documentary has been produced and presented in several TV shows and professional conferences.
UNAP Kosovo: Alternatives to institutional care for abandoned babies

**Agency/Service/NGO responsible:** Save the Children in UNAP Kosovo

**Contact person:** Ms. Feride Dashi, Child Protection Project Officer

**E-mail address:** scik@scik.org

**Reference** Save the Children

**Objectives:** The goal was to develop and promote opportunities for children who were unable to live with their birth families or/and to grow up in a family environment with the aim to:

- Reducing the average length of time for abandoned babies to remain in hospital wards before being moved to foster carers or transit houses.
- Producing of a step-by-step guide in Albanian and Serbian for use by social services officers to train foster carers.
- Strengthening the capacity of the DSW to develop proper family based care systems for children deprived of parental care and development of policies and practices in the field of child and social protection which is grounded in children’s rights. The activities included:
  - Provision of training to CSWs on foster care and child development.
  - Provision of advice to CSWs and public awareness raising regarding the value of family based care.
  - Assistance to CSWs in advertising for and recruiting foster carers.
  - Provision of intensive training for foster carers that were recruited and assessed by the social workers.
  - Development and production of Training Pack for recruitment, training and approval of potential foster carers.
  - Provision of expertise on development of policies, procedures and other related documents re to development and implementation of foster care services.

**Background:** Save the Children in UNAP Kosovo first became involved in Alternatives to Institutional Care (AIC) project in response to babies found abandoned in the Pristina hospital immediately following the conflict in 1999. Political change and instability, economic and social distress related to the post-conflict situation and lack of adequate social safety nets, have contributed to an increase in child abandonment in Kosova. More than 700 infants have been abandoned in Kosova/o since 1999. The root causes of abandonment are generally related to poverty, social norms, gender issues and lack of education on reproductive health. As a conventional model of intervention, ‘transit baby houses’ were set up for infants abandoned in hospital, to favour adoption, foster care or reintegration in biological families. Gate keeping, however, became a severe challenge and many children were staying in the hospitals and also routinely placed in children’s homes for extended periods.

To tackle this problem, UNICEF, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW), EveryChild and Save the Children implemented the AIC Project. It focused exclusively on children without parental care-under the two years of age. The government through the CSWs became responsible for the recruitment of foster carers and the placement of children. UNAP Kosova/o does have foster care legislation and this has been one of the factors behind the quick start-up of the project. Social Welfare Structures, as key partners in this project, are involved in the development of professional content of the project through: development of policies, guidelines and procedures for practice in foster care and in identifying, recruiting and approving foster families.

Yet, many social workers prefer that the babies remain in baby houses (ex. operated by SOS Kinderdorf in Pristina) rather than be cared for in a family with more modest economic conditions. Many social workers are also doubtful that there are families prepared to foster older children, children with special needs or children who have been abused. They prefer to place these children in residential care; in Hope & Homes, SOS Bee House for children with disabilities or the SOS ‘Family’ House. The centralised financial administration systems also produces delays in paying foster carers and despite the DSW
regulation on re-imbursement for health services of foster children, foster families report that they have never been reimbursed for such services or medicine.

Decentralization should help to address this problem. However, it is not clear how competencies and budget responsibilities will be divided between central and local level as regards key child support services such as foster care and adoption.

The Alternatives to Institutional Care Project was implemented in the whole UNAP Kosovo involving 31 Centres for Social Work from 31 municipalities. The project was financially supported by UNICEF, EveryChild and Save the Children. 74 social workers were trained on foster care, 145 children were placed in foster care, mostly abandoned infants although 29 older neglected children were also placed in foster care during the project implementation, 35 families have been recruited, approved and are active as foster carers.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:

- **Increased understanding** by CSWs that the rights of children are generally best met in a family environment.
- **Reduced reliance on institutional care** for abandoned babies.
- **Policies and procedures** for the professional implementation of foster care services developed.
- **Increased capacity of the Department of Social Welfare** to independently manage the foster care service efficiently and effectively.
- **Importance of community-based presentations and dialogue**: Some families were reluctant to foster children in fear that the community would think that the foster child was a grandchild from their unmarried daughter. Community presentations held with social workers were very important as foster care suffers from confusion with pre-adoption. There was a need to explain the difference through public debates and discussion, as posters and leaflets were ineffective, whilst they remain an important tool for raising awareness.
- **Non-blood related fostering**: At the beginning, many social workers thought that foster care would not work and found it difficult to distinguish between this new scheme from pre-adoption and longer-term foster care placement. Many had been involved in foster programmes among blood relatives. It was very important to explain the difference. The initial focus, which was clearly negative and directed towards financial aspects of the programme, has now shifted to concentrate on the structures needed to make the foster care work
**FYR Macedonia: Rehabilitation and Social Inclusion of Children with disabilities from the Special Institute in Demir Kapija**

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Special Institute in Demir Kapija</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Mr. Petar Nikolov, Director</td>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment and Child Care Reform internal document</td>
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**Objectives:** To prepare institutionalised children for discharge and placement in alternative family or community-based care services.

**Background:** As part of the continued support to the de-institutionalization process, this special rehabilitation programme was launched in early 2001 in the Institute for people with severe disabilities. Based on the agreement between UNICEF and the Faculty of Philosophy, a trained and specially qualified group of educators under the guidance of 3 university professors, has been working with groups of 20 children at a time with the aim of preparing them for reintegration into family environment. The team (two defectologists, speech therapist, physiotherapist, social worker, caregiver, neuro-psychiatrist) prepared an individual development plan and undertook a complete medical examination of each child.

Whilst working on de-institutionalisation of children, UNICEF also worked on improvement of the living conditions for those children remaining in the Institute. In 2004, with financial support of the Italian Government, UNICEF rehabilitated the children’s ward in the Institute. In order to facilitate the discharge of children ready to leave the institution, UNICEF has been leading coordination among involved stakeholders: first of all, CSWs, directly responsible for individual plans for children; University representatives, international NGOs such as EducAid and CRIC (the latter implemented an ECHO funded project supporting foster families network) in finding appropriate alternative care solutions for every case.

Coordination with UNICEF Education sector has been maintained to promote implementation of pilot projects on inclusion of children with disabilities within mainstream schools. Macedonian professionals from various disciplines were given an opportunity to study the Italian model of school inclusion during a study visit to Italy. This visit resulted in establishment of a multi-disciplinary school inclusion team, chaired by a representative of the Bureau for Educational Development, Ministry of Education and in opening of School Inclusion Resource Centre integrated into the Ministry of Education support system for teachers and families, establishing a sustainable, long-term impact on the educational system for children with disabilities.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- Up-to-date 32 children left the Institute and were placed in their biological or foster family. The state support to these families is usually material (the monthly social allowance).
- Lack of continued assistance through education and training activities, and absence of local support networks are slowing down the achievement or results.
- Weak capacities of the Centres for Social Welfare are hindering provision of prompt and effective supervision and help to foster families.
- An important entry point for advocacy and demonstration of possibilities for de-institutionalization of child care sector in the country, even for children with severe disabilities.
Romania: Good practices and lessons learnt during the de-institutionalisation process

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<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Mariela Neagu, Secretary of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td><a href="http://www.copii.ro">www.copii.ro</a></td>
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<td>Annex</td>
<td>Child Welfare in Romania – the history of a reform process</td>
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**Objectives:** To improve and strengthen the child protection system in Romania in line with the principles emphasized within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by closing down old-style residential care institutions and creating alternative services.

**Background:** In 2001, the National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights undertook to solve the problem of institutionalized children, especially those residing in large old-style institutions. It organized the de-institutionalization through grant schemes to the county Directions for Child Protection.

With support from national and international experts, 91 old style placement centres were closed down; 339 apartments and 242 family type homes were set up, as well as 51 day-care centres, 14 mother and baby centres, 34 day-care and rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities and many others. Over 15,000 children have benefited from the programme’s activities. The budget was approximately 46 Million Euros, including EU financed awareness campaigns.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- Reduced number of children in institutions, better conditions for the children who used to be institutionalized, alternative services for the prevention of institutionalization created;

- In depth cooperation and coordination between relevant stakeholders for child’s rights; general public sensitivity to child welfare issues.

- Romania general economic situation was a constraint: very low wages, large scale unemployment, and increased poverty were likely to slow down the reduction of abandonment rates than would otherwise have been the case.
Family and Child Support Services

Albania: Multidisciplinary centre for children and families in Tirana

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Every Child Albania</th>
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<td>Internet</td>
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**Objective:** This multidisciplinary centre is set up to provide qualified assistance for children, youth, women and families at risk in order to improve their social status, individual well-being and their life quality.

**Background:** This centre was set up in Tirana city (municipality level) in November 2005. The city of Tirana has several marginalized areas where the concentration of people with low income is at really high levels. The lack of employment is one of the main causes driving many families to fall apart, leading to divorce, abandonment, migration and even domestic violence against women and children. Children and young people being brought up in these families are negatively affected, express worries about their prospects of a better future and are at risk of dropping out of school, falling into alcohol and drug abuse, or being exploited as child labourers. The multidisciplinary centre addresses each individual case from several professional points of views, including social work, psychology, medical and legal perspective and employment prospect.

The services aim:
- To improve the psychosocial situation of vulnerable children, women and families through provision of psychological and social services.
- To improve the health situation of children, women and families through provision of medical consultations.
- To improve the economic situation of women and families through provision of job counselling, vocational trainings and mediation with employers.
- To alleviate the resolving process of different legal issues through provision of counselling and legal aid.
- To improve the welfare of children without parental care through provision of pilot foster care services.
- To integrate at risk children into preschool systems and to promote inclusive education for children with minor disabilities through provision of information, trainings, raising awareness and providing support services for parents and educators.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
Community centre set up to deliver services to vulnerable and hard to reach groups in Tirana also remove obstacles for access to mainstream services such as stigma, lack of financial resources and social support and lack of knowledge and orientation towards the services.

Along with the preventative social work to support families, the services also support the reintegration of institutionalized children with their families as well as pioneering foster care services.

The services are managed and provided in a planned way meeting individual’s need through an individual care plan which is designed and implemented in cooperation with the client. The rights of clients, including to privacy and dignity are fully respected and the clients have the freedom of choice even if their interests are different from the common activities.
The services are delivered under the direct responsibility of the Municipality of Tirana with support from the World Bank and in coordination with EveryChild Albania in compliance with decentralization of social services reform policy in Albania.
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Transformation of residential care into family based services for children without parental care in Zenica

| Agency/Service/NGO responsible: | Hopes and Homes for Children |
| Contact person: | Julia Down, Project Officer |
| E-mail address: | hhcbosnia@hotmail.com |
| Reference: | UNICEF country office |

### Objectives:
To transform and replace a residential institution with a system in which
- A family based solution is identified for every child currently living in the institution
- A range of services is developed to replace the current institution through:
  - Prevention and reintegration
  - Fostering
  - Small Family Home (maximum capacity of 12 children)
  - Young Adult Support (young people from both institutions – DC MOST and Dom PORODICA)

### Sub-project 1:
To close down the institution and place all its current beneficiaries into family based solutions or facilitate their independent living. These measures are being implemented through the following:
- Reunification with biological families
- Adoption
- Fostering
- Small Family Home
- Young Adult Support

### Specific objectives:
- Develop strong partnerships with all relevant actors in Zenica
- Capacity building (training, educational activities) for local professionals and authorities
- Enable local authorities to improve the quality of child care
- Gradually come to a closure of DC MOST and set up services based on family model
- Enable children to return to their biological families, strengthen and support families
- 50% of children in the target group (children form DC MOST) will be in permanent placements
- Work on prevention through mobile team
- Develop a network of 16 foster families
- Provide a high standard of care for children in Small Family Home
- Develop a support project to enable young people a successful transition on their way to becoming independent – joint project with young people from DC MOST and Dom PORODICA

### Subproject 2:
To enable group of 34 young adults currently placed in two residential institutions (including the one to be close down) to become independent and set up model of good practice in working with young people

### Specific objectives:
- Identify and assess all young people between 16 and 18 in order to prepare them for independent living.
- Involve these young people in all decisions (choice of occupation and career).
- Identify and assess young people aged 18 and above in order to prepare them to become independent.
- Involve young people in development of their career and acquiring skills needed for independent living.
- Enable young people to reconnect with their biological and extended families.
- Identify existing resources and employment possibilities.
- Supervision and training in order to support young people from this target group in undertaking their work-related responsibilities and independent living.
- Supporting young people to live independently: renting a flat, family house.
- Supporting young people to continue their education in line with their preferences and skills.

