EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SUPPORT OF FAMILIES AND ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS DURING 1999-2004

FINAL REPORT

Period of evaluation: October through December 2004

Place of evaluation: Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev Oblasts and the City of Minsk

Data of the final report: 15 December 2004

Total project budget: 213222.76 USD

Evaluator: G.V. Semya, Doctor of Psychology, Professor, University Vice-principal, Russian Academy of Education

UNICEF COORDINATOR: A. Karankevich, Child Protection, assistant programme officer

Forms of foster families were processed by: N.S. Pospelova, Senior Inspector, National Centre of Adoption, Ministry of Education, Republic of Belarus
# TABLE OF CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION ON PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS PRIOR TO THE PROJECT ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF ORPHANED CHILDREN</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. GROUNDS FOR THE POLICY OF DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF ORPHANED CHILDREN AND PREVENTION OF SOCIAL ORPHANAGE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. ASSESSMENT OF THE UNICEF ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF ORPHANED CHILDREN</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. EVALUATION OF THE AVAILABLE SERVICES GIVING SUPPORT TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN, OF THEIR OPPORTUNITIES AND THE COVERAGE OF THE TARGET GROUPS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES FOR EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF FAMILY PROBLEMS, COORDINATION AND COOPERATION OF STATE ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH ISSUES OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CLOSURE, TRANSFORMATION AND REALIGNMENT OF STATE INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. EVALUATION OF THE POSITION OF CHILDREN IN STATE INSTITUTIONS</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. EVALUATION OF TRAINING OF GRADUATES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS AND OF ACTIVITIES ON ADAPTATION OF CHILDREN AFTER THEIR GRADUATION FROM STATE INSTITUTIONS AND OF THE SYSTEM OF FOLLOW-UP OF THEIR FATES</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. EVALUATION OF THE STAFF POLICY AND THE METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED BY SPECIALISTS</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN THE PREVENTION OF SOCIAL ORPHANAGE</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF ORPHANED CHILDREN PLACEMENT INTO FAMILIES</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISATION OF THE STATE FUNDING OF STATE INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF CHILD</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. EVALUATION OF SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOSTER FAMILIES</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV. EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT TRENDS IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV. PROJECT FUNDING EVALUATION</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI. EVALUATION RESULTS AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII. INFORMATION SOURCES USED:</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 1</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYTICAL NOTE ON THE POSITION OF FOSTER FAMILIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 2</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR FAMILY-SUPPORT CENTRES AND SHELTERS</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE UNICEF QUESTIONNAIRE ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION, AS WELL AS ACTIVITIES FOR SUPPORTING THE FAMILY AND PLANS OF ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE IN BELARUS</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 3</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR CHILDREN’S HOMES AND STATE SCHOOLS FOR ORPHANED CHILDREN</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE UNICEF QUESTIONNAIRE ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION, AS WELL AS ACTIVITIES FOR SUPPORTING THE FAMILY AND PLANS OF ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE IN BELARUS</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 4</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKING NOTEBOOK OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of tables

Table 1. State institutions for orphaned children
Table 2. Groups of graduates from state institutions for orphaned children
Table 3. Enrolment of graduates from state institutions for orphaned children into secondary special and higher educational institutions
Table 4. Placement of graduates from state institutions into different types of families (guardianship families, foster families, adoptive families, and family-type children’s homes)
Table 5. The dynamic of the number of children adopted within the country and outside the country
Title:
Evaluation of the project on deinstitutionalisation and activities related to support of families and alternative placement of children deprived of parental care in the republic of Belarus during 1999-2004

Evaluation

Authors: V. Semya, Doctor of Psychology, Professor, University Vice-principal, Russian Academy of Education
       N.S. Pospelova, Senior Inspector, National Centre of Adoption, Ministry of Education, Republic of Belarus

Institutions: The evaluation was funded by UNICEF and carried out by an independent expert from Russia and specialists from the Ministry of Education of the republic of Belarus.

Date: The evaluation was conducted in 2004.

Region: CEE/CIS

Country: Belarus

Type: Evaluation

Theme: Evaluation of the project on deinstitutionalisation


PIDB: 2004 Evaluation

Sequence Number:

Follow Up: The obtained data will be used for the joint review with counterparts of existing information systems and channels through which the obtained results will be presented and disseminated. The evaluation results will be also used for the development of communication strategies in relation to child protection and child rights promotion within the framework of 2003-2005 Programme of Cooperation, as well as for new Programme cycle 2006-2010 planning.

Languages: Russian, English.

(Section 2 — Summary)

Background:
The UNICEF project on deinstitutionalisation and activities related to support of families and alternative placement of children deprived of parental care in the Republic of Belarus during 1999-2004 had the following goals: 1) establishing new forms of placement of orphaned children (foster families and a patronage education system) and 2) establishing a network of institutions for prevention of social orphanage and psychological-pedagogical and socio-pedagogical follow-up of the families fostering children.
The total project budget in 1999 – 2003 was 213222.76 USD.
The main partner in the project was the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus. The main strategy was aimed at training personnel for the purpose of the organisation and performance of
such activities, including readiness of different-level specialists to introduce new forms of child placement, and the development of the regulatory and legal frameworks needed to use innovations in practice. In parallel, the material and technical facilities of the institutions were created and enhanced. In the course of activities within the project on deinstitutionalisation the priorities and the basic activities were modified, depending on the identified practical problems. Financial resources of UNICEF were used to organise project seminars and roundtables to elaborate deinstitutionalisation mechanisms, develop regulatory documents, train personnel and provide methodological support in their activities, conduct monitoring and surveys, and organise material and technical facilities for new institutions.

Purpose/Objective:
The main objective of the evaluation is to evaluate the project on deinstitutionalisation implemented by UNICEF together with the Ministry of Education during 1999-2004, based on the following criteria: compliance of the project goals and tasks with the needs of the country, global priorities, requirements of persons who are responsible for the fulfilment of obligations on children left without parental care, as well as interests and rights of children; ensuring efficiency of the project in terms of fulfilment of the set tasks and achievement of the planned outcomes; ensuring of efficiency of the project in terms resources used to achieve the set tasks; impacts (positive or adverse long-term effect) of the project on the target groups; sustainability of the project outcomes and further activities of the partners after the completion of the main funding by UNICEF. By now, the first sustainable outcomes of the project have been obtained; therefore it is advisable to evaluate the achievements and problems, and to identify their causes so as to determine future lines for the development of the project on deinstitutionalisation.

Methodology:
The project was evaluated in 6 Oblasts of Belarus: Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev Oblasts, and in the City of Minsk through visits and/or surveys and questionnaires. The evaluation targets included: the role and opportunities of the state authorities and organisations to provide support to families and to protect the rights of children; coordination/interaction of state organisations dealing with family and children issues; the existing services for the provision of support to families and children and their opportunities; the position of children in boarding institutions (BI) for children, the work of boarding institutions for children and of services providing social and psychological support to their children; activities related to closure, transformation and realignment of boarding institutions for children; activities related to post-institution adaptation of their graduates and the system for follow-up of such children; and alternative forms of placement of children, including foster families.

The target groups included into the evaluation were children, foster parents, personnel working in social and pedagogical centres, social shelters, boarding institutions for children and children’s homes, specialists of childhood protection authorities and managers of different levels.

The evaluation methodology was based on: analysis of the respective state legislative, regulatory and legal frames, action plans, statistics, the results of monitoring and research within the UNICEF project, the reports provided by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus; organisation of focus groups including various categories of specialists; organisation of roundtables devoted to interdepartmental interaction involving representatives of all departments dealing with prevention of social orphanage; distribution and analysis of special questionnaires among foster parents; and interviews among managers of the governmental and municipal levels.