**Background:** The project is based on findings of a 3-month study undertaken by Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) in collaboration with children’s homes *Porodica* and *Most* and relevant local authorities and the proposal is the result of joint work and negotiations between HHC and the Ministry for Work, Social Protection and Refugees and Zenica Municipality. The local authorities in Zenica plan to keep Dom PORODICA as the only institution for children without parental care in Zenica and to transform DC MOST.

The project follows the model presented in the National Strategy *Policy on Protection of Children without Parental Care and Families at Risk in Bosnia and Herzegovina* 2006-2016. Hope and Homes for Children is offering technical support and expertise together with capital investment. The timeframe for the project is 18 months. The budget for the transformation is about 180,000 euros.

**Prospects:** The proposed project is one of the first models for comprehensive reform of an institution which is covering all the aspects such as prevention and reintegration, family based care, but also looking at the support to be provided to a young people who are to leave the institution at the age of 18.
**Bosnia and Herzegovina: Early identification of children with special needs and their developmental needs in 8 municipalities of Republika Srpska**

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Republika Srpska Children’s Fund</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Office</td>
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**Objectives:** This government led project aims at the early identification and provision of services in 8 pilot sites, with the ultimate objective of setting up the system for data collection, provision of services and monitoring at the entity level.

**Background:** One of the major gaps of the Child Protection system in BiH is the lack of coherent services for children with special needs, including early identification and provision of proper support and services for those children and their families. Children with special needs are often invisible and socially excluded.

The project was initiated by the Republika Srpska Children’s Fund in 2005 with the purpose to examine the scope of the problems and needs of children with disabilities. Republika Srpska Children’s Fund engaged 7 governmental and NGO organizations to conduct field work organized in two parts: research (identification of children with special needs) and provision of services.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- Data base of children with special needs and established functional system for *early identification and access* to services;
- Awareness raising in local communities and *liaison* between local service providers
- Mobilization, *self-support groups* and *support* to parents;
- Improved *cooperation* between child protection service providers
- Network of governmental and NGO providers
- Training of researchers
- Grants for special *focused projects*
- Professional and financial support provided to 7 implementing partners
Bulgaria: Complex of Social Services for Children and Families in Plovdiv

Agency/Service/NGO responsible: EveryChild Bulgaria Foundation
Contact person: Elka Nalbantova, Director of the Complex
E-mail address: everychild_en@netissat.bg
Reference: EveryChild

Objective: The overall goal of the project was to improve the welfare and protection of especially vulnerable children in Plovdiv Municipality through the development of community based services to prevent child abandonment, institutionalization of children and create an alternative to existing institutionalized care.

Background: The project was a part of the national project “Child Welfare Reform” implemented by the Bulgarian Government with the financial support of the World Bank. The project’s total cost was 293,324 leva and the contractors were the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Plovdiv Municipality, while the implementing agency was a Consortium of 5 partners, led by EveryChild Bulgaria Foundation. The pilot phase was 1 year 01.07.2005 to 31.06.2006. After that the Plovdiv Municipality took over the management of the Complex and its services. Leading organization faced the challenge of project complexity and the extensive amount of financial, human and material resources involved. It was the first time that 5 NGOs united forces in one Consortium to manage a comprehensive provision unit.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:
- The project demonstrated:
  - Possibility of establishing Complex social services with three major components: Community Support Centre, Mother and Baby Unit, Support Centre for Street Children
  - The impact on quality of services by tendering of services from Municipalities to licensed and experienced NGOs
  - Mechanisms for co-ordination between a range of players on case level to ensure quality management and sustainable solution for the child
  - The impact of a wide range of social and educational services in the areas of prevention, deinstitutionalization, work with street children and prevention of school drop outs
  - The impact of multi-disciplinary approaches in child welfare activities
- More than 27,000 information materials developed and 50 media activities were implemented to ensure awareness
- Two regional meetings were held – one on prevention and one on deinstitutionalization
- Two information campaigns were carried out: “Foster Care” and “School without abuse”
- 709 clients used the services of the Complex
- 1560 individual and family sessions took place; 16 group forms of services and more than 20 individual forms of services provided by the Complex team.

Plovdiv Municipality took over the management of the Complex, which is now one out of 10 complexes funded by the State at national level. With funding from the PHARE programme other similar initiatives are beginning to be implemented, using lessons learned and practices from Plovdiv.
Bulgaria: Social Program of Municipality of Varna

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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<td>Reference:</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment</td>
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**Objective:** In line with national social policy strategies and programs this initiative aims to provide social protection and integration of vulnerable groups through the establishment of a network of accessible and inclusive community-based services.

**Background:** The first municipal social program "Bulgaria for Everybody" was elaborated in 2003 by the administration of Varna Municipality during the European Year of People with Disabilities. The program was implemented with the active participation of NGPs-members of the Public Council for Rehabilitation and Social Integration of the People with Disabilities in Varna municipality, marking the beginning if good cooperation between the local authorities and the NGO sector. In 2004 the social program of the municipality covered already all vulnerable groups. The partnership principles were further developed by delegating the implementation of many activities to NGOs.

The program is structured in several clusters, i.e. social services, education, health care, drugs prevention, accessible environment, culture and sport, and includes 90 activities. The implementation involves active participation of all directorates in the municipal administration, the Municipal Council, the Public Councils, NGOs and social institutions in Varna. The program is adopted by the Municipal Council. The activities are outsourced to private providers after competitive procedures. The budget is 1 864 000 EUR for the period 2004-2007.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- NGO projects for rehabilitation and social integration of people with disabilities from Varna municipality;
- Establishment of a Family Centre for Children and a Centre for Social and Educational Support to Children with Disabilities;
- Counselling Bureau for children and young people;
- Investments in repair works of public infrastructure for improved access for people with disabilities;
- Provision of counselling and training to people in disadvantaged situation;
- Rehabilitation activities including sport programs, competitions and social services (social assistants) for people with disabilities; Provision of equipment and refurbishment for health and social services for people with disabilities;
- Public awareness activities; Concerts and other cultural activities; Public dining-hall for poor people
- Co-financing for NGO projects
- One constraint is the budgetary process. The municipal social program is approved only after the adoption of municipal budget- usually in February. The outsourcing procedures that follow are further shortening the time for actual implementation of the services.
**Bulgaria: Complex for support to children from 0-3 and their families in Sofia**

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>For Our Children Foundation</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Reference:</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet link:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.forourchildren-bg.org">www.forourchildren-bg.org</a> (in Bulgarian)</td>
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**Objective:** To ensure the right of the child to family care through the provision of community based services, through:
- Development and support of a family type of care for children 0-3 through prevention of child abandonment and reintegration;
- Development of the local capacity for provision of quality social services meeting European standards and quality;
- Increasing public awareness on the issues around child abandonment and the effects of institutionalization on child development.

**Background:** The project is implemented since 2007 in partnership between Home for Medico-Social Care for Children, a Hospital and its maternity ward, For Our Children Foundation and the Agency for Social Assistance, with funding from EveryChild UK.

The Centre provides the following services:
- In the area of prevention of child abandonment: Consultation and support to the parents in the maternity ward; Intensive support to the mother in funds management, family planning, meeting children’s needs, developing attachment with the child, etc.
- In the area of family support: Social consultation; Consultation on family planning; Advocacy; Working with the extended family; Family conferences; Direct work with children; Specialized assessment and development of individual programme for using social services; In-kind support.
- In the area of reintegration: Specialized assessment and development of a plan for reintegration; Direct work with children; Capacity building programmes for parents; Supervised meetings between children and parents; Family counselling; Advocacy; Self-support group of parents; Support to the family after the reintegration; In-kind support.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- Four main players are directly involved in the gate keeping
- Mechanisms for co-ordination between a range of players established - on case level to ensure quality management and sustainable solution for the child;
- The impact of multi-disciplinary approaches will be possible to evaluate
- Crucial role of licensed and experienced service providers from the NGO sector is being acknowledged in the reform process;
- The first three months of the Centre functioning the success with the prevention of child abandonment seems very promising;
- More than 101 clients have used the services of the Centre;
- 121 individual and family consultation sessions have taken place. Out of them 84 were in the community;
**FYR Macedonia: Day Care Centre for Street Children**

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Centre for Social Welfare in Skopje</th>
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<td><a href="http://www.mtsp.gov.mk">www.mtsp.gov.mk</a></td>
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<td>Reference</td>
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**Objectives:** To provide care and protection to children living or working in the street, while re-integrating them and their families into a broader care and support network.

**Background:** There are over 1000 street children in Skopje that live on the edge of bare existence, spend their daytime in the streets, begging or cleaning windshields, left with no possibility for education and other opportunities for normal child development, exposed to risk of violence, abuse and/or exploitation. Most of them have a family but live in improvised “houses” with no access to water, electricity, etc; do not go to school; do not have health insurance and care; lack food, clothes, shoes etc. The previous efforts to support these children were not systematic and did not achieve sustainability and social inclusion.

The first day care centre in the municipality Kisela Voda in Skopje was opened by the Government in 2004 and up-to date an estimated 400 children attended that centre. A second centre was opened in the municipality of Suto Orizaru in Skopje in 2006, managed by an NGO with financial support from the Government. An estimated 30 children visit this centre. A third one is planned to be opened by the end of the year, in the municipality of Gjorce Petrov in Skopje.

In the two centres, a team of professionals works on daily basis with the children and provides them with psycho-social support, engages in educational and extracurricular activities that support the child’s mental and physical development, ensures regular health check and vaccination, works with parents; and supports children to enrol in the state educational system. As a result, this year, 33 children were in enrolled in regular schools.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

Ministry has proactively developed a partnership with civil society and created an NGO support network.

The Centres collect and utilize data to inform evidence-based policies and to help inclusion of children into mainstream services.
FYR Macedonia: Day Care Centres for Children in need of Special Care (DCC)

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment and Child Care Reform internal document</td>
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**Objectives:** To allow children with moderate and severe disabilities to be integrated within their home, families and community.

**Background:** DCCs were promoted by UNICEF as a measure for children with severe and profound disabilities to prevent their placement in residential institutions. Starting in 2002, UNICEF has been supporting opening DCCs in different towns in the country, which are now fully maintained by the MoLSP. The MoLSP opened an additional DCC in 2005 without UNICEF’s support. The total number of DCCs countrywide rose to 17 and three more are planned to be opened by the end of 2008. The NGO EducAid, has provided technical expertise for training of staff working in the DCCs. At present, some 200 children with special needs benefit from the services provided in these centres. The centres are opened six hours per day, five days per week. Children can play, learn, enhance their skills and develop their potentials. Awareness raising through diversified media accompanied the opening of DCCs, to sensitize communities and to mobilize their support.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- DCC improved children communication and learning abilities and as a result 14 children have been successfully integrated in the mainstream educational system.

- The professional qualification of social workers in the management of the day care centres was developed according to a networking approach aimed at increased collaboration of the social service and the local community, which resulted in developing a local action plan for social welfare in some municipalities.

- De-institutionalisation is becoming an increasingly accepted idea in the country.
Montenegro: Day care centre “Tisa” for children with disabilities in Bijelo Polje

Agency/Service/NGO responsible: Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare, Montenegro
Contact person: Snezana Mijuskovic, Deputy Minister
E-mail address: snezanam@mn.yu
Reference: UNICEF Country Office
Annex: External Evaluation of Tisa Day Care Centre, UNICEF and HI, November 2005

Objectives: The social integration and participation of children with disabilities in the community, through:
- promoting equal opportunities in access to services,
- educational activities to prepare children for preschool / school
- social and medical rehabilitation to improve the child’s functional abilities essential for integration in daily life activities.

Background: The Day Care Centre Tisa is a multidisciplinary community-based service for children with disabilities, opened in 2004 in Bijelo Polje, Montenegro. The Centre is actually part of the services provided to persons with disabilities within the Centre for Social Work in Bijelo Polje.

Tisa project was initiated by the Association of Parents of Children with Special Needs from Bijelo Polje, in partnership with the Centre for Social Work from Bijelo Polje, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Municipality, the Union of Parents Organizations from Montenegro and three international agencies (UNICEF, Handicap International, GGS). The DCC Tisa represents the first community setting for children with disabilities in Montenegro, which relies on the principles of inclusion and respect of the rights of the child.

Before Tisa opened its doors, the parents of children with disabilities have to rely on the only available provider of specialized services for persons with disabilities – which was the residential institution “Komanski Most”, a large setting for 350 persons with physical and intellectual disabilities. The services were based on a medical approach to disability. As no other alternative existed, in terms of education, rehabilitation or socialization for the children with moderate and severe disabilities, many parents preferred to keep the children at home, in a friendly environment, but without any access to other services.

In addition, Bijelo Polje, as many other cities in Montenegro, has many accessibility problems for the disabled persons. The transportation and mobility are difficult, because of environmental barriers and of the lack of adapted means of transportation. These aspects lead progressively to social isolation, and reduced access of the disabled persons to any education programs.

The Union of Parents Associations of Montenegro and then the Parents Association of Bijelo Polje were supported and encouraged by Save the Children UK, the Swiss SDC and later by UNICEF and Handicap International to mobilize for the opening of a small community setting for their children.

The centre provides services to 17 children with moderate and severe learning disabilities and two children are visited at home (patronage) on weekly bases. Beside personal care, the activities planed on individual bases are aimed to socialization, integration, education, social and functional rehabilitation.

“Tisa” is a pilot project, designed for replication in Montenegro, through a network of day care centres, for children and teenagers with disabilities. The results and lessons learned from Tisa are planned to inform the articulation of quality standards for this type of service in Montenegro. UNICEF and HI, as partners and donors of the DCC, initiated an external evaluation of the service.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:
The Day Care Centre in Bijelo Polje is the first alternative setting for children with disabilities in Montenegro based on a holistic approach, where a complex of services and a social model of integration are proposed, rather than a medical model of rehabilitation and education of children with disabilities.

Activities are planned on an individual basis.

DCC prevents children's placement in residential care. Parents would like to see the continuity of service provision, responding to the needs irrespective the age of their children, their educational abilities or medical condition. However, the professionals are stressing the priority of services for young children to prepare them for preschool or inclusion in mainstream school. Sometimes it is not easy to fulfil both expectations.

Regulations are unclear and more transparency is required on relationships between all actors involved in project.

A DCC is not an “alternative” to institutionalization of persons with disabilities, but a community-based service which responds to very specific needs of a category of users, in a specific moment in time.

The biggest risk of a DCC is to become a “mini-institution”, meaning a small setting, providing a set of services for a closed category of users, without any relations with the other existing services in the community. More work is needed on defining the role of the centre and plan for its evolution over the years. More clarity is also needed with regard to division of labour between Tisa and other services that are already available in the community, including mainstream schools, hospitals etc.
Montenegro: Family mediation

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**Objectives:** Family mediation represents an alternative method for resolution of family disputes. In Montenegro, family mediation was considered a priority within the reform of the justice system, aiming to ensure full protection of the rights of children from dysfunctional families and their parents. The objective of Save the Children UK initiative was to introduce family mediation as a practice within the justice system through increasing the capacity of civil society organisations and the state system to use alternative methods for resolution of family disputes in Montenegro.

**Background:** In Montenegro, with a population of approx 625,000 inhabitants, every seventh marriage ends up in a divorce. According to Centres for Social Work, in most cases, parents cannot reach agreement mainly regarding the child’s custody and alimony. This process leads annually, to at least 750 children who are affected psychologically, economically and socially by their parents’ divorce.

The Ombudsman of Montenegro raised as a major concern the impact that children perceive in case of divorce and of interrupted communication with both parents. It is noted that in practice, in 90% of cases of divorces in the country, children rights with regards to the maintenance of relationship with both parents are violated.

Family mediation is a dispute resolution process. As an alternative to judicial or administrative decision-making, the spouses are assisted by an impartial/neutral professional in order to analyse the situation and to try to reach their own agreement with regards to some or all of the matters under dispute. The Council of Europe recommended mediation to be compulsory in family cases primarily for the protection of children's rights.

The Montenegro Family Law and Law on Mediation (2005) include family mediation service in all family disputes, including divorces. However, it has not yet been fully enforced into practice, due to the lack of procedural mechanisms, technical knowledge, experience, human and financial resources, etc.

Save the Children initiated and supported the Ministry of Justice in the development of the new Family Law. Within this process, Save the Children facilitated dialog between Ministry of Justice and NGO Association of Montenegrin Mediators, which lead to the introduction of family mediation. Further on, the support continued with training and capacity building of family mediators, focus groups with children, preparation of promotion materials, promotion campaign, advocacy and lobbying activities, as well as piloting mediation activities in few judicial courts in Montenegro. The project is implemented in: Podgorica, Nikšić, Herceg Novi, Bijelo Polje, Rožaje, Berane, Kotor. The budget is 90 000 euros.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- Introduction of family mediation into Family Law, meaning obligatory mediation in family disputes;
- Facilitated and improved cooperation between civil and governmental sector;
- Inclusion of children into the family mediation process whenever it is acceptable for children according to the professionals’ opinion;
- Lobbying and advocacy with citizens and professionals to accept mediation as an alternative procedure to solve family disputes;
- Lobbying and advocacy for establishment of Montenegrin Mediation Centre;
- Government commitment for introducing family mediation in practice of few juridical courts and for scaling up to country level in the future;
- Better informed Montenegrin citizens, civil sector, professionals and duty bearers especially from justice and social welfare system about newly introduced service of family mediation and its benefits;
- Increased advocacy, management and fundraising skills of family mediators, members of the Montenegrin association of mediators and stronger advocates for child rights;
- Increased capacity of 20 professionals already experienced and with expertise in family issues, in family mediation;
- Trained family mediators are appointed by the minister of justice as first official family mediators in Montenegro;
- Successful use of gained knowledge and skills of mediators in practice, which leads to improved communication between family members in the dispute and reduced conflicts;
- Children benefited from reduced conflict between parents: significantly reduced emotional and physical abuse and neglect by parents;
- Reduced workload of the Courts which brings to the better quality and faster work of the courts.

Family mediation enables better protection of child rights and application of best interest of the child principle compared to court procedures in cases of family court cases. This project is an example of good cooperation and between state and civil sector, as it is implemented in partnership among Ministry of Justice, basic courts, Save the Children UK, National Association of Mediators.
Romania: Prevention of child abandonment through community centres.

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Fundatia Romana pentru Copii, Comunitate si Families (FRCCF)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>EveryChild</td>
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**Objective:** The key aim of the initiative is to prevent the abandonment of children by their families and communities. The target group is represented by children in very difficult circumstances, whether they are raised in families, but still at risk of being physically, sexually or emotionally abused or whether they have been neglected by their family such as for example street children. It also targets children that have been reintegrated into their biological family, but have a hard time to adjust after long period of institutionalization. To prevent abandonment and other forms of abuse and neglect, the range of services developed within the community centers was expanded to the environment acting directly upon the children: parents, siblings and professionals working with them.

**Background:** The community centres support children and families with a wide range of services such as counselling, education, personal development, advocacy, family intervention, vocational guidance and job mediation. Material support was provided seldom in form of food, clothing, hygienic products, where it was considered absolutely necessary. All the activities are being implemented in partnership with local authorities and other NGOs.

FRCCF has been developing and running community centres since the year 2001. The first one was opened in the city of Cluj-Napoca. Seven community centres function today all with a contribution from EveryChild, but also with the financial involvement of a variety of other donors: The Romanian Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, PHARE, Tokyo Marine for the Cimpia Turzii community Centre, private donors and companies. Currently the funding for the community centres in the larger cities (Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Cimpia Turzii and Satu Mare) is secured until 2009.

In Cluj-Napoca, the two community centres provide services for 50 children daily average. In 2006, an assessment of the impact of these community centres was performed. To the question: “What changed in your life since you started to attend the community centre?”, almost a third of the children said that they had better school results. Then, a considerable number of children appreciated the fact that here they could make new friends and that they received help with their homework. They also said that since they came to the centre they play more, they behave better and that they have more confidence in themselves. The social workers were also asked to identify the progress of the interviewed children and it was found that their assessment was similar to what the children had experienced; 34% of the children had better school results, 30% were more sociable and 31% had more confidence in themselves after benefiting from the community centre services.

Similar experiences were registered throughout the country and positive results were influencing also the development of new policies with regards to setting up and financing community social services by local authorities. The National Strategy developed during 2006 mentions the need for development of community based services in more than 3,000 communes throughout the country.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- **Prevention** is much more efficient and effective than reaction to an already existing crisis situation.

- Community centres are adaptable to flexible needs for social services and promote the multidisciplinary approach. They look at the child from several perspectives and accompany the child over a longer period of time, in its environment (own family or alternative care, school, peer group, other services).
Community centre services address the whole community through: involvement of volunteers in the centre’s activity; donations from individuals and companies; financial and strategic involvement of local authorities; Community centre function according to nationwide accepted standards and are licensed accordingly; Because the community centres are run very close to the place where the children live, they encourage local authorities and other actors in the social field to find solutions to local problems locally.
**Romania: Multi-sectoral approach for the prevention of child abandonment in hospitals**

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights</td>
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**Objectives:** To contribute to the prevention of the abandonment of children in hospitals by promoting an integrated approach and through capacity building of professionals with responsibilities in this field (especially medical staff and policemen).

**Background:** Prevention of abandonment is considered as a complex intervention as it claims integrated, inter-sectoral working methodologies and coordination. Most often providing effective and efficient prevention requires the involvement of professionals from several institutions at county level: County Council, General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Protection, Public Health Authority, County Hospital Direction, Police, School Inspectorate, Local Authority (Social Services within the Mayoralty), and sometimes, non-governmental organization.

In order to ensure effectiveness and coherence of intervention, capacity building of these professional and increased understanding and support for more collaborative approach was considered essential. In this context, the National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights initiated training activities with an initial sectoral focus, but followed by inter-sectoral approach of capacity for intervention in prevention of abandonment. With support from national and international experts, over 200 policemen and 200 medical staff were trained in 2005 and over 800 policemen and 1200 medical staff in 2007, nation-wide.

Various interactive and attractive training materials on child rights with a dedicated chapter on children left in hospital units were tailored and distributed to each professional group.

The training activities developed in the frame of the two educational campaign on child’s rights benefited from a total budget of 5.3 million Euro

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- Due to effectiveness of integrated intervention, the number of children abandoned in hospital units has reduced;

- After the training, the willingness and commitment of all authorities and professionals involved increase with regards to the implementation of the provisions of the new law on promotion and protection on children’ rights;

- The capacity building and educational campaign generated and proved successful collaboration and important involvement at all levels (central and local authorities).

- Unfortunately, the number of participants and the number of days allocated to the training sessions were limited.

- There is still an insufficient number of community based services to continue to support families and preventing child abandonment.
Romania: Temporary shelter, a form of care and protection, not a disguised form of residential care

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Complex of Community Social Services for Child Protection from Reşiţa, Caras Severin County</th>
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<tr>
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Objectives: The Maternal Centre “Hope” aims at protecting each child’s right to benefit from stable family contacts and works to prevent child abandonment and institutionalization. For mothers and families at risk of abandoning their children, it provides temporary accommodation; food; health services; protection and care; emotional support and, if needed, psychological counselling; education; socialization and spare time activities; social care; information; legal advice; independent life skills development; social integration services; professional integration services; family and community reintegration; post-residential services. It has 8 places (mother and child couples) and its usage rate is 80% per year with an efficiency of over 90%.

Background: The Complex of Community Social Services for Child Protection offers viable alternatives. It cooperates with the General Department of Social Work and Child Protection from Caras Severin county, with most of the residential centres from county capital city and nearby locations, Public Health Authority and County Hospital (including maternity ward and paediatrics), County Police Inspectorate, County School Inspectorate, County Employment Agency, and many nongovernmental organizations working in the county.

The Complex of Community Social Services for Child Protection from Reşiţa is a public social care institution working at county level, with legal personality, set up and working under the jurisdiction of the Caraş-Severin County Council. The Complex includes the following structures:
1. The Maternal Centre “Hope”;
2. Social Care Service made up of three components called:
   - “Service for Parent Counselling and Support”;
   - “Service for Child Reintegration and Integration into Family”;  
   - “Service for Abused, Neglected, Exploited Child Counselling”.

These services are carried out in compliance with: Minimum compulsory standards for maternal centers, for centers of parent counseling and support, for the centre preparing and supporting family reintegration or integration of children, for counseling centers for abused, neglected and exploited child. All services provided to beneficiaries are licensed by the National Authority for Child Rights Protection. The license is granted only if the minimum compulsory standards for social services are met.

The Complex is a county public provider of social services and can run social services only if accredited according to legislation in force. The Complex is accredited to provide social services by the Caraş-Severin Accreditation Commission for Social Service Providers, whose executive and secretarial work is covered by Caraş-Severin Department of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family. The Complex (the Maternal Centre) is state budget-funded.

The target group consists of families with children in need and young single mothers. Direct beneficiaries include pregnant women in the last trimester who consider abandoning their child at birth; young homeless mothers of under three-year-olds who do not have a stable source of income; young mothers facing family crises; women who cannot relate to their child or face difficulties in taking care of the child; low level of education / professional skills or other social and professional integration problems which
entail shortage of material and financial resources. Although most recorded cases are solved quite quickly, new referrals keep the number of cases constant.