The evaluation helped identify direct results and socially important outcomes of the project.

Key Findings and Conclusions:
Direct outcomes of the project at the time of evaluation were:
1. Establishment of the network of institutions for prevention of social orphanage and for follow-up of family forms of placement of orphaned children (31 socio-pedagogical centres and 95 social shelters for children).
2. Development of the regulatory and legal frames for implementation of the policy on deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children.
3. Availability of trained specialists (according to the estimates based on the reports provided by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, about 3000 specialists were trained during the project period) and of methodological and material support for their activities.

Socially important outcomes of the project include:
1. Growth of the number of children placed into families (in 2003, in the majority of the regions 60% to 70% of children deprived of parental care were placed into families).
2. Reduced inflow of children to primary schools of boarding institutions for orphaned children (for example in Minsk Oblast, only one first grade was opened in one of eight boarding schools for children, while other schools did not have first grade classes) by placing preschool children into families.
3. Decreased number of cases when parents are deprived of parental rights, owing to early identification of problematic families and professional work with crisis and problematic families (for example in Brest Oblast, 61% of children who have passed through the process of rehabilitation in shelters have been returned to their biological families).
4. Sustainable development of the foster families (growing number of children in foster families: there were no such families in 1999, while as for 1 January 2004, there were 1397 foster families in the country with 1906 children).
5. Cooperation between concerned departments, institutions and organisations at the municipal and regional levels in the field of the organisation of prevention of social orphanage.

Some problematic fields have been identified during project implementation.
Despite all efforts to introduce patronage education as a form similar to fostering, the patronage institution has not been developed in Belarus.
The boarding institutions for children, in fact, do not apply the main principle of their work – they should be institutions for temporary placement of children deprived of parental care pending their placement to families for rearing.
There is no system for training of graduates for independent life and for their follow-up after they leave boarding institutions.

General recommendations for further development of the project
1. Further development of alternative forms of family placement of orphaned children, above all, through the establishment of a system of services for patronage education.
2. Establishment of a motivating system of fees, preferences and compensations for foster families and national adoptive parents;
3. Establishment of a system for follow-up of children after they leave boarding institutions for children, taking into account interdepartmental cooperation.
4. Development of a plan of actions for re-profiling of boarding institutions for children and advanced training of specialists working in such institutions.
5. Organisation of work with mass media to develop positive public opinion about family placement of orphaned children.
6. Enhancement of work for early identification of problematic families and development of interdepartmental cooperation at all levels of authorities.
INTRODUCTION

Evaluation scale and subject

The main objective of the evaluation was the evaluation of the project on deinstitutionalisation, implemented by UNICEF together with the Ministry of Education in 1999-2004, based on the following criteria:

- compliance of the project goals and tasks with the needs of the country, global priorities, requirements to persons responsible for the fulfilment of obligations on children deprived of parental care, as well as interests and rights of children;
- ensuring efficiency of the project in terms of the fulfilment of the its tasks and the achievement of the planned outcomes;
- ensuring efficiency of the project in terms of resources used to achieve the tasks;
- impacts (positive or adverse long-term effects) of the project on the target groups;
- sustainability of the project outcomes and further activities of the partners after the completion of the main funding by UNICEF.

Tasks of the evaluation:

- To identify the achievements, problems and lessons learned in the course of the project on deinstitutionalisation in Belarus;
- To analyse the collected information and give recommendations to key state authorities and UNICEF on how to improve the system for ensuring wellbeing of children, develop processes on deinstitutionalised placement of children, support of families, prevention of family problems, deprivation of parental rights and placement of children into specialised institutions in Belarus.

Procedures and methods used for the project evaluation:

- Analysis of the relevant national legislative and regulatory frames, action plans, statistics and monitoring and survey results in Belarus.
- Focus groups with various categories of specialists: personnel of family-support centres, shelters and state institutions for children (totally, 84 personnel members);
- Focus groups with specialists who have been trained through programmes funded by UNICEF (42 specialists).
- Roundtables for foster parents (57 foster parents)
- Roundtables on interdepartmental cooperation involving representatives of all departments dealing with prevention of social orphanage (37 representatives).
- Analysis of the available information sources.
- Distribution of special questionnaires among foster parents. The survey included 226 foster families rearing 306 children.
- Interviews among managers of the state and municipal levels (11 persons).
- Specially organised observation.

Efficiency of the project was assessed on the following basis:
- Evaluation of the role and opportunities of state authorities and organisations as regards the support of families and protection of the rights of children;
- Evaluation of coordination/cooperation between state authorities and organisations dealing with issues of families and children;
- Evaluation of the available services giving support of families and children, their opportunities for reaching out to the target groups, their coverage, skills of specialists and the level of financial support by the state;
- Evaluation of the situation of children in state care institutions (CI) for children, performance of state institutions and of services giving psychosocial support to children, implementation of the main principle in their work as institutions designed for temporary placement of children deprived of parental care.
- Evaluation of activities related to closure, transformation and realignment of state institutions for children;
- Evaluation of activities on adaptation of children after they leave state institutions for children and of the system of follow-up of such children;
- Evaluation of alternative forms of placement, including foster families. Evaluation of activities on the organisation of the system of foster families. Comparative analysis of the dynamics in the development of foster families. Analysis of the regulatory and legal frames.
- Comparative characterisation of funding of state institutions for children and alternative forms of child placement by the state.

The project was evaluated in 6 Oblasts of Belarus: Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev Oblasts and in the City of Minsk through visits and/or surveys and questionnaires.

Nine institutions have been visited in different regions of Belarus.

The target groups for evaluation included: children, foster parents, personnel of family-support centres, social shelters, state institutions for children and children’s homes, specialists of childhood protection authorities, and manageress of various levels.
I. EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION ON PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS PRIOR TO THE PROJECT ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF ORPHANED CHILDREN

By 1999, the Republic of Belarus had a critical social situation as regards the protection of childhood and, above all, unprotected categories of children (orphaned children, social orphans, children with specified needs, etc.). The problem of poverty had become one of the most acute social problems: 46.7% of the country population lived below the poverty level. By the results of 1999, 51.4% of families rearing children, 59.7% of families having two children and 78.1% of families having three children had annual incomes below the subsistence level.

The grave economic situation was accompanied by a crisis of families, as a result of which children were “removed” from the family. As of 1 January 2000, single-parent families reared 265,100 children or 11.1% of the total children population. When families disintegrated, children were involved into family conflicts, which affected their psychic and moral health. In 1998-1999, the care and guardianship authorities considered 1721 disputes on children.

The family crisis was also accompanied by the growing number of social orphans. In 1999, the number of new children deprived of parental care was 5369, i.e. 4 times higher than in 1990. The main reason why children lost their families was deprivation of parents of parental rights. In 1999, the number of children withdrawn from their parents by courts of justice was 4279 (with or without deprivation of parental rights), which was 5.8 times higher than in 1990.

This growth of the number of social orphans resulted in appearance of children deprived of support and care, street children, cruelty and violence against children. According to data provided by the child care and guardianship authorities, in 1999 courts of justice considered 88 cases on cruel treatment of children, violence and sexual harassments; 87 similar cases were considered by childhood protection authorities.