A personalized intervention plan is drawn up and re-assessed with the consent of the mother and, according to the case, after consulting with the child’s father, grandparents and other people relevant to the mother and child.

Activities for the preparation of discharge are also developed to ensure socio-professional reintegration and reunion or contacts with the extended family. In a few cases, these activities also include referral to other type of social services or residential care. The main goal of the centre if to have the mother and child discharged in complete safety.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

**Outcomes:**
- awareness and direct involvement of local communities in supporting the families with children that benefit from the centers’ services;
- active and effective support of beneficiaries provided by public services / institutions running activities in this area;
- transfer of competence;
- beneficiaries’ accountability with regard to problems and parent duties;
- Financial, psycho-pedagogical and relationship support offered to beneficiaries.

**Effects/impact on beneficiaries:**
- social and professional integration / reintegration;
- employment;
- accountability with regard to problems and parent duties;
- prevention of beneficiaries’ child abandonment and child institutionalization.

Indicators are tested at service level and after group assessments run quarterly or twice a year as stipulated in the convention and plan-based work is analyzed at least once a year.

The service running costs are minimum compared to those of residential institutions and the human benefits for parents and children are great.

The law recommends that a formal contract for residency be signed for a period of 6 months, after which it can be prolonged up to 12 months. When signing the contract, the mother is informed, and the case manager (social assistant) makes sure that it is clearly understood and accepted, that residency is temporary and conditional to cooperation on the proposed personalized intervention plan. In the Maternal Centre „Hope”, due to the good collaboration between the centre’s specialists and the rest of the social protection network throughout the county, the average period of residency in the centre is 8 months.
Romania: Transformation of a large residential institution into a complex of services for children with disabilities


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Reference: UNICEF Country Office

Objectives: To respect the rights of children with disabilities and provide them with adequate care and support.

Background: Disability is still a cause of stigma and discrimination in Romania. This is a constant concern for the government and for NGOs. Yet, new services tend to focus on children’s disabilities, rather than on their potential and on their right to live like other children. Nationwide, around 6,000 children, representing approximately 10% of the total number of children with disabilities, are still living in institutions. Progress has been made in the last years in terms of closing large institutions and moving children to smaller units. Unfortunately, child rights monitoring is lacking in residential care. Long-term patients and those with severe disabilities live in particularly poor situations, with inadequate food and clothing, and very limited provision for recreation and leisure activities.

Before 2004, the Rehabilitation and social assistance centre “White Lilly” was a rehabilitation hospital which provided medical services for children with disabilities from the community and for 20 children in residential care. The reform in the child protection system brought a shift from service delivery to the protection of children’s rights and from special protection needs to more attention being paid to families exposed to risks and vulnerabilities.

In this context, the General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Protection (GDASPC) of sector 3 in Bucharest decided to change services delivered in old-type residential institutions and to develop a new way of approaching children and their families, as part of the community. This new holistic approach brought the Local Council of sector 3 and the GDASPC to decide upon the transformation of the hospital into a modern complex of rehabilitation services for children with disabilities both in residential care and from the community. Support was provided from the National Authority for the Protection of Children’s Rights (legislation, standards) and from the Local Council (financial support), as well as from partner NGOs (capacity building and support to behavioural change).

The Rehabilitation and Social Assistance Centre “White Lilly” is now a modern complex of services including a residential centre under the responsibility of GDASPC. 56 children and youth between 2 and 18 years with various disabilities are residents in this centre. Numerous therapeutic services are offered: psychological counselling, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychotherapy for depressed children and adolescents, cognitive behaviour therapy, family therapy-parenting support groups, hydrotherapy, physiotherapy, massage, and electro-physiotherapy). Over 120 children from the surrounding community also benefit from these services, but many more are still on the waiting list because of limited capacity.

The centre is coordinated by a doctor and the staff is composed of: 1 psychologist, 1 speech therapist, 1 social assistant, 1 stomatologist, 1 rehabilitation doctor, 1 neurologist doctor 1 general practitioner, 4 educators, 2 occupational therapists, 10 nurses, 26 care givers, and 12 administrative staff.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:
The transformation was guided by:
- Support for development of activities to reduce stigma and discrimination and to facilitate community integration and participation. Most of these children did not attend mainstreaming school – few were going to the only special school in the neighbourhood. They did not participate in activities within the community as they did not go out of the residential centre.
- Improving and increase access to quality specialized services for children with disabilities residents of the centre, but also for other children from the community.

The outcomes of this action within the process of transformation are:
- Over 50 staff of the centre improved their abilities and skills in order to better interact and communicate with all the children beneficiaries of the centre;
- Over 50 children without parental care, living in the residential centre, are able to enjoy activities developed with and within the community and combating thus the existing stigma;
- All children with disabilities attending the special school or special education programs in the centre have the opportunity to interact and socialize with children from the normal school, from the community;
- Over 100 children, beneficiary or not of the residential and rehabilitation services, benefit also of a recreation and leisure outdoor space and playground facilities;
- Over 200 children improved their physical and medical status and condition by using diversified and modern equipment;
- Around 100 children have access to complex specialized services through the rehabilitation of the water therapy facilities;
- The centre “White Lilly” became a best practice model for other similar institutions in the public system.

Attitudes and perceptions in the community have changed. Promotion, communication and advocacy were essential in order to increase a sense of responsibility and ownership.

Creating partnerships with professional NGOs and sharing experiences with specialists from other countries was also very important. The centre initiated experience and study exchange programs and currently is engaged in yearly activities with students from “Horizon College from Netherlands, volunteers from Norway, Canada, USA.
Romania: Parenting Education Program “How to became better parents”

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<tr>
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<th>Holt Romania</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.holt.ro">www.holt.ro</a> and up-coming soon: <a href="http://www.educatieparentala.ro">www.educatieparentala.ro</a></td>
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**Objectives:** To develop parenting skills of parents and reduce the risk of abandonment and maltreatment by educating the parents on positive discipline, developing positive attitudes of parents about their children, creating a social network for vulnerable parents and their children, understanding the role of children in families, reducing abuse, neglect and domestic violence and child labour.

**Background:** This programme was initiated by Holt Romania in 2002 to help parents improve the life of their children and prevent separation of children from their families. A team recruits parents with the support of local authorities and organizes 7 meetings with them. The meetings are moderated by 2 parent educators. Over two hours are allocated for each meeting, along the following issues:

- How to begin
- Self care
- Communication
- Stress management
- Positive discipline
- Child development
- Future plans.

The program was implemented in 12 counties out of 47 throughout the country. In 9 counties training programmes for parenting educators and experimental parenting courses were organised. Curricula for courses, a guide for educators, a guide for parents, 12 videotapes with educational movies were produced.

Altogether, 120 parents’ educators have been trained and approximately 2000 parents attended the parenting education courses. The budget is on average 50.000 Euro per year.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

The programme helps parents change their definitions and behaviours in relation to their children and to themselves. This constitutes deep and sustainable change. The meetings contribute to develop group identity, especially for participants that are marginalized. The norms and values of the group have more influence on the parents than individual interventions. Group work is thus more cost effective.

Funding is a crucial restraint. Up until now, UNICEF has been the only financial support of this initiative in Romania. Yet, the authorities are now aware of the importance of this programme.
**Serbia: Sustainable Rett Day Care Centre**

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<tr>
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<td>Reference:</td>
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**Objectives:** To develop sustainable alternative services to support children with Rett syndrome and their families. In addition, this program aimed to promote good practice in terms of piloting, development and ensuring sustainability of activities, in order to be replicated in other types of service development, through:

- Provision of sustainable services for preventive support to families with children who have Rett syndrome so that the child could stay in the family environment and socialize with peers and participate in tailored individual programs for developing the capacity of every girl in the Center.
- Learning from this practice to develop family support services in Serbia.

**Background:** In Serbia and in Belgrade, no Day Care Centre for girls with Rett syndrome existed before 2002 and these girls could not benefit from specialized services provided by the social welfare and child protection system.

In 1995, few parents founded an Association dedicated to services development for girls affected by Rett syndrome and their families. Until 2002 when the reform process was initiated, the Rett Association was the only support for these children and their families.

In 2002, when the Ministry of Social Affairs started the reform in the social welfare system, the Rett Association received support for creation and development of a pilot Weekend Day Care Centre in the premises of one of the residential institutions in Belgrade. The Fund for Associations of Persons with Disability (FOPD) allocated the necessary budgetary funds. Following a successful completion of this first pilot project, the Association was encouraged by FOPD in 2003 to continue and develop activities and thus, the Day Care Centre was created, functioning three days a week in different premises of the same residential home in Belgrade. Towards the end of the FOPD funding for the second year of activities, the City of Belgrade took over the regular financing of the Day Care Centre, according to its mandate to fund day care services on its territory. The total approximate budget for the two (2002 and 2003) projects funded by the FOPD is 15,000 Euro.

The Day Care Centre which was created due to a private initiative proved in time the benefits of having the girls with Rett syndrome socializing, receiving appropriate care that responded to their specific needs, and leaving the isolation of their homes. These were arguments to generate and develop a successful private-public partnership.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- **Improved and diversified services for** girls with Rett syndrome (physical therapy, cognitive exercises, peer socializing, etc.);
- **Positive impact on the quality of family life** for children with Rett syndrome (parents have more time to spend with their children, including the possibility to work);
- **Education and transfer of experience and expertise to families with similar problems throughout Serbia**;
- **Specialized service established and functional, that is tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries**;
- **Voluntarism of parents along with professionals providing additional guarantees that the best interests of the child is respected**;
- **Sustainability of the center and its services was reached through the contribution of the local government (in this case the City of Belgrade) which has recognized and accepted its responsibility for providing the service**;
- **A potential shortcoming is that there are no standards for these types of services, so there can be no “independent” quality assurance of the implemented programs in the Day Care Centre. This**
shortcoming has been addressed by the Rett Association by inviting professionals who are not engaged in the work of the Centre to provide their opinions and recommendations on the work of the Day Care Centre.
**Serbia: Street Children Harm Reduction project**

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>NGO Centre for Youth Integration.</th>
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<td>Contact person:</td>
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<td>Reference:</td>
<td>Save the Children UK</td>
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**Objectives:** The project aims to raise awareness of the general public and of institutions on the real needs and realities of children living on the streets, and to provide direct services to these children through outreach, tailored intervention, and educational development.

Specific objectives are:
- Set up standards for services to be provided to this vulnerable population;
- Create and develop referral mechanisms to use existing services, currently not accessed by the majority of children living on the streets;
- Facilitate and convene meetings with representatives of the public social welfare system, in order to improve information-sharing and experience exchange with professionals of statutory services;
- Create a “street children friendly network” among NGOs active in this area;
- Address the issue of STDs among children living on the street;
- Find satisfying accommodation solutions for very young ones;
- Assess needs / strengths / weakness in the children’s original family and provision of social assistance (e.g. regulating their family status, legal status, documentation, registration, etc).

**Background:** In 2005, due to occurrence of a dramatic situation involving children living on the streets, a rapid inquire was performed in order to map out the services and responsible agencies (child rights centre, centre for social work, and police) involved in this particular area. This inquiry activity demonstrated that there is a lack of understanding of responsibilities with regards to these children, and as well among different key players.

Following a rapid evaluation of the needs of these and other children living and working on the street, a network of 11 outreach workers was developed, who voluntary go out on the field 4-6 times per week. A coordinator of the outreach work, together with the project coordinator, and one networking with the stakeholders, were building a team of intervention in order to ensure that the children have access to medical institutions, to share information with the police, and to establish some links with social welfare system. This experience generated the creation of a drop-in centre which was established. The drop-in center was the first institution to serve this population on principles of voluntary access to services, confidentiality, respect and trust.

This programme is implemented on territory of Belgrade. However, it serves all children who are working/living on streets, and those are children from all over the country. The creation of the drop-in centre is supported by Save the children UK (18.084, 00 euros) and by the governmental Social Innovation Fund (55.355,00 euros). Yet, sustainability is an issue as these funds are secured for a period of 12 months and most work is voluntary.

**Positive factors:** The organization has accumulated a strong experience in working with these children living on the streets. In time a collaborative approach and exchange of information were promoted and developed with institutions like the Ministry for Labour, Employment and Social Policy. Collaborative attitude is hoped to be developed also this local authorities.
Gatekeeping at National and Sub national Level—the role of the State

Bulgaria: Development of municipal strategies for social services for children

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Care International Bulgaria</th>
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**Objectives:** To improve the quality of care in specialized institutions for children in 10 pilot municipalities in accordance with municipal strategies for children and families, leading to:
- The introduction of community-based services
- The reform of 14 specialized institutions for children.

**Background:** Care International Bulgaria initiated activities related to quality of care in 2003 in the framework of the EuropeAid contract for provision of technical assistance for reform in the social services for children in 10 pilot municipalities in Bulgaria (see also: “Child Welfare Reform Project” under chapter on Targeting, Planning and Forecasting a Continuum of Services).

Reform in the management of specialized institutions for children, including decrease of the number of children living in them and deinstitutionalization, was not possible without the availability of community-based services. In other words, efficient and sustainable institutional reform had to be linked to municipal strategies and social services available at municipal level.

Inter-agency working groups were established in all pilot municipalities. They involved mayors, regional and municipal educational structures, staff from specialized institutions for children and the heads of the Directorates for Social Assistance (DSA). With the support of Bulgarian and European experts, as well as Care’s local coordinator, these groups elaborated strategies, action plans and pilot projects targeting an effective deinstitutionalization process.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- Development and piloting of a model for municipal strategies, action plans and development of community-based services;
- Increased understanding of professionals working in institutions about the child-focused approach;
- Opening of the specialized institutions to the communities through provision of new and diversified services and establishment of community boards;
- Increased capacity of local NGOs for provision of services;
- Insufficient number of staff, need of constant efforts for staff qualification and high turnover ratio in the Child Protection Directorates;
- Lack of clarity and division of roles and responsibilities among professionals and institution at local level;
- Weak inter-sectoral cooperation and multi-disciplinary communication within the institutions;
- Insufficient knowledge and understanding on alternatives to institutionalization;
- Very limited contacts and cooperation with parents;
- Insufficient attention paid to the individual needs of children. No regular case reviews.
- Poor contact with the communities.
**Bulgaria: Training on the best interest of the child**

| Agency/Service/NGO responsible: | State Agency for Child Protection  
Agency for Social Assistance  
International Social Service Bulgaria Foundation  
Child Legal Centre Bulgaria Foundation |
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**Objectives:** Enforcement and implementation of international and national legislation in child protection administrative and court procedures through:
- Establishment of work relationships and exchange of information between the magistrates and the social workers,
- Increasing the knowledge of the social workers on the operation of the justice system,
- Increasing the knowledge of the magistrates on the procedures and specifics of the social work for child protection,
- Implementation of mechanisms for determining the best interest of the child in administrative and court procedures,
- Exchange of experience and best practices.

**Background:** The adoption of the Child Protection Act introduced the Child Protection Departments as the single entry points for the child protection system and court decisions for any cases of placement of children outside their biological families. The practice between 2001 and 2003 helped the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP) and Agency for Social Assistance (ASA) to identify the main problems in the cooperation between the social system and the courts, e.g. vague status of the social workers in court procedures, contradictory court practices, contradictions between the Family Code and the Child Protection Act, insufficient knowledge of the judges of the Child Protection Act (CPA), lack of mechanisms for determining the best interest of the child. A two-day seminar was organized in 2003 for social workers from Child Protection Directorates (CPD) and two judges from each district courts.

Pilot training of judges was organized in 2004 between SACP, the Child Welfare Reform Project Management Unit and the National Institute of Justice. The training was clearly beneficial and continuation was recommended. Thus, road seminars were initiated in October 2005 and a second round was conducted in October 2006.

The training seminars entitled “Legal, psychological and social aspects in child protection” in 2005 involved judges, social workers, teachers, police and other professionals from the following regions: Lovech, Sevlievo municipality, Targovishte, Shoumen, Veliko Tarnovo and Smolyan. The seminars in 2006 on “Best interest of the child – social, psychological and legal aspects” included professionals from the regions of Plovdiv, Smolyan, Kardjali, Burgas, Sliven and Stara Zagora. An additional seminar was organized for central level experts from the Ministry of Justice, the MLSP, SACP, ASA, the Union of Judges, judges, lawyers and social workers.

The trainers’ team comprised of a British family judge, a British social worker, and representatives of SACP, International Social Service Bulgaria and Child Legal Centre Foundation. The training program was focused on the principles of the CPA, which are also included in the UN CRC, i.e.

1. Child’s welfare is of paramount importance,
2. Immediate imposition of child protection measures,
3. No court decision is stipulated unless it would improve the child’s situation
4. Welfare list (check list of seven criteria used by professionals in England to determine the best interest of the child).

Another important topic was the possibility to share the parental rights between the biological parents and the state.
Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:

- Improved cooperation between the justice system and the child protection system.
- The professionals from the child protection system are informed on the operation of the justice system when child rights are interests are at concerned.
- The magistrates are informed on the work of the social workers and the opportunities of the child protection system for placement of children outside their biological families.
- Mechanisms for determining the best interest of the child in administrative and court procedures have been developed.
- Good practices have been exchanged.
- The training in 2005 included 162 professionals. The training in 2006 covered 169 professionals.
Bulgaria: Care Leavers Integration Program

Agency/Service/NGO responsible: International Social Service-Bulgaria
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Reference: UNICEF Country Assessment
Internet: http://www.iss-bg.org
Annex: Care Leavers Integration Project Proposal

Objectives: To achieve accelerated and effective vocational and social integration of young people raised and educated in residential institutions (RI), through:
- Support to common preparation for independent life for care – leavers;
- Accompaniment during transition between care leave and independent life;
- Introduction of measures for cooperation with the local institutions concerned with social integration, professional orientation and realization of care – leavers.
- Support to Government’s efforts to establish legislation on after care support.

Background: According to 2002 data based on the national representative study “Social Assessment of Child Care in Bulgaria” the overall number of children in specialized institutions was about 30,000, representing about 2% of the population of children in Bulgaria. Children who have grown up in such institutions often encounter difficulties with integrating in society and are not successful in their professional life. They cannot build up long-term relations with grown-up persons. The only lasting relations built up in care homes are those between the children themselves. When they leave, they feel uncertain and confused. The care homes are created and managed following the principle of collective bringing up of large groups of children. The infrastructure is very often inappropriate, and life in institution is orientated towards activities in large groups, therefore young people are not provided with the opportunity of individual development.

The preparation for independent life lacks vision, although such requirement is stipulated in normative acts. Most children with existing parents have little or no contacts with them. The professional orientation before the young person is leaving the institution is very limited, and the opportunities are mainly within the areas where the homes are located. Under the law they are sent back to their native place when they turn 18, regardless of the absence of contact with their families.

The programme Care Leavers Integration Program (CLIP) has been developed by the experts of ISS Switzerland and realised by ISS- Bulgaria, based on a trilateral agreement signed between the Swiss Confederation, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (MES) & the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP). It was implemented between 2003 and 2006 in three pilot municipalities: Veliko Turnovo, Sevlievo and Lovech. The implementation at municipal level was supported by inter-agency operational groups (including the municipal authorities, Departments for Social Assistance, Child Protection Directorates (CPD), Labour Bureau, RIE, Directors of the specialized institutions). The budget was CHF 1,530,000 from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and CHF 490,162 as Bulgarian co-financing.

The project intervened on three levels:
- At young people’s level: Development of individual care plans for young people between 16 and 18 years old until leaving the institution, preparation to independent life; and educational trainings; psychosocial consultations on professional realization and social adaptation; Peer Group Programme: sharing of experience, assisting in applying for qualification degree, spending some of the free time in social contacts outside the home, stimulating artistic activity, organizing joint activities – meetings, youth camp and trips.
- At professionals’ level: Training of educators, psychologists from SI and of social workers from CPD and Labour Office Directorates. After – care Program: support during the process of social adaptation /vocational realization, housing and social integration/ after leave, creation of sustainable Centres for
social rehabilitation and integration for work with children and young people at risk in society; Forum for exchange between directors of Residential institutions, Social Assistance Directorates, Labour Office Directorates, Regional Inspectorate of Education and Project coordinators; Training of directors on projects development, budgeting, forming and managing of a team, and others.

- **At community’s level:** Operational groups in the three municipalities to establish a partnering network and coordination.

The following infrastructure was established and supported by the state:

- Small living units (Protected Living Spaces) in the Residential institutions for young people to cope independently with everyday life and to take over self-responsibility 2-3 years before leaving the home.
- Two apartments (Half-Way Apartments) in each of the three pilot municipalities in which young people can live in the transition to complete independence, if they are ready to work actively on their personal, social and vocational integration.
- Consulting centres with easy access (Centres for social rehabilitation and integration of children and youth at risk) in which the young people have a person of reference who supports and accompanies them personally and professionally. Those centres will benefit also to other young people at risk of the community.

Between 2003-2006, 122 youths aged 15-18 received life skills training for independent life. All members of the RIs’ staff were trained on individual care planning, team work, child abuse prevention, etc. Representatives from the personnel of the RI, DSA and LO received training through the specially developed modules for care leavers preparation for independent life. A few products came out of project implementation: a manual and workshops for professionals; a workbook for young people from the RI for preparation for independent life; a methodology for delivery of the new social service for young people, who left the RI and those at risk from the community.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- Multi-disciplinary co-operation of all actors - young people themselves, young volunteers of the community, staff in the residential institutions and the social services, resource persons in the community, authorities of the municipalities and concerned Ministries, as well as the team of specialists;
- Common vision of a resource-oriented accompaniment of care leavers and their integration in Bulgarian society
- Positive effect “Protected living space” according to research carried out in May 2006. It included 19 youngsters from the 4 care homes, who lived in the Protected living spaces, and 32 educators. The information gathered through a structured questionnaire and target groups revealed that youngsters have a better self-esteem and self-control, resulting from their improved abilities to cope with everyday life, increased social skills, significant interpersonal relations with the other youngsters from the Protected space and people from outside, opportunities for personal choice and increased independence.
- Half-way apartments have accommodated 48 youngsters for period of 22 months. Those who left the service, work on permanent contract, live alone or with friends, and can afford to support themselves and live independently. The effect of individual support and accompaniment on the care leavers is estimated as positive. Out of 106 youngsters who had left the homes in 2003, 2004 and 2005, by the end of May 2006, 84 persons (81%) are working, 75 of them on permanent contract, 6 are unemployed (6%), 11 (13%) are in Higher education establishments. 50 (48%) live independently, 46 (43%) with close friends and relatives, and 10 people (9%) receive support from one or another type of public support.
**Romania: Children's rights monitoring tool**

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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**Objectives:** To create a country tool for monitoring the rights of all children, within or outside the child protection system, able to offer an exact state of facts over the system, based on data collected from the local authorities and on the real situation existing within their jurisdiction.

**Background:** The new legislation on the promotion and protection of children’s rights legalized a new approach that shifts strategies of intervention from individual cases of rights violation towards all children and from them to the family. It also claims shifting strategies of intervention in individual cases of rights violation towards the creation of a protective environment enabling all children to grow and develop in safety and good health.

In this sense, the project was initiated because of the need for a more complex, accurate and reliable instrument to be used in monitoring all children’s real situation and how their rights are respected and protected at local level.

In Romania, the monitoring system of children rights is organized on three main levels, national – National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights (NAPCR), at the county level, the General Direction for Social Protection and Assistance (GDAPA), and the local level (villages and other administrative units subordinated to the county) through the Public Services for Social Assistance. The document was elaborated by the Monitoring Department of NAPCR and has been transmitted for completion to all 47 local Child Protection Directions within the country. The local authorities request a number of data from the Public Services for Social Assistance functioning at community level. After filled in, the document was re-sent to the NAPCR for centralization of data reported by all the counties.

The tool consisted of a fiche which was elaborated at the beginning of this year. It was tested and after an 2days training with chief of monitoring departments within the GDAPA), it was send out for data collection. Based on the UN CRC and on the provisions of the new legislation on child rights protection which apply to all children of Romania, this document is meant to help collecting a more complex range of data from the local level, from all the administrative units mentioned above, referring to children, services provided for them, specialists working in various areas of the system, etc.

The expected results consist mainly in creating a real picture of the situation concerning the respect for the child’s rights in Romania and also in development of a system that would provide evidence based information to be used to improve the policies and strategies elaborated by the central authorities in this field.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**

- This instrument offers the possibility for the NAPCR to have an overview of the fulfilment of all children’s rights, so that identified strengths and weaknesses could be used for influencing, adjusting and developing new special child rights based policies.
- The main difficulty is related to the possibility of different interpretation of the fiche (monitoring tool) by representatives of local counties. Nevertheless, a unitary and coherent interpretation of the data is realized at national level (NAPCR).
Serbia: Day Centre for child trafficking prevention and rehabilitation, including children living in institutions

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reference:</td>
<td>Save the Children UK</td>
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**Objectives:**
- Prevention of child trafficking through education, information, legal advice and psychological assistance provided to children at risk, exposed to or victims of trafficking;
- Reintegration of children victims of trafficking including: vocational orientation and support for education (continuation of school program); support and assistance for participation and involvement in everyday life of the community; and secondary prevention (avoiding the return to trafficking) through psychological assistance and recovery, legal assistance, and participation to creative, recreational and educational programmes.