In 45% of cases, state governance authorities began to work with problematic families when the child was an adolescent, i.e. became a “difficult” child – such child was removed from the general school and placed to an institution, a children’s home, a state institution for children, or a special school for children who require special education conditions. This happened because family problems were identified at a late stage. Such children spent most of their childhood in risk families and were removed from problematic families at the age of 11-13 (25%) and 14-17 (20%), which was fraught with problems for their future socialisation.
Because the majority of children were deprived of parental care, as a rule, after the age of 3, their chances for adoption decreased with every year, since the world practice shows that children under 3 are taken to adoptive families most often. The state had the problem to search for alternative forms of children placement for their rearing and education.

Thus, analysis of the situation of children in the country demonstrated that state governance authorities had to develop a range of measures required to change the situation.

This crisis could be resolved only through the reformation of the child protection system, implementation of a deinstitutionalisation policy and putting in place of a mechanism needed to implement such policy, and provided relevant resources were available: legal, financial, material, technical, human and information resources.

However, another problem existed related to a hidden resistance of specialists and administration of the institutions for orphaned children. Specialists understood that development of alternative, non-traditional caring through foster families and placement of children into families would require a professional approach and constant support. Childhood protection inspectors at the district (rayon) level, who were already overloaded, understood that this meant additional work for them with the same salary. Besides, they did not have problems of placement of children into state institutions.

Specialists working in children’s homes and state institutions for children thought that their institutions were a good form of child placement. In addition, transfer of the child from an institution to a family would reduce the number of children in institutions and, hence, the amount of work and pay rates.

Officials had as their priorities a timely placement of children, rather than the forms of child placement.

Scientists and specialists considered the new forms of institutions as “alien”, which were imported from outside Belarus; therefore, this model was not advocated in scientific literature or mass media.

The greatest problem was that professionals, i.e. psychologists, educators, etc., were not prepared to use new family forms of child placement efficiently and properly. Many of them had a one-year course of general training and did not have skills needed to apply new technologies.

II. GROUNDS FOR THE POLICY OF DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF ORPHANED CHILDREN AND PREVENTION OF SOCIAL ORPHANAGE

The main prerequisite for the implementation of the project is availability of a legislative framework that would allow introduction and development of alternative forms for placement of
orphaned children. The lines of activities making the basis of deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children and children deprived of parental care were declared in the principal state documents developed and adopted during 1999 – 2004.

By 1999, the Presidential Programme “Children of Belarus” was adopted in the country, as well as regulatory acts aimed at working with families were passed (Edict No. 46 of the President of the Republic of Belarus dated 21 January 1998, called “On the Principal Lines of the State Family Policy”; Edict No. 392 of the President of the Republic of Belarus, dated 12 August 1998, called “On Financial Support of Families Adopting Children”; Ordinance No. 1136 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, dated 21 July 1998, called “On Approval of the Tentative Regulations on the Territorial Centre of Social Services for Families and Children”).

The new Code on Marriage and Family came into force on 1 September 1999. The following regulatory acts have been endorsed:

- Orders of the Ministry of Education, registered in the National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus:
  - No. 154 “On Approval of the Tentative Regulations on the Family-Support Centre”, dated 29 March 1999;
  - No. 743 “On Approval of the Regulations on Childhood Protection Authorities in the Republic of Belarus”, dated 14 December 1999;
  - No. 154 “On Approval of the Regulations on the Social Shelter for Children”, dated 03 February 1999; etc.

Adoption of the above regulatory acts provided the legislative basis for the establishment of the system of work to protect and support families and the development of the system of services that will enhance social protection of families included into “risk groups”.

Further development of the legal grounds for the implementation of the project on deinstitutionalisation was reflected in the documents passed by the Government of the Republic of Belarus. In May 2001, the Programme “Children of Belarus” for 2001-2005 was approved; in May 2003, the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On the Principles of the System for Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Offences” was passed; in December 2003, “The National Action Plan for Improvement of the Position of Children and Protection of Their Rights for 2004-2010” was approved. Thus, the project implemented by UNICEF meets the main lines of the national social policy.
Experience related to deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children gained during the project period is used to improve the regulatory and legal frames of the policy. In 2003, the Ministry of Education submitted to the Government of the Republic of Belarus the package of regulatory acts, including in particular:

- The draft law of the Republic of Belarus “On Making of Amendments and Additions to the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Marriage and Family”;
- The tentative statute of the specialised institution for minors in need of social support and rehabilitation;
- The regulations on the Commission of Affairs of Minors;
- The tentative statute of the specialised education and upbringing institution.

Meetings organised during the evaluation with managers from the Ministry of Education and managers of the Oblast and District levels demonstrated that many state leaders and officials of different levels of authorities understand the essence of the deinstitutionalisation policy in general, however only a few of them know this term.

The current regulatory and legal frames existing in the Republic of Belarus give opportunity to implement the deinstitutionalisation policy at the first stage. However, to move forward along this line, the regulatory frames should be improved. This concerns, above all, opportunities for the establishment of a network of various institutions dealing with family placement of orphaned children, adaptation of children after they leave state institutions, legal measures to enhance liability of parents for rearing of children, and making of amendments in the regulations on the foster family using the obtained practical results.

III. ASSESSMENT OF THE UNICEF ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF ORPHANED CHILDREN

The project was started in September 1999. The main partner of UNICEF for the project was the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus. The following goals were set: 1) establishing new forms of placement of orphaned children (foster families and a patronage education system) and 2) establishing a network of institutions for prevention of social orphanage and psychological-pedagogical and socio-pedagogical follow-up of the families fostering children.

The main strategy was aimed at training personnel for the purpose of the organisation and fulfilment of such activities, including readiness of different-level specialists to introduce new forms of child placement, and the development of the regulatory and legal frames needed to use innovations in practice. In parallel, the material and technical facilities of the institutions were created and enhanced.
In the course of activities within the project on deinstitutionalisation the priorities and the basic activities were modified, depending on the practical problems identified.

Financial resources of UNICEF were used to organise project seminars and roundtables to elaborate deinstitutionalisation mechanisms, develop regulatory documents, train personnel and provide methodological support in their activities, conduct monitoring and surveys, and organise material and technical facilities for new institutions. Analysis of financial activities of UNICEF is included into Section XV.

Financial support by UNICEF made it possible to study experience of federal experimental sites in the Russian Federation and, later on, experience of other counties so as to use their working technologies.

Project seminars and training with participation of specialists (De Monfort University, Great Britain, was a partner of UNICEF), organised in 1999, allowed launching the project in all regions of the country, instead of two pilot regions planned earlier.

To make timely adjustments in the project and evaluate efficiency of project activities throughout the entire project period, UNICEF ordered monitoring and expertise of legal documents, the situation of children in institutions, etc.

The UNICEF Office in the Republic of Belarus, together with state governance authorities and nongovernmental organisations, takes part in joint programmes to use the regulatory and legal frames and establish an efficient system for support of children who need special protection. Activities conducted by UNICEF and its partners have made it possible to create conditions needed for the development of a positive public attitude to the current reforms and to change the priorities in the thinking of officials as regards children who find themselves in a socially dangerous situation so as to shift their thinking towards family values.

Organisation of international conferences in the country inviting of specialists from different countries, primarily from Russia, has helped Belarusian specialists better understand their achievements and problems and demonstrate how they exercise the rights of children according to the Convention of the Rights of the Child in Belarus, first of all, the right to be reared in the family atmosphere.

An important outcome of all activities has been the establishment of a professional community of specialists who have special knowledge and skills to use modern technologies of work. The evaluation helped identify that the specialists and institutions were ready to introduce further innovations while the regulatory, legal and legislative frames were lagging behind.

_The direct results_ of the project at the time of evaluation were:
1. Establishment of the network of institutions for prevention of social orphanage and for follow-up of family forms of placement of orphaned children (35 family-support centres and 115 social shelters for children).
2. Development of the regulatory and legal frames for implementation of the policy on deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children.
3. Availability of trained specialists (according to the estimates based on the reports provided by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, about 3000 specialists were trained during the project period) and of methodological and material support for their activities.

**Socially important outcomes** of the project included:

1. Growth in the number of children placed into families (in 2003, in the majority of the regions, 60% to 70% of children deprived of parental care were placed into families).
2. Reduced inflow of children to primary schools of state institutions for orphaned children (for example in Minsk Oblast, only one first grade was opened in one of eight institutionalised schools for children, while other schools did not have first grade classes) by placing preschool children into families.
3. Decreased number of cases when parents are deprived of parental rights, owing to early identification of problematic families and professional work with crisis and problematic families (for example in Brest Oblast, 61% of children who have passed through the process of rehabilitation in shelters have been returned to their biological families).
4. Sustainable development of the foster families (the growing number of children in foster families: there were no such families in 1999, while as for 1 November 2004 there were about 2000 foster families in the country with 1906 children).
5. Reduced time for placement of a child deprived of parental care into families.

**IV. EVALUATION OF THE AVAILABLE SERVICES GIVING SUPPORT TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN, OF THEIR OPPORTUNITIES AND THE COVERAGE OF THE TARGET GROUPS**

In 1999 – 2004, the country opened 35 family-support centres and 115 social shelters for children. Efficiency of these institutions is confirmed by the state statistics, however focus groups have demonstrated that in a number of districts the degree of coverage of the target groups is less than 50%.

A typical example of this is the Gomel District family-support centre, operating since 2002. It is rated for 30 children, while today it has 19 children, of which 30% are preschool children. The total number of children in the Gomel District is about 13 000, basically living in rural areas. The
Centre includes only 2 psychologists and 1 social worker (social pedagogue) and 6 educators. During the period of 3 years, this Centre has provided help to 139 children. Of this number, 62 children have been returned to their biological families, 16 children have been placed in guardianship, 14 children have been placed in foster families, and 24 children have been placed into state institutions for children because of medical indicators. The dynamics of the number of children return to their families is as follows: 5 children in 2002, 37 children in 2003, and 20 children by the beginning of November 2004; the dynamics of children placement to state institutions for children: 8, 13 and 3 children, respectively. During 3 years of operation of foster families, only one foster family stopped its existence because of illness of the mother, and only one child has been transferred to another family because of conflicts with other children. At the time of evaluation, the shelter included three adolescents who could be transferred to families; they found relatives for two adolescents and the third adolescent was about 18 years. Two families were in the process of training and wanted to take over small children.

Since there are no tentative manning tables approved, the number of employees is determined by local authorities; therefore, the workload on specialists is very high and varies by the districts. Another problem includes technical support to the centres, increase of the number of specialists and ensuring of mobility of specialists to travel to remote rural areas.

The psychosocial centres with shelters deal, mainly, with early prevention of family problems and selection and training of parents for substitution families. They are not actively involved in the process of seeking a family for a specific child: this function is performed by specialists working in care and guardianship authorities.

Monitoring of activities of the social shelters made in 2002 demonstrated that at the time of monitoring, in Belarus, there was no uniform understanding of the principles of selection of children for social shelters, nor there was any integrated approach to the implementation of goals and tasks set before such institutions. Lack of understanding by local executive and administrative authorities as to what was the difference between educational institutions and family-support institutions as well as absence of a substantiated stand in the district and town education departments explained the fact why the manning tables of the social shelters did not include positions of social educators and psychologists and why the goals and tasks stipulated by the statute documents of the institutions did not correspond to the Regulations, which in turn hindered the implementation of the goals and tasks making the core of activities of social shelters for children and thereby raised doubts about the need for such institutions.

The majority of shelters have the financial and materials support for their successful operation; however a number of drawbacks have been identified in conditions of living for their
children. This includes, first of all, the heating conditions, supply of cold and hot water, proper equipment of laundry and sanitation units.

Experience of effective and targeted work on social and psychological rehabilitation of children, prevention of child neglect, social orphanage and various asocial phenomena among children is developed by the children’s shelters in Bobruysk, Klimovichi, Bykhov and Krasnopolye Districts, and Bobruysk City shelter of Mogilev Oblast; Dobrush, Zhlobin and Gomel District shelters of Gomel Oblast; Tolochin and Lepel District shelters, and Vitebsk City shelter in Vitebsk Oblast; Logoyysk, Borisov, Pukhovichi and Stolbtsy District and Zhodino City shelters of Minsk Oblast; and Baranovichi and Brest City social shelters for children.

While in some districts social shelters for children operate as prevention institutions and they include mostly children from the families that can be potentially deprived of parental rights (Brest and Vitebsk Oblasts), then in other districts (City of Minsk and Minsk Oblast) children kept in social shelters for children include mainly children deprived of parental care. As a result, some social shelters for children are oriented to social, pedagogical and psychological rehabilitation of children and their families and operate as family-support centres.

In Brest Oblast, 61% of children who have been given rehabilitation in social shelters for children have been returned to their biological families; the relevant figures in other Oblasts are: 44% in Vitebsk Oblast, 34% in Grodno Oblast, 22% in Gomel Oblast, 20% in the City of Minsk, 17.2% in Minsk Oblast and 16.3% in Mogilev Oblast.

At the same time, other institutions of this type have operated as institutions for placement of children who have been deprived of parental care. For example, 40.4% of children staying in the social shelters for children in Minsk Oblast have been placed in substitution families, and 42.2% of children have been placed in state institutions for children.

Education management authorities have not fully used opportunities of social shelters for children to place orphaned children to substitution families. For example, in Grodno and Gomel Oblasts, only 9% of children staying in social shelters for children have been placed into substitution families, and respectively 22% and 19% have been placed into state institutions for children. In Mogilev Oblast, 30.7% of children have been placed in state institutions for children, and 7.8% have been placed in substitution families, while in Vitebsk Oblast 25.5% of children have been placed in state institutions for children and 5.9% of children have been placed in substitution families.

The majority of social shelters for children are in need of developing game, toys, literature and sport equipment to boost efficiency of pedagogical rehabilitation of children. The capacities of the correctional and developmental training and rehabilitation institutions are not fully used for the
organisation of correctional support (correction of defects) to children staying in the shelters for children, many of which have specific psychic and physical development.

By the results of the monitoring, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus issued an order, and the situation substantially changed within the subsequent two years. This example demonstrates importance and value of project monitoring.

V. EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES FOR EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF FAMILY PROBLEMS, COORDINATION AND COOPERATION OF STATE ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH ISSUES OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Activities have been started for early identification of family problems and giving support to children and families. All concerned services and institutions are involved into these activities. The number of children who were able to return to their biological families after proper work had been done by specialists has increased substantially. Further research is needed to improve the mechanism used to follow up these families and give to them required support.