**Background:** The creation of the Day Center resulted from ASTRA’s direct work with victims and survivors of trafficking, especially children. The design of the provision of services is based on the beneficiaries expressed wishes and the assessment of their needs.

Currently in Serbia, trafficked victims are temporarily accommodated in a specialized shelter or returned directly to their family. One additional temporary shelter in Belgrade, accommodates girls exposed to trafficking and who have nowhere else to go, but its limited residential capacity allows only up to 5 as a maximum number of beneficiaries for up to one year protection. Admission criteria are unclear and, due to its reduced capacity, the shelter must often refuse receiving new clients.

With regards to reintegration interventions and programs for victims of trafficking, these are often lacking in long-term perspectives and in coherence with individual capacities. Even after one year sent in temporarily shelter, there are girls and young women to do not have a sustainable plan for reintegration: some of them are returning home, a small percentage go back to school. NGOs usually provide them with medical, legal and psychological assistance, but these programs depend on availability of funds. Others are caught back in trafficking because of the lack of adequate support even in their former / biological environment (primary family where they suffer violence, unemployment).

Astra’s Day Centre is organized according to weekly schedules, with daily activities from 4.00 pm to 8.00 pm (creative workshop, group meeting, foreign language course, yoga, cooking, educative workshops on different subjects, movie projections and relax time, psychodrama). A library, computers, Internet access are at the clients’ free disposal. Individual consultations, psychological or legal, are conducted in previously agreed terms, unless urgent intervention is needed. Communication out of opening hours is possible by phone or SMS (reminders, emergencies, etc.). Women survivors of human trafficking who have children also visit the Day centre.

The annual budget is 20 000 – 30 000 euros.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- Building national, unitary strategies for victim’s identification and assistance through development of coherent referral mechanisms and strengthen coordination among responsible institutions;
- Improving protection and care of children (potential) victims of human trafficking;
- Demonstrating effectiveness and efficiency of coherent reintegration activities and program for children victims of trafficking;
- Decreasing the overall rate of victims’ re-entering the trafficking ring;
- Increased awareness of 200 girls from children’s residential homes about trafficking and different situation exposing them to risk;
- Unfortunately, residential institutions are reluctant to long-term cooperation.
Due to victims' psychosocial state, it is difficult to establish a stable structure for long term child development.
Turkey: Towards good governance, protection and justice for children

Agency/Service/NGO responsible: UNICEF
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Deputy Representative
E-mail address: lpieters@unicef.org
Reference UNICEF Child Care Reform internal document and project description
Annex Project fiche TR 0404.01

Objectives: Within the context of accession to the EU, the overall objective is to enhance the protective environment for children in conflict with the law and to prevent child delinquency as outlined in the CRC, by upgrading the capacity of related institutions, including establishment of relevant baseline data and empirical evidence, development of common strategies and collaborative implementation practices. This implies:

- Harmonizing national legislation in line with the CRC and other international instruments and ensuring implementation of the legislation and promotion of rights;
- Ensuring that the child completes a basic education; that the family adapts to social and economic change; that the child is brought up in a healthy and protective environment and does not become a victim/perpetrator of crime and enter in conflict with the law;
- Increasing the capacity of institutions responsible and accountable for the protection and care of children and enhancing cooperation among them;
- Reducing the number of children in institutional care by developing alternative care services and improving the state of existing institutions;
- Guide and train children, families, community, media and personnel providing services for children to ensure that they safeguard the best interests of the child.

Background: Further to the concluding observations of the CRC Committee and in the course of progress towards EU accession, Turkey has recognised the need for more coordinated and collaborative action to be taken by the Ministries of Justice and Interior in cooperation with the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK), the Ministry of National Education, and Civil Society Organisations.

Through a consultative process facilitated by UNICEF, this EU funded project was designed to undertake:

- Research and evaluation: Qualitative participatory research helping to gain knowledge and understanding on the extent, scope and situation of child abuse, domestic violence, neglect and exploitation of children, but also on the capacities of training institutions (universities, police academies etc). The research also assesses the existing skills, attitudes and knowledge of the professionals working with and for children. Research teams are composed of both national and international experts.

- Support for pilot child centred initiatives:
  - Interventions aiming at improving communications with vulnerable families;
  - Early childhood development strategies targeting families with 0-6 years children;
  - Strategies to strengthen the capacities of families with 7-18 year old children to prevent them from running away from home, institutions or schools;
  - Strengthen the juvenile justice system;
  - Support the establishment of an Independent Ombudsman for Children with statutory powers.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:
The main lessons that have been learnt are that in essence, there is a need for:

- Establishing accurate baseline data and measurement tools to develop a modern and effective child protective environment;
- Involving civil society representatives, including both parents and children, in the design of new policies, strategies and plans of action;
- Develop preventive and re-integration models of care and protection;
- Improve co-ordination and communication at institutional level to implement child protection measures.
Targeting, forecasting and planning the establishment of a continuum of services

Albania: Preparation of Regional Community Care Plans in 12 Regions

Agency/Service/NGO responsible: World Bank- British Council

Contact person: Elleva Vertopi, Project Manager, Project Coordination Unit for Social Services Delivery Project of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

E-mail address: evertopi@ssdpgov.al

Reference: UNICEF Country assessment

Objectives: to improve the capacity for planning, managing and delivering social care services with increased involvement of local government, communities and civil society, through:

1. Setting up of Committees for Community Care Plan in 12 regions;
2. Training of Regional Community Care Plan Committee members;
3. Identification of vulnerable groups’ needs for care services;
4. Identification of possibilities/potentials for developing care services in all regions of Albania;
5. Increasing to the highest possible level the independence and self reliance of vulnerable people in developing their potential and unused skills in order to gain control over their own everyday life and social status; Developing productive and positive way of acting and thinking and make them aware of different possible solutions that exist and how they can select and access the right service needed for them.

Background: Based on the first Social Protection Sector Strategy (2002-2005), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities initiated the process for the Preparation of the Regional Community Care Plans and for the capacity building in the Regions. The Community Care Plans Group (CCPG) was set up in each region, based on Decision of Council of Ministers and with the leadership from the Regional Council Office.

Care Plans (CCPs) were prepared with technical assistance provided by consultancy companies to the Local Authorities, under the guidance of the British Council. These plans included the following activities:
1. helping the Regional State Social Services (SSS) in establishing the CCPG, while ensuring participation from all important regional stakeholders. Local media were used to announce the start of this process;
2. development of a work plan, with inputs from the Regional SSS and the British Council for each set of assigned regions;
3. discussion and sharing of information with other regional stakeholders, interested to join this process;
4. organisation/facilitation of meetings and workshops during the CCP preparation;
5. preparation of the monthly brief reports, highlighting the obstacles and the progress made in the reporting period;
6. preparation of the draft CCP reports for the assigned region, with inputs from the CCPGs, Regional SSS and the local government. The reports were submitted to the Project Co-ordination Unit (PCU) and British Council for finalisation;
7. support to the regional SSS to raise public awareness about the CCP process (through the local media).

Community Care Plan as a reflection of community needs, was considered a very useful instrument in defining the priority services as a first important step in designing policies for regional social services and community development. The programme was supported by the World Bank and the British Council, with an overall budget of 720,000 $.
Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:

The CCP ensured the implementation of the following principles:
- **Client comes first** – the needs and requirements of the clients are the priorities of the service;
- **Public interest** - the community care plan is an community issue;
- **Equal rights** – anyone has to have equal access to available social services;
- **Inclusion of users and providers** in development and delivery of the services;
- **Access to decision making** of the users and providers of social services;
- **Participation** of users and providers of services in defining the quality standards of the services.

The Community Care Plans and the Planning Committees have four years experience, and are now operational in all 12 regions. To date, in 8 of these, 50 NGO projects related to the establishment of new social services have been accepted. On this basis, procedures have been put in place regarding the establishment of 20 Centres for Social Services.

Challenges included:
- Development of a **systematic** method of community planning (manuals, guidance);
- Establishment of a **realistic** Plan in terms of time frame, funding, material and human resources;
- Development of mechanisms for funding of social services;
- Increase of the regional capacities in regards to the functioning of the CCPGs.
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Policy on protection of children deprived of parental care and families at risk (2006-2016)

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>MoLSP of BiH and Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska UNICEF/Save the Children UK</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Office and Save the Children UK</td>
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**Objectives:** To reach consensus amongst policy-makers and practitioners on transformation of public care system for children deprived of parental care. The policy document and commitment of the authorities are needed to ensure implementation of the proposed policy/strategy provisions being a direct result of such consensus.

**Background:** In 2002 UNICEF undertook a comprehensive research on situation of children without parental care and children at risk of being institutionalised, which was finalised in 2003 and widely disseminated in 2004. At the same time legal research was done on the framework for treatment of children without parental care, temporarily separated children and children living in institutions; and also on aspects of social protection for children. The evidence gathered during those studies became a starting point for a policy making initiative, a joint action of UNICEF, Save the Children UK, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Federation of BiH and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republika Srpska.

In 2005 a national conference took place and gathered about 100 representatives from relevant ministries, Centres for Social Work (CSW), children’s institutions, academics and NGOs. An updated situation analysis was prepared for this event, along with position papers on 4 key thematic areas: transformation of institutions, development of alternative forms of care, CSWs capacity building, and legal reform; whereby prevention of separation and raising awareness on importance of family environment were cross-cutting components which underpin each of the aforementioned themes. Special presenters shared information on the models of good practice from countries in the region. During the conference, four thematic working groups were formed and started to discuss the issues outlined in the position papers and outline policy recommendations. The latter were further elaborated at additional meetings of the working groups afterwards. Based on the outcomes and conclusions of the thematic groups, local and international consultants finalized the policy document and strategic guidelines for its implementation during 10 years term.

In early 2007, the Government of the RS adopted the policy document and incorporated the recommendations and activities contained in the plan into wider revision of the social welfare system, ensuring that the plan would receive financial and political support for implementation in the RS. In the Federation of BiH, the policy document was not officially adopted yet. However, entity government is committed to its implementation and integration of its components into wider sector reform.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- Entity level Ministries of Social Welfare (there is no state Ministry in charge for Social and Child Protection in BiH) took a lead role in coordinating working groups of government and NGOs, which resulted in the development a policy document on Children Deprived of Parental Care. The policy included recommendations for the revision of practices and care mechanisms in Centres for Social Welfare, transformation of existing institutional care and revisions to legislation.
- The process of development of a policy represented a good practice model itself – it was a consultative process which involved more than 50 professionals from the country – representatives from relevant entity and cantonal ministries, practitioners from Centres for Social Work and institutions, civil society, international agencies and Academy.

- However, such a shortfall as lack of costing and financial implications in the document, hamper the implementation of the reform. UNICEF is planning to support entity governments in the legal reform and standards development, envisaged by the policy document.

- The fragmented, decentralized structure of the government makes the implementation of national policies and legislation a significant challenge, and results in the lack of responsibility and accountability. Limited mandate of state-level institutions in influencing the policy development and implementation at the lower governance levels, especially in the area of education, health and social welfare.

- Limited human resource capacity of the government, ethnic structure of the government, political interests in each Entity, lack of strategic and consistent approach to policy-making; lack of horizontal and vertical coordination and domination of financial considerations all constitute obstacles to the reform.
**Bulgaria: Child Welfare Reform Project**

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
<th>Ministry of Labour and Social Policy</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment</td>
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**Objectives:** To promote community-based child welfare and protect children’s rights in Bulgaria through:
- Development of a coordinated national policy for childcare and services;
- Establishment of community-based services in pilot municipalities;
- Promotion of child development in disadvantaged communities to prevent abandonment; improve police interaction with children; and reduce social exclusion of the Roma.
- Provision of services for street children and families at risk and mechanisms ensuring them access to training and healthcare, for their full social integration.

**Background:**
Preparation for the child welfare reform was initiated in 1998. The project was negotiated between the Government of Bulgaria and the World Bank in 2001. The Loan Agreement for 8.8 million EUR became effective in May 2001. Additional funding was received from various governmental agencies. The project was closed on June 30, 2006.

It consisted of four components:
- De-Institutionalization: Prevention of child abandonment and institutionalization; De-institutionalization of children living in the old type residential institutions; Fostering and adoption; Prevention of deviant behaviour and school drop-out and restructuring and rehabilitation of the viable existing institutions.
- Street Children Services: Social services promoting family and social reintegration, securing shelter and basic services (health, education), providing legal and vocational advice, psychological support and family counselling.

The project was implemented at national level and in 10 pilot municipalities selected upon specific criteria (e.g. size of child population, number of children in residential care, share of ethnic minorities): Burgas, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Russe, Shumen, Sliven, Sofia, Stara-Zagora, Targovishte and Varna. Municipalities committed buildings and/or land for the construction of new small facilities, while the project supported the financing of feasibility studies, designs, civil works for building infrastructure, furniture, equipment and supplies and the operational costs for one year.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- Technical assistance and training on a large scale: Social work training for CPD staff; Training of trainers; Social services management training; Training in management and provision of community-based social services; Mini program “Enhancing the Capacity in combating the Worst Forms of Child Labour of the Ten Centres for Social Services”; Training for judges; Training on prevention of abandonment and violence, case management; Study visits in the Netherlands, UK and Romania for stakeholders at central and local levels.
- Public Awareness: through one campaign addressing information about the reform under the slogan “To every child with love and care” (June 2003) and one campaign introducing foster care in Bulgaria.
(2005), through video and radio spots, educational films, posters, photo exhibition, press coverage, public workshops and debates, lobbying of MPs.

- **Assessment and monitoring**: Baseline beneficiary assessment, Assessment of the impact of Component 3, Assessment of the CPD’s capacity in 11 municipalities. Assessment of the decentralization of services and Social Service Centres; Regular collection of child protection data from all institutional structures, on-site visits and meetings between key players.

- **Management Information Systems nation-wide**: IT equipment, MIS software and training were delivered to all DSAs in the country.

- **Development of social services**: Feasibility studies and municipal strategies nurtured agreements between the municipal authorities, MOLSP and SACP. The Project financed works and goods for the refurbishment of 9 buildings and construction of 10 new buildings for the 10 Complexes of Social Services hosting: 10 Community Support Centres (CSC), 9 Mother and Baby Units (MBU), 5 Street Children Centres (SCC) and 1 refurbished centre in Sofia. Complexes of Social Services were subcontracted on a competitive selection process to 6 NGOs (see Plovdiv example under Child and Family Support Services section).

- **3,721 clients benefited from services provided in the Social Service Complexes from June 2005 to May 2006. (3,322 for CSC, 57 mothers and babies in MBU and 104 children for SCC, 423 street children returned to their families). 9 out of the 10 pilot municipalities’ services were further contracted out from NGOs (as state delegated activities with funding from state subsidies based on agreed financial standards). One municipality took over full administrative and management responsibility for the services.**

- **Restructuring of institutions and de-institutionalization**: 17 institutions have been selected for restructuring in 8 pilot municipalities. 32 specialized institutions for children have undergone assessment, and 1 institution has been restructured.

- **The number of institutionalized children decreased in the pilot municipalities (from 5,476 to 4,479) and well as country wide (from 30,751 to 23,688), achieving targets. However the de-institutionalization performance could have been even better if the social services were in place earlier, as initially envisaged.**

- **In 2002-2003, 87 NGOs implemented 56 sub-projects with 4,102 children to foster social integration and early childhood development through refurbishment of child pedagogical units, 24-hour detention units and homes for temporary placement, and police training.**

Legislation passed prior and during the project consolidated the legislative framework needed for reform implementation. Strong support to newly established institutions (training, assistance, equipment) turned them into key players. New criteria for admission and prevention contributed to the decrease of new entries in residential institutions. New quality and unified per capita financing standards valid for both public and private service providers and regulations on contracting/outsourcing services enabled more public-private partnerships. Campaigns led to a better understanding/acceptance of the reforms. Child welfare improved in the pilot municipalities. Participatory approaches, dissemination of good results, increased formal involvement of ethnic minorities, and involvement of the police were all positive factors.

Longer project duration would have allowed further support to the municipal authorities and NGOs in delivery, management and monitoring of the services. Fragmented responsibilities of specialized institutions, low initial capacity at municipal level for planning, management and monitoring of social services, and slow development of family substitute services constituted obstacles.
Bulgaria: Regional Strategy for Development of Social Services on the Territory of Varna Region
2007 – 2009

Agency/Service/NGO responsible: Regional Directorate of Social Assistance
Contact person: Maria Chankova, Director
E-mail address: rdspvn-director@mbox.contact.bg
Reference: UNICEF Country Assessment

Objectives: With the ultimate goal of establishing regional priorities in the development of social services, improving their quality, the cooperation between key players and the social inclusion of beneficiaries, the programme’s objectives are:
- To determine the priorities of the municipal social policies;
- To attract external sources of financing (ESF and other programs);
- To synchronize the activities of all service providers;
- To build capacity for project management;
- To raise public awareness and gain public support for new social services;
- To monitor and control the implementation of the municipal strategies.

Background: The National Agency for Social Assistance (ASA) and the Regional Directorate of Social Assistance (RDSA) of the Varna region initiated this work in 2006, in connection with the ASA and municipal administrations’ responsibilities in the Plan for Improving the Situation of the People with Disabilities Placed in Specialized Institutions. The regional strategy built upon municipal ones, through regional and municipal budgets, and included the following:
- Formation of a team of RDSA experts, experts from the Directorates for Social Assistance and representatives of the Public Councils for Social Assistance;
- Each DSA conducted needs assessment in its municipality;
- A sociological research was conducted in the town of Varna by a research agency on the Social Parameters of the Risk for Vulnerable Groups;
- The draft of the regional strategy was discussed by the Multi-agency team and between the RDSA and DSA.
- The coordinated draft of the strategy was adopted on a regional meeting in February 2007 with mayors of the municipalities, ASA representatives, chairs of municipal councils, social services providers and directors of specialized institutions;
- An Action Plan was also approved.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:
- Effective collaboration between different organizations and institutions at the stage of planning and elaboration of a common vision;
- Improved cooperation between the institutions involved;
- Increased public awareness;
- Increased role of the Public Counsels for Social Assistance as an instrument for cooperation between the local authorities and the civil sector;
- Incomplete needs assessments, relying only on information provided by the DSA;
- Low capacity at municipal level for needs assessment and planning;
- Public Counsels for Social Assistance not well regulated and lacking action plans;
- The Multi-agency team for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the measures for de-institutionalization is a voluntary structure and has no resources for administration, which hampers its operation.
UNAP Kosovo: Social Services Database

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<td>Reference</td>
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<td>Annex</td>
<td>Database Evaluation Report</td>
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**Objectives:** To create a modern social services database for use at ministerial level, as well as in Departments of Social Work and by social workers in Centre for Social Work throughout UNAP Kosovo. The project was formulated and financed to respond to the challenges faced by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) in collecting and analysing social services data both at local and central level. Its overall aims are to improve the quality of services, by allowing better monitoring, and to generate information on social trends and priorities, that could guide national policies.

UNICEF considers the establishment of information systems to monitor and review social service decisions and outcomes as one of the basic elements of gate-keeping. In UNAP Kosovo, where institutionalisation of children is virtually non-existent, the issue was whether a database could enhance the capacity of social services to serve the best interests of children.

**Background:** In UNAP Kosovo, the social welfare system was reactivated after the end of the war. The municipal Centres for Social Work (CSWs) – one per municipality – for a total of 33 centres, were re-established shortly after 1999, while the MLSW was formed in 2002, incorporating the Department for Social Welfare. In the early post-war phase CSWs were primarily engaged in disseminating emergency social assistance payments and material aid.

As the situation began to stabilise, professional social service activities were able to expand. In mid-2001, a reorganisation of the CSWs was carried out whereby two teams were formed: the Social Services Team and the Social Assistance Team, for a total number of about 500 employees. Social Assistance Officers administer in-cash assistance, while Social Service Officers provide services in the area of domestic violence, family counselling and legal advice, adoption and foster care, and child protection.

By 2004, data was collected by CSWs. Despite considerable time consumed in filling forms and reporting, the DSS was not receiving comprehensive and accessible information for planning purposes. Protection of confidentiality was also a problem. The solution envisaged by UNICEF and MLSW to meet these challenges was the creation of a database system to be used in the DSS to store data on social services delivered throughout UNAP Kosovo.

The project was designed and implemented by ASTRA, a Kosovan NGO specialised in social work, and PROGIN, a local IT company. It covered the period June 2004 to August 2005, for an overall budget of 84 732.63 EUR.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:** The database work in the child protection sector was on the whole positively evaluated, especially for the extent to which there is high ownership in the Ministry of the monitoring approach and of the database itself. It increased the availability of child-centred data and paved the way for the use of evidenced based planning and budgetary allocation.

Areas for improvement were also highlighted in the evaluation, such as the importance of coordinating social protection sector reforms with those of the World Bank and DfID, which has inspired UNICEF and the Ministry to call a joint planning meeting with UNICEF, the World Bank and DfID in early 2007.

The development of a database has not only taken steps to increase the availability of data about child protection issues, it has also helped social workers begin to shift from a responsive approach to a preventative one. The evaluation report states “Many [Centres for Social Work] are convinced that..."
database information can assist in the identification of priority social needs in their communities, including the needs of vulnerable children." In some municipalities, staff of the Centres for Social Work began to notice emerging child protection abuses due to migratory patterns, in others they have noticed increased juvenile delinquency below the minimum age of criminal responsibility. At the Central level, Social service professionals have started using the data to establish priorities and elaborate strategies in their field of action.

However several lessons learned have been noted:

- **Data on its own does not necessarily lead to better monitoring.** Without a national regulatory framework and standards of care in UNAP Kosovo, increased availability of data did not support performance monitoring. "Although monitoring the quality of services was among the database original purposes, this function is currently hindered by the lack of parameters against which to assess service performance." The process of developing database has called attention to the gaping lack of social service standards, despite the promulgation of laws and strategies. Because the database categories were and structure was developed over several months in a participatory manner, the process also highlighted capacity gaps among social workers on basic terms and provisions of social services. DFID has since responded to this gap, and UNICEF plans to proceed in a harmonized fashion such that the existing database can support monitoring against the benchmark set by the standards DFID will help the Ministry develop.

- **Capacity development in understanding the implications of data needs to accompany the development of a database if it is to be used to advance protection of children’s rights.** "In order to maximise the strategic use of statistics generated from the database, both [central and municipal] staff need to be trained on data analysis and presentation. The risk is that otherwise database statistics will be used for bureaucratic reasons only (reporting to higher level)." UNICEF is planning such capacity development as follow-up to the database, resulting next year in the production of an annual social services review publication, highlighting trends in child protection.

- **Ministries may hesitate to share data for fear of service scrutiny.** Some difficulties can be seen in the lack of willingness of the Ministry to share its data with the media and civil society. It is suspected that this is due *not necessarily* to a desire to hide high numbers of child rights violations and abuses, but rather to draw attention away from the low numbers of documented child protection cases handled by the ministry. Since the population served by the social service sector is low, the Ministry fears this may call into question resource allocation towards social services. This is a significant threat for the field of Social work in UNAP Kosovo, which is not yet established as a long term profession with predictable budgetary flows.
FYR Macedonia: National De-institutionalisation Strategy

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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<td>Reference</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Assessment and Child Care Reform internal document</td>
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**Objectives:** To develop a strategy for comprehensive and sustainable de-institutionalisation and transformation of institutions into alternative forms of care.

**Background:** Since 2000, some steps have been taken in the process of de-institutionalization and child care reform, notably: legislative changes in the Social Protection Law and the Family Law, continuum of services through 18 day care centres, discharge of children with mild and severe disabilities from Demir Kapija Institute, strengthened network of foster families countrywide, standards for community and family based services (Rule Book on foster families and day care centres). However, the interventions in this sector have been conceptualized and implemented without overall sector reform strategy. This significantly hindered the financial and operational sustainability of some of the interventions.

In 2006, UNICEF supported a study visit to Romania for a governmental delegation to learn about the role of different social actors in the de-institutionalization process, the progress and gaps in child protection reform and the ways, in which the state is integrating child’s rights standards in its responsibility to protect children at risk and those deprived of parental care. As a result of the study visit the Government reiterated its commitment to the child care sector reform and de-institutionalization process and established a Technical Working Group within the MoLSP that will lead developing a comprehensive national DI strategy. This document will include more systemic analysis of the relevant public policies; budgets and staff (re)deployment needs based on plans for gradual transformation of public institutions; in-depth assessment of professional training needs; standardization of new professional child care practices, protocols and procedures. UNICEF will support this group by providing technical expertise and by facilitating access to relevant resource materials.