Each Oblast of Belarus has developed its own mechanism of interdepartmental cooperation for prevention of family problems and social orphanage. Interdepartmental databanks have been compiled including problematic and crisis families; the integrated documentation system has been developed for all services; methods of work and control have been tested; a vertical line of relevant entities at all levels has been built, from district to region, including representatives of the systems of education and social protection, Ministry of Emergencies, inspections on affairs of minors, commissions on affairs of minors, etc. The work done by all services and organisations is coordinated by the Commission on affairs of minors. However, further attention should be paid to differentiation of powers between the services and specialists, clear identification of the organisation which orders work with every specific family; development of criteria for the completion of the specific work by various specialists. First attempts to introduce a technological approach to such work can be found in Smorgon District family-support centre. While activities were in place in the local-level entities, there was no systematic work related to interdepartmental coordination at the national level; this was rather declarative. We can as an example of the currently available models of coordination the work done in Mogilev Oblast. Every department had its own lists of problematic families, based on their own criteria – the rate of discrepancy by these lists was as high as 80% in different entities. When joint actions were developed, they compiled the integrated databank on families and children who were in a socially dangerous situation. They also set up an interdepartmental commission which included representatives of the Ministry of
Emergency, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Protection, Oblast Executive Committee, District Department of Internal Affairs, Inspections on affairs of minors, Commissions on affairs of minors, and the Education Department. Members of the Commission visited Rural Councils and organised their own commissions under local executive committees; they obliged Rural Councils to check families every week which ensured mobility and fast response by specialists to family problems.

Specialised centres play an important role in the prevention of social orphanage and work with problematic families. An example of this is the work done by the Crisis Centre for co-addicts in the City of Gomel, which provided, during 2 years, support to 126 clients (free all-inclusive treatment). Of this number of clients, only 12 children from 4 families were in the shelter. However, funding of this centre is provided not regularly from foreign sources without state support.

VI. EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO CLOSURE, TRANSFORMATION AND REALIGNMENT OF STATE INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN

Analysis of the network of such institutions has demonstrated that changes have taken place in the recent time, including the following:

- an institutionalised school for orphaned children has been opened in the town of Slutsk and a SOS village for children has been opened in the township of Maryina Gorka;
- the children’s homes have been closed in Osipovichi and Soligorsk; as well as the state school for orphaned children in Smilovichi;
- the specialised state schools for children have been reorganised into general education state schools for orphaned children (Bytenskaya state school in Brest Oblast and state institution No. 8 in the City of Minsk);
- Mogilev children’s home No. 2 has been reorganised into a state gymnasium school for children;
- other changes have taken place.

Thus, at the time of evaluation the network of state schools for orphaned children included 34 basic education state schools for children, 10 specialised state schools for orphaned children, 30 children’s homes, 4 children’s villages (2 of them were nongovernmental).

Table 1 shows the dynamic in the network of state schools for children over 5 years.

Table 1. State schools for orphaned children

|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|

In the past 5 years, of the total number of orphaned children (25,900 children), 40% (10,397 children) have been transferred to state school for children. While the number of state school for orphaned children has increased by 15 institutions or by 22%, the number of children in

Table 2. Numbers of children in state schools for orphaned children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>1999/2000 academic year</th>
<th>2003/2004 academic year</th>
<th>Dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General education state schools for orphaned children</td>
<td>4975</td>
<td>5990</td>
<td>+20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special state schools for orphaned children</td>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>-24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s homes for preschool age children</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s homes for school age children</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>-51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed children’s homes</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>1301</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s villages</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>+50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>9 846</strong></td>
<td><strong>10 056</strong></td>
<td><strong>+2%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A small increase of the number of children in such institutions can be explained not only by the fact that children who have finished basic or secondary school have left these schools, but also by the fact that over this 5-year period more than 4,600 children have been transferred from children’s homes and state institutionalised schools for children to families.

Development of family forms of placement of orphaned children has resulted in a rather tense situation as regards the filling of state schools for children. The number of children in primary classes has dropped radically. For example, during the current year only one first grade has been formed among all state schools for children of Minsk Oblast. It is not planned to have first or second grade classes in the City of Minsk in the next academic year.

The problem of “redundant” state schools becomes very acute. They have started to close children’s homes. Therefore, it becomes a priority task to prepare a project on realignment of such institutions and advanced retraining of their personnel.
Unfortunately, practice has demonstrated that state officials actually do not have a clear understanding of the programme of realignment of state schools for children, which brings about some tension among personnel of these institutions.

VII. EVALUATION OF THE POSITION OF CHILDREN IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

Today, state schools for orphaned children include 10,056 children.

Health. Attitude to children’s health is one of the most precise indicators of quality of work done by the institution and its administration.

The problem of health is very acute in a number of state institutions for children. For example, it is the case in the Slutsk institutionalised school where no work is done to prevent infectious and catarrhal diseases – during the year, 125 children have been hospitalised (i.e. 75% of all children). Children also suffer because of neglect by educators. During the academic year, children staying in the Mogilev Oblast cadet institutional school had 11 injuries, including 4 fractures and shell fragment wounds; one child from children’s home No. 4 in Minsk has been lost. Children using toxic substances are not referred in time for treatment – as a result, the number of children staying in state institutions who use drugs is increasing.

Also, it should be noted that medical activities in the country are licensed according to Decree No. 17 of the President of the Republic of Belarus, dated 14 July 2003 and Ordinance No. 1378 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus dated 20 October 2003. According to data provided by the Ministry of Health, none of the state institutions has obtained a license for medical activities.

Health rehabilitation. Proper organisation of health rehabilitation for children is of immense importance. This year, the state institutions have received invaluable aid from Italy and other countries. Much is done to rehabilitate health of children in the country itself. In 2003, only 225 children or 10% of children staying in children’s homes and 1298 children or 14% of children staying in state institutionalised schools, who were transferred to special rest conditions in their state institutions, did not go to health rehabilitation camps. The new Regulations on health rehabilitation and resort and spa treatment stipulate that orphaned children, when needed, have the right to be sent twice for health rehabilitation to specialised camps and rehabilitation centres.

Diet. Children staying in state institutionalised schools have five meals a day. They include two-week (perspective) menus and daily menus. There are special technological cards for all dishes, specifying calories, diverse chemical compositions of dishes, daily presence of salads, and also days of Belarusian cuisine. Daily quality inspection of finished products is organised, including
registration in quality inspection logs. Public commissions on control over meals organisation have been set up. Although children of some state institutions complained about lack of food, but this may also be related to the fact that they are fed according to the diet conditions, but not when a child wishes to have meals.

School canteens have sufficient technological and refrigeration equipment as well as kitchen and tableware.

**Education and upbringing.** The Ministry of Education Has defined criteria and indicators of quality of education in state institutions that provide general secondary education, family-support centres and extra-school educational institutions (Order No. 177 of the Ministry of Education dated 28 April 2003, the Collection of Regulatory Acts No. 7 of 2003). The components used to assess quality of education and upbringing include, firstly, quality of the education and upbringing results (the level of education, personal improvement), secondly, quality of education and upbringing in the system of institutions and, thirdly, quality of conditions in the organisation of education and upbringing.

Today’s programmes of education and upbringing stipulate cooperation between children and a wide variety of social groups and their preparation for future individual life. Some regions of the country give opportunity to children to get adequate education (for example, the gymnasium state school for girls in the City of Mogilev).

A number of children’s homes and state schools for children have started to actively use innovative developing technologies in their educational processes. It is worthwhile to note and disseminate the experience of the Vetrinskaya state school whose educators use 17 innovative teaching technologies, thus allowing them to help their graduates enter gymnasium schools in Polotsk and Luzhesnyany. Innovative developing technologies are introduced in Gomel and Divinskaya state schools.

However, according to the monitoring organised through an order of the Ministry of Education in 2003-2004, these institutions have cases of rough treatment and abuse of children: 10% of children indicated that their educators were shouting at them or using abusive language; 10% indicated that educators could hit them; 21% of senior class children indicated that educators were always reprimanding them. Thus, 41% of senior schoolchildren indicated behaviours of their educators showing that they were either not fit to work with such children or did not have proper professional skills. At the same time, 10% of the educators characterised their relations with children as conflicting. The surveys demonstrated that one in three children could not find friends in their surrounding. The most serious problems among children staying in children’s homes and state schools are relations among children and conflicts with peers. Sometime, conflicts become
persistent and children become victims: 23% of sniper schoolchildren and 28% of junior schoolchildren indicated that there were people in the children’s homes or state institutions whom they feared.

It is necessary to reconstruct educational work, develop self-governance of children, set up children’s and youth organisations, develop leaders and use them in the process of education and upbringing. It is necessary to organise training for educators and psychologists of state institutions.

Below is given statistics showing the number of children taken from state institutions and placed into families: in 1999, 1.2% of children were placed into foster families, and 3.1% of children were adopted; in 2003, the relevant figures were 3.1% and 5.3%, respectively. A similar situation can be seen in other institutions for orphaned children. Therefore, today we cannot state that state institutions for children use the main principle of work – they should be regarded as constitutions for temporary placement of children deprived of parental care, pending their placement into families.

VIII. EVALUATION OF TRAINING OF GRADUATES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS AND OF ACTIVITIES ON ADAPTATION OF CHILDREN AFTER THEIR GRADUATION FROM STATE INSTITUTIONS AND OF THE SYSTEM OF FOLLOW-UP OF THEIR FATES

Graduates of general education institutions for orphaned children and children deprived of parental care represent a separate target group. They may become a cause of secondary orphanage of children. The complexity in the organisation of work with them is that when they start their independent life they come under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, therefore, there should succession in the work of these two ministries. Talks with representatives of the two ministries did not show such interaction or joint documents (at least, at the level of a protocol for commission of joint actions).

Surveys organised among specialists showed that the main problems faced by graduates include education, getting of living accommodations and employment.

The basis for decent life after children leave state institutions should be good education; however it has not become a priority in the work of state institutions. There is some positive trend in the solution of this problem: in 1999, 9.6% of graduates of state institutions for orphaned children became students of secondary special or higher educational institutions; in 2000, this figure was 7%, in 2001 it was 8%, in 2002 it was 9%, and in 2003 it was 10%. At the same time, it should be noted that in 2003, 33% of graduates from the Smorgon state institutionalised school became
students of higher educational institutions and 44% became students of secondary special educational institutions.

Table 3. Enrolment of children leaving state schools for orphaned children into secondary special or higher educational institutions (persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions/ year</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s homes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education state schools for orphaned children</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special state schools for orphaned children</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The President of the Republic of Belarus instructed the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to set databanks on graduates of children’s homes and state schools for children and to organise their follow-up after they graduate from such institutions through the regional social protection centres. In June 2004, the House of Representatives of the National Assembly considered in the first hearing the draft Law “On Social Guarantees for Orphaned Children and Children Deprived of Parental Care”. This draft Law provides for the regulation of issues related to provision of living accommodations and employment of graduates. The draft Housing Code of the Republic of Belarus is being developed, which stipulates the provision of housing accommodations to orphaned children and children deprived of parental care – they can be given social housing facilities for a term of up to one year after they leave their educational institutions. It also stipulates the provision of social living accommodations for orphaned children in hostels with the right of official residence registration, pending receiving of social living accommodations.

Today, the main indicator of activities of state institutions is the level of education of their graduates, which very little determines their readiness for independent life. Survey organised among specialists demonstrated that they do not understand the entire range of problems faced by their graduates, above all, social and psychological problems. A low level of practical intellect, a complex of the orphan, dependence, an elevated level of victimisation (readiness to become a victim), and compensation mentality of the graduates – all this is the result of education and upbringing in institutions. These are the factors that minimise efficiency of the regulatory frames for the protection of the rights of graduates and of efforts of specialists. Also, the country has no trained specialists to work with orphaned children after they leave state institutions and, hence, there is no professional follow-up of graduates.

Thus, the tasks related to training of graduates for their independent life, development of technologies to follow them up after they leave state institutions, training of professionals,
coordination of activities of the ministries and departments and of other organisations tackling issues of protection of the rights of graduates represent priority issues that are extremely important today.

It should be noted that children leaving foster families find themselves in a different situation. The surveys organised through questionnaires showed that the overwhelming majority of foster parents plan to keep contacts with their foster children when they leave their families and start adult life. Only two of the respondents indicated that they did not plan to do this; two others indicated that they were not planning to do this in relation to individual children (these were the respondents who had two or more children reared in their family). Thus, the foster family helps create a sort of backup for the graduates, giving them opportunities to receive aid and support.

IX. EVALUATION OF THE STAFF POLICY AND THE METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED BY SPECIALISTS

As it was stated before in this report, training of skilled specialists to work with crisis or problematic families, foster or guardianship families was the basis of the strategy used to develop the project on deinstitutionalisation. According to reports of the Ministry of Education, more than 3000 specialists have been trained. It is necessary to note the programme of training by specialists from the De Monfort University (Grate Britain): 200 persons were trained for two years under supervision.

We can indicate two main lines for training of specialists.
1. Training of specialists to introduce new family forms of placement of orphaned children, i.e. placing them into foster families.
2. Training of specialists for family-support centres and social shelters for children.

The evaluation included focus groups with specialists trained through educational programmes funded by UNICEF (42 interviewed persons).

According to members of the focus groups, the training helped them substantially increase their competence in the following fields:
- knowledge of the state policy in the field of deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children;
- knowledge of psychology of child development;
- working with risk families, foster families, guardianship families and orphaned children.

They developed skills in the following fields:
- diagnostics and assessment of development of the child and the family and of family problems;
- counselling and correctional development of the child and the family;
- preventive work;
- development of strategies how to organise support to children and families;
- optimisation of interaction with other organisations and specialists;
- summarizing professional experience.

Trainees assessed their knowledge in the field of new approaches to evaluation of their activities and identification of goals of child support and organisation of work on adoption as moderate; as regards the use of technologies and methods of training of graduates for adult life and follow-up of children after they leave state institutions, the trainees assessed their knowledge as minimum.

To use the results of the training programmes in professional activities, practically all the respondents indicated that they were given in full the following preconditions:
- understanding and accepting of new ideas by professionals;
- convenient working conditions.

On the other hand, they indicate that conditions were not sufficient for:
- relative independence in selecting strategies and methods of provision of support to children;
- regular improvement of their professional skills.

The respondents also pointed to a low level of material and technical support of their activities and a low degree of readiness of the legal frames regulating activities of the institutions on the foster families and on adoption.

The respondents indicated the following conditions that, according to their opinion, are available in the minimum degree:
- effective encouragement to introduce new knowledge and skills into practical work;
- availability of methodological support.

Speaking about ways of use of their new knowledge and skills in their professional work, the respondents made a high assessment of the following:
- use of the results in their own practical work;
- organisation of training on the site;
- promotion and popularisation of new ideas on how to give support to orphaned children and children of the risk group among broad public (involving authorities, mass media, organisations and communities).