As a follow-up to the study visit to Romania, the MoLSP, with support of UNICEF, held a strategy meeting on child care sector reform with a focus on de-institutionalization involving all the key stakeholders. The aim was: 1) to understand the latest developments and trends in DI in the region, within the broader context of child care sector reform, and to stimulate a discussion among participants on key challenges and opportunities in this sector; and 2) to review key achievements, the challenges ahead and the key priorities to pursue DI in Macedonia. Consensus was reached on key priorities and follow-up actions: i) development of a national strategy for DI by a MoLSP experts group; ii) start a revision of the child care policy and legislative framework, focusing in particular on foster care; iii) start comprehensive capacity development programmes for professionals working in the child care sector.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:** The successful development of a strategy is expected to lead to a comprehensive reform of the child care system, including the closing/transformation of all exiting residential institutions for children with special needs; the development of alternative forms of care such as family reunification, foster care and adoption, and small group homes; improved protection services for children.
FYR Macedonia: Resource Centre on Children with Special Needs

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<td>Reference</td>
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**Objectives:** To improve data collection on children with special needs at national and local level, and to advance the existing family and community-based services for children temporarily or permanently deprived of primary care givers.

**Background:** In order to support the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in development of evidence-based policies and actions, in 2006 UNICEF provided financial and technical support to the Institute for Social Activity (ISA) for setting up a resource centre. The resource centre aims at unified approach in collecting, processing and disseminating data on this category of children. It will also facilitate monitoring, coordination and delivery of training activities for all relevant professionals on data collection and processing, preparation and circulation of reports related to the available data on children, creation of programmes and plans for development of professional capacities, development of regulations and standards based on the data collected.

The support to the resource centre included three activities: i) hiring of project staff - one project coordinator responsible for mapping professional capacity and existing equipment in the CSWs, design and testing the new data collection forms, and supporting preparation of trainings; one national technical consultant responsible for conducting information system analysis and producing a report on development and installation of software ii) investment costs - purchase of office equipment iii) study visit to Slovenia as a role model country with a similar social and legal system and advanced experience in this field.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes**

The ISA, under the MoLSP, is responsible for monitoring social services, developing standards and guidelines, and providing training to professionals in the social sector. It also has responsibility for collecting data and carrying out analysis of the social sector to advise the MoLSP on policy development and planning. The ISA is based in Skopje and operates with a team consisting of only 8 professionals. Its capacity to undertake all the tasks mentioned above is thus extremely limited by the lack of human capacity as well as material and financial resources.

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<th>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</th>
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**Objectives:** 120,000 of most vulnerable and deprived groups of children and adults in the Montenegrin society would benefit from a reform of the social/child protection system, which would ensure successful translation of international standards and Government policy objective of poverty reduction into a new rights-based system of social/child care and protection, with clearly defined user-centred policies, established standards, quality control mechanisms, and sustainable community-based protection approaches.

The objective is to facilitate the development of a National Strategy for Social Care and Child Protection Reform in Montenegro, with active participation of all social actors in the society, setting clear steps and directions for introducing an integral social/child protection system with accessible, quality and diverse service networks developed at the community level, providing better protection and social inclusion of the marginalized and poor.

**Background:**
All the sudden and drastic changes in societal, political, economic and value systems, as well as unfavourable demographic movements, have resulted in a disordered social balance. Therefore, the need for a wide reform of the social care and child protection systems in Montenegro has become evident and urgent. The development of a National Strategy for Social Care and Child Protection Reform is the first step towards the implementation of such reform, relying on international and European standards and practice of socioeconomic development, reduction of poverty and provision of qualitative protection for vulnerable groups. All relevant social actors and the citizens of Montenegro will be given the opportunity to participate and contribute to the development of this Strategy. This strategic document will define clear social protection policy with identified short-term, medium-term and long-term aims, for the forthcoming ten year period.

From the very initiation and planning phase of the project, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has been relevantly included, through a Memorandum of Understanding signed between SCF and the Ministry. Joint activities have already included: a social situation analysis, the organization of regional Round tables, focus groups with children at risk, media promotions. These activities resulted in a Draft Strategy document to be adopted by Montenegrin Government. The budget of the Strategy development was 75 000 euros. The strategy is in a direct connection with Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, and the EU accession process. The lack of a qualitative database and the insufficient development of the civil sector were a major restraint.

**Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:**
- **Inclusion** of all relevant social actors into the development of the Strategy document, through participative methods in the Strategy development;
- **Improved cooperation between governmental and civil sector**;
- **Active participation of non-governmental sector**;
- **Participation of children**, in particular children at risk through the organization of focus group discussions, thus providing for the children’s voice to be heard;
Inclusion of the Ministry from the very beginning of the process; providing for the Strategy to be developed based on the realistic needs from both state and local level and in accordance with realistic possibilities of the state and local communities;

New national social/child protection policy developed with clearly defined short, mid and long term objectives as a basis for setting up a reformed efficient system of social/child protection and welfare meeting the needs and rights of vulnerable and marginalized children and families in the society;

Better quality social/child protection models and services that are cost-effective, efficient and accessible, with clearly defined standards and quality control mechanisms, replicable within the country;

Creation of pre-conditions for pluralism of care providers (government, private, civil sector) and establishing their partnerships, setting up coordinated and harmonized cooperation between different systems, as conditions for overcoming partial and development of holistic approach in addressing human needs;

Set clear basis and framework for decentralisation of social protection system: decentralisation of responsibilities and resources allocated at the municipal level to ensure more efficient, economic and timely meeting the needs of the children and vulnerable people within their local community;

The socially disadvantaged groups and NGOs will be empowered and more aware of their ability to influence the social services: from decision-making to provision.

This was a one-year well planned detailed and participative process, which involved all important actors in the society – social service beneficiaries, civil sector, state institutions, professionals and academics and decision makers at the government level in needs assessment, addressing gaps and development new approach and services based on identified needs and rights of children and their families. The Strategy directly links with the PRSP document and international standards in the area of social and child protection.
Costing and Financial Flows for Child Protection Services

**Romania: Financial flows for child protection services in Romania**

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<td>Reference</td>
<td>National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights</td>
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**Objectives:** Elaboration of the child protection budget by the General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Protection (GDSACP) with the collaboration with the National Authority for the Protection of Child’s Rights (NAPCR), in order to build an overview of cost of the child protection system in Romania.

The exercise consists in identifying and planning:
- Reform costs;
- Costs supported by the state budget;
- Costs by funding source.

**Background:**

The Law on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child states the following:

Art. 188 - The prevention of the child’s separation from his or her family, as well as the special protection of the child who has been deprived, either temporarily or definitively, of the protection of his or her parents, is financed from the following sources:
- a) the local budget of the communes, towns and cities;
- b) the local budgets of the counties, or of the Bucharest sectors, respectively;
- c) the state budget;
- d) donations, sponsorships, and other forms of financial contributions, which are allowed by the law;

The National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child may provide financial support for programs of national interest for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, from funds transferred from the state budget for this specific destination, from 46 foreign refundable or non-refundable funds, as well as from other sources, in accordance with the law.

Art. 119 – (1) For each child for whom a placement measure has been enforced, a monthly placement allowance will be granted, amounting to 670,000 ROL, which is indexed through a Government decision. The child for whom legal guardianship was established also receives this allowance, in accordance with the law.
- (2) The allowance is paid to the person or the representative of the family with whom the child has been placed, or to the legal guardian.
- (3) The placement allowance is covered by the state budget through the budget of the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family.

Art. 120 – The expenses entailed by the payment of wages or indemnities for maternal assistants, as well as those related to the enforcement of the provisions of Law no. 326 / 2003 on the rights of children and youngsters placed in the specialized public child protection services, the mothers sheltered in maternal...
centres, as well as children who have been entrusted or placed with professional maternal assistants, are covered by the county budget or by the budget of the Bucharest sector, respectively, and are administered by the general department for social security and child protection.

Art. 121 – (1) The mayors grant exceptional financial assistance, in case the family who is legally responsible for the child is temporarily facing financial problems, which are caused by an exceptional situation and which endangers the harmonious development of the child.

(2) The exceptional financial assistance is granted primarily to children whose families do not have the opportunity or capability to provide appropriate care for the child, or as a result of the need to cover some particular expenses aimed at preserving the personal relation of the child with his or her family.

(3) In each case, separately, the mayor decides on granting the exceptional financial assistance and the amount of this assistance, through a directive.

Art. 122 – The maximum amount, as well as the conditions for granting the exceptional financial assistance, are determined through a decision of the local council.

Art. 123 – The exceptional financial assistance may also be granted in kind, based on a directive issued by the mayor, primarily in the form of food, clothes, school books and stationery or school equipment, or it may cover the expenses related to transportation, procurement of prostheses, medicine, and other medical accessories.

Positive factors:

This instrument offers the possibility for the NAPCR to have an overview of the whole system, despite its complexity, so that weak or strong points can be easily identified and special policies adopted.
**Serbia: Social Innovation Fund**

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**Objectives:** The program is founded on the following principles a) bridging the gap between short-term needs and long-term reform objectives by supporting reform oriented alternative forms of social care at local level, thus indirectly supplementing the transitional costs of social system reform, b) creating value for social investment by fostering innovation, quality and civil-society partnership, c) strengthening coordination of inputs and outputs of all relevant sectors involved in social system reform, d) ensuring coherence among the types and quality of services in order to avoid the introduction of incompatible and unsustainable models, and e) facilitating inclusion of the private sector (non-profit and profit, as appropriate) in social services.

The main objectives, as defined in the SIF Operational Manual, are:
1) Upgrading of the existing services,
2) Fostering inclusion and deinstitutionalization through alternative services, and
3) Providing access to larger number of beneficiaries to social services.

**Background:** The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) Program was initiated by the Ministry for Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia in 2002. It was designed as a joint fund of budgetary and donors’ funding set up to finance the development of the community based services and to cover the transitional costs for the establishment of these services. The SIF was conceived as a mechanism of change in the area of social welfare services at local level, mechanism for decentralization and deinstitutionalization, as well as tool for developing partnerships between the government, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders at local level and their capacity building. The SIF model as a mechanism for reforms and innovation in developing social welfare services at local level was nominated as a best practice model/example in the annual CARDS report for 2005.

Prior to launching the Program, a Program Implementation Unit was established with the task of managing the calls for proposals and project implementation. An Operational Manual was produced, where all the administrative and organizational procedures were set up, followed by development of web-site, all instructions and guidelines necessary for its functioning. The launching of the SIF took place in end 2002 and the first call for proposals was published in early 2003. The calls of proposals are organized annually, published in the main daily newspapers and on the SIF web-site with the complete application forms, instructions, other required documents including appraisal criteria and process; each call for proposal offered the “topics” in accordance with requirements of the on-going reform processes. In the period from 2003 to 2006 (3 calls for proposals), a total of 130 projects (innovative services) were approved.

The SIF specific outputs are (as defined in the SIF Operational Manual):
1) Increased institutional and organizational capacity of all social welfare services and institutions participating in SIF and social workers acting as agents of change,
2) Increased number of children taken care of in foster families
3) Developed foster care for children with disabilities and support to families that have children with disabilities
4) Increased number of elderly people and persons/children with disabilities provided with day-care, respite care and other alternatives to institutional care
5) Increased number of innovative services provided together by CSWs and NGOs addressing the issues of violence against women and children, children and youth in conflict with the law, families at risk in crisis, responsible parenthood, etc.

6) Developed partnership between social welfare institutions, NGOs and local administrations (including other relevant stakeholders).

In the period 2003-2006 the total SIF project budget was 3.6 million euros; the share of budgetary funds varied from 30 to 40% (with donor funds participating with 60 to 70%). The main donors are the Government of Norway, EAR (through UNDP) and DFID.

Positive factors, challenges and outcomes:

The main advantage of SIF is its applied and sustainable strategy – it is created as a nucleus where the policy, donor support, social welfare institutions and NGOs all meet. In practice it means that a) SIF incorporates good practice to address the needs for social welfare support, b) SIF promotes the models that can be replicated, and d) SIF promotes plurality of social welfare service providers.

An important argument supporting the SIF accomplishments to date is the high level of beneficiaries’ satisfaction (over 90%), as a result of two Beneficiary Assessments (BAs), conducted in 2005 and 2006.

The main challenge for SIF in the area of social welfare services represents mobilization of social service-providers and ensuring their full understanding/acceptance of their changed roles, standard practices and accountability (in relation to their clients and the society in general). All social welfare services need to be brought in line with the relevant International Conventions and to European standards of practice.

One of the serious shortcomings reflecting on SIF is the lack of standards, licensing and accreditation as the main preconditions for fully applied plurality of service providers and quality control of provided services. A second shortcoming is the lack of a mechanism to ensure that local governments take on the financing of service developed through the SIF. Thirdly, the NGO sector in terms of social service provision is underdeveloped: NGOs are concentrated in larger cities, so there is an uneven geographical spread and the capacity for service provision is also limited. This was clearly visible during the most recent call for proposals organized by SIF where there was a lack of quality NGOs that applied for projects related to de-institutionalization of services and the provision of alternatives for social and child care.