In conditions of limited funding of social work and of psychological and pedagogical support of children and of their parents, it is required to provide specialists with necessary technologies to make their activities effective. This problem is closely related to the development of standards on social work. Currently, this work is not conducted.
During four years of the project, skilled specialists have been trained to work on family problems and fostering of children. Training has been provided, basically, by foreign specialists. Training programmes have involved various categories of specialists, using variable forms of training, such as prolonged training under supervision, training sessions, training workshops, study trips, etc. This has helped increase competence of specialists in many practical fields, with the exception of working with children graduating from state institutions. The organised focus groups allowed identification of problematic fields. As a rule, individual specialists have been trained, rather than teams of specialists – as a result of this, some family-support centres and shelters have only a few specialists who are not in a position to introduce individually innovative approaches and technologies. Better results are obtained by the services in which not only personnel but also the supervisor has been trained. In fact, all the respondents have indicated the lack of incentives for the use of new and modern technologies. Methods of work suggested by Western specialists should be adapted to the national traditions of professional activities (which are related to the methodology of training of specialists in the country) and to the national mentality. In the Republic of Belarus, there are no innovative developments as regards theoretical and practical science in the above fields of knowledge; nor are there any dissertations on pedagogical and psychological aspects of work with problematic or crisis families, orphaned children, foster families, etc. Analysis of presentations at conferences, of published books and manuals indicated to availability of a great potential in this field and of specialists who can develop national science. Only scientifically grounded domestic technologies of work can ensure a substantial progress of the policy of deinstitutionalisation and develop as professional community of specialists employing the same paradigm.

Another problem is the establishment of the national system for training of specialists in the country. UNICEF resources should be used to train specialists who, in turn, should become translators of knowledge and technologies. Unfortunately, currently available pedagogical institutes and refreshment training institutes are hardly involved into this work. Today, short-term training may be provided only through a number of family-support centres using their own experience, such as in the centres of Rogachev and Smorgon.

To give methodological support to specialists, some manuals have been purchased from Russia, while other manuals have been drafted and published in Belarus, including for example, two volumes of the book “Psychological Features of Children Deprived of Parental Care” and “Psychological Work with Children Deprived of Parental Care” (1999, 2000 copies); “Family Placement of Orphaned Children” (2003, 3000 copies); “Some Aspects of Activities of Family-Support Centres” (2004, 500 copies); and “Social and Pedagogical Follow-up of the Foster Family” (2004, 500 copies).
During the assessment, the specialists indicated to the lack of methodological recommendations and manuals. Based on the project strategy, it is required to develop a plan of procurement and of publication of specialised literature (first of all, manual on how to work with graduates and with crisis and problematic families).

X. EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN THE PREVENTION OF SOCIAL ORPHANAGE

It is obvious that no measures are able to change the situation of social orphanage, unless this problem is paid attention by the public and broad walks of society are involved into the process of understanding and finding of ways for the solution of this problem, besides specialised bodies. Here, mass media should be in the frontline. During trips to different regions, I learned about TV programmes devoted to social issues, district and town press, and I gave several interviews to mass media, which allowed, first, making a survey among journalists and identifying their weak understanding of the problem and the essence of the work to be done. As a rule, mass media highlight activities in the traditional way, they give information rather than analysis, while articles devoted to orphaned children are often meant only to raise compassion. On the other hand, the level of public awareness about the policy of deinstitutionalisation is low. Therefore, it is needed to keep attention of journalists working in public and political press on the problem of social orphanage, to increase the level of analytical approach and competence of their materials and of the creative level of specialised publications. This should also include training of regional journalists, organising of contests in various nominations for the best article, to organise a permanent column or a newspaper highlighting problems of prevention of social orphanage. Also, social publicity materials can be used, as it was the case with three publicity rolls on foster families within this project.

XI. EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF ORPHANED CHILDREN PLACEMENT INTO FAMILIES

The deinstitutionalisation policy is based on the development of alternative family forms of placement of orphaned children. As a result of the work done in the country there can be seen a positive dynamics in the transfer of children into the families of Belarusian citizens (Table 4)

Table 4. Placement of graduates of state institutions into various families (guardian and foster families, adoption and family-type children’s homes)
The foster family has been developed most of all. The establishment and regulation of the foster family are regulated by Articles 169-174 of the Code on Marriage and Family of the Republic of Belarus and the Regulations on the Foster Family, approved by Ordinance No. 701 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, dated 28 October 1999.

The surveys have demonstrated that the foster families formed, as a rule, by spouses who have a significant period of family life, living mostly in urban areas, who have reared their own children to the age of adolescence or to the legal age. The results of the surveys among foster parents by means of special questionnaires are given in Appendix No. 1.

There is a legal, financial and material basis for the establishment of the foster family. Foster parents are given social benefits provided for educators; they receive wages at the rate of the educator working in the children’s home: standard salary + added fees for the record of work (10% for a record of work up to 5 years, 15% for a record of 5-10 years, 20% for a record of 10-15 years, and 30% for a record of work over 15 years) of the standard salary + added fees for the nature and conditions of work (plus 63% of the first category rate, if fostered children have no special features in their psychic and psychical development; plus 95% if fostered children have special features in their psychic and psychical development); plus added fees for working in rural areas in the amount of 20% of the standard salary. Also, the record of pedagogical work is taken into account; they can also work as part-timers. Besides, allowances are paid for each child – the amount of this allowance makes 110,000 roubles per month.

The role of family-support centres in the development of foster families is high. For example, during 1993-1999, in the town of Rogachev, 160 children out of 224 children deprived of parental care were placed into state institutions; however, after a family-support centre was set in 2000, only 8 children have been placed into institutions over the period of 4 years, while all other children have been placed into families. During 4 years, 32 foster families have been established rearing 78 children. Specialists of the family-support centre have examined 104 candidates for foster parents; 9 families have been rejected, other 4 families have withdrawn their applications; 64 families have been trained. Throughout 3 years of its existence, the Gomel District family-support
Centre has managed to return to the families 62 out of 137 children brought to the shelter, and 30 children have been placed into substitution families. Only 3-4 persons come to the centres out of 50-60 persons who call by phone the family-support centre inquiring about the establishment of the foster family. This ratio between efforts and outcomes exists also in Russia in the authorities dealing with patronage reading of children.

Analysis of the legislative frames and talks and focus groups organised for foster parents and specialists working in the guardianship and care authorities have helped identify both objective and subjective factors that impede the development of foster families.

1. Absence of family-support centres in some of the regions that select and train foster parents and ensure psychological follow-up of the child and the foster family, which results either in disintegration of the foster family or, due to neglect of the family by the authorities, in a negative perception of the institution of foster parents by the community.

2. Fees received by foster parents do not encourage them: their salaries do not depend on the number of children taken to the family for rearing.

3. Legal regulation of activities of foster parents raises a lot of issues that cannot be resolved by specialists on the site. For example, the issue of possible payment of compensation for the unused 56-day leave; especially when it is not recommended to leave the child in another foster family or a shelter keeping in mind the need to protect the foster child psychologically. Also, the issue of employment of the family father in case of a temporary inability of the mother. Therefore, it is necessary to improve legal knowledge of foster parents; for example, a legal reference document for foster parents can be compiles, including the rights and duties of foster parents and foster children and required references to relevant laws.

4. In different districts of the country, executive authorities use different policy on social support of foster families. For example, foster parents in Mogilev Oblast complained that they had to pay in full the fees for education of their foster children in music and sport schools, although the Code on Marriage and Family of the Republic of Belarus contains an article that exempt them from such fees.

5. Another aspect of the social policy is provision of benefits for foster families in addition to benefits stipulated by the legislation. Only some districts, through their own initiatives, consider the foster family as a family rearing many children, with all related consequences, and when referrals are given to send children to health rehabilitation camps they also take into account blood children of foster families to keep sibling relations in the family. Such policy shows to foster families that they are important and valued.
6. The first salary and allowances for the child are transferred after one month of its stay in the foster family, which creates a problem of finds needed to keep the child during this period of time.

There are facts when foster parents are obliged to travel every month from the rural area to the district inspector to get a permit to withdraw from the bank account the allowance paid to the child. Also, they demand that this money should be used to prepare “dowry” for the child and to report about this regularly (the city of Bobruysk).

Cases have been reported when children have been transferred from institutions to foster parents without personal things or toys. Foster parents from the City of Mogilev have reported that the children’s home refused even to hand over photos of the child, thereby leaving it without its past history.

7. Foster parents have also complained that the amount of allowance to the child does not vary on the child age, although the keep an adolescent costs much higher than to keep a baby.

8. One more target group has been identified that needs attention by specialists, which includes teachers at schools and educators at kindergartens, many of whom have negative attitude when a problematic child appears and they make rather rough claims to foster parents.

In a number of the regions (for example in the City of Mogilev and in Bobruysk District), policies of executive authorities in the field of development of foster families mainly include not the expansion of the number of such families, but rather the number of children in such families. The reason for this is that salaries of foster parents do not depend on the number of foster children. Therefore, there are cases when the authorities refuse to transfer a single child to a foster family, but require that two or three children are taken over. Such strategy of development of foster families does not ensure project sustainability.

Nongovernmental organisations of foster parents have been established, as well as guardianship councils and association of substitution families. It is necessary to give all possible support to nongovernmental or civil organisations and associations. They are indispensable in non-standard situations and can help implement projects, which is often problematic for governmental organisations.

Despite the past efforts related to introduction of the idea of patronage education and upbringing as a form similar to fostering, the institution of pastorate has not been developed. They might have been related to the fact that there is no any organisational or legal basis for such form of placing the child into the family and, therefore, the expected organisation of such authorities service and the temporary status of the orphaned child through amendments in the Code on Marriage and Family of the Republic of Belarus may help in the development of patronage.
XII. COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISATION OF THE STATE FUNDING OF STATE INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF CHILD

When the policy of development of substitution families is substantiated, they often resort to the argument related to cost-effectiveness of establishment of such families for the state. According to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, in 2003, the average cost of stay of one child in a children’s home made 3,559,000 roubles per annum, and in the state institutionalised school 3,576,400 roubles. According to the directors of such institutions in which assessment has been made, this amount is higher, i.e. exceeds 6,000,000 roubles (500,000 roubles a month). This includes salaries of personnel, food for children and communal services. For a number of years, clothes and footwear, stationeries and home chemicals have been supplied to these institutions through humanitarian aid. Therefore the cost of stay of a child in the institution is in fact even higher.

The cost of rearing a child in a guardianship family makes on the average 1,055,020 roubles, in the foster family 2,033,000 roubles, and in the family-type children’s home 2,007,000 roubles. The costs related to increased communal fees results from appearance of new family members, higher spending for washing powder and other items are born by the foster parents.

If we compare these amounts, we will see a substantial saving for the state. However, it does not exist in reality. The thing is that funding of fees paid to foster parents is made from the local budgets, while funding of state institutions is made from the Oblast (regional) budgets, i.e. the sources are different. This situation exists in Mogilev, Brest and Gomel Oblasts. Besides, even when some children are transferred to substitution families, it does not in fact reduce the budget of the children’s home, because there is no system of institution’s funding per capita. Real saving may come only when an institution is closed – and even then it concerns only the Oblast (regional) budget. Analysis of statistical data shows that by the beginning of the 1999-2000 academic year, there were 34 state institutionalised schools and 29 children’s homes, and by the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year there were 45 state institutionalised schools and 31 children’s homes (including specialised institutions); also, the number of children placed into substitution families was increased from 11,458 children in 1998 to 14,872 children in 2003. Therefore, in some districts, the managers do not have any financial incentives to implement a social policy aimed at the development of foster families.

Another problem is presented by the lack of special mechanism for funding of the family when it takes over a child from another district. For example, in Rogachev District 18 trained foster families are in the state of waiting because there are no children deprived of parental care in the district, and one family is ready to adopt a child. Out of 26 children deprived of parental care in
2003, 12 children have been returned to their native families, 10 children have been placed to foster families, and one child has been placed to a state institution in another district because of medical indicators because this district did not have state institutions for children. It should be noted that the management of the district takes over to its foster families some children from other districts, paying salaries to parents from its own budget. However such practice is seen rarely.

There is one more problematic situation related, on one hand, to protection of the rights of biological parents in the foster family, and, on the other, to impossibility to develop foster families without violation of the current legislation. Children are often transferred to families living in rather constrained conditions; in such cases, many families also take over foster children, thereby aggravating the conditions, first of all, for their native children. Talks with 56 foster parents showed that at least 50% of them stated that their living conditions had become much worse. Thus, it is necessary to review and change the regulations on the deinstitutionalisation.

Assessment of the financial situation by the parents was made by means of questionnaires. There were no well-to-do parents among the respondents (36% of the respondents indicated that the total monthly income in the family was equal to 5 or more sustenance standards; however, when we analyzed the composition of their families it became clear that they possesses only small amounts of funds per capita in the family).

On the average, the total income of 87 families, or 38% of the families (without fees paid to maintain foster children), makes up to 260,000 roubles per month or up to 2 sustenance standards; the total income of 62 families, or 27% of the families makes up to 390,000 roubles; and the total income of 41 families, or 18% of the families makes 500-520,000 roubles per month. There were no families with the monthly income less than 1 sustenance standard among the interviewed families.

Equal amounts are allocated per foster child in all regions of the country (from 95,000 to 105,000 roubles per month).

According to only 8 foster parents, the monetary amount allocated per child was sufficient to provide a balanced diet, footwear and clothes, private toys and a private place in the flat. The remaining 218 respondents indicated that such money was enough only for some things (for example, for food or only for clothes), or was not enough for anything at all. Two foster mothers indicated that they had enough money in any way, since the state did not force them to take foster children and they understood what they had before them, when they organised the foster family.

Many parents indicated that during the first days of existence of the foster family, especially when children came from the shelters without any personal things, they had to spend all family reserves to buy clothes and other things for the child (bed linen, tableware, towels, personal hygiene goods, etc.).
42 foster families (18.5%) did not receive free of charge facilities for rehabilitation of health of their children, and 13 families (5.7%) indicated that they were given such facilities not regularly.

The most widely spread types of social support to foster families include humanitarian support with clothes and footwear for children and food (about 70% of the interviewed indicated that they received such support). Children staying in foster families are given a special ticket allowing them to use public transport and visit entrainment facilities (cinema, exhibitions, and sport grounds). Some districts provide free meals to foster children at schools; they give free school books for foster children; families with 3 or more children pay 50% of fees for the kindergarten.

Some districts have introduced a new type of benefits for foster families, i.e. compensation for communal fees for children living in the housing facility of foster parents (this was mentioned by foster families from the City of Minsk and Gomel Oblast). The amount of compensation, probably, depends on opportunities of them local budget and varies, according to the respondents, from 0.5 to 2 minimum wages. Unfortunately, this quite justified benefit is used in a very small number of districts.

In one of the districts in Grodno Oblast local authorities found opportunity to organise free visiting of the swimming-pool for the entire families, not only for children.

The absolute majority of foster parents are convinced that the amount of allowance allocated for a child in the family must be increased. The majority of families would like to have a doubled allowance. Some foster parents indicated that they would like to receive 400,000-500,000 roubles per month.

As regards other additional benefits and services that the respondents would like to have, they indicated most often the following:
- compensation of fees for communal services;
- family visits to rest houses during summer periods or compensation paid to parents for the unused annual leave;
- free/reduced fares for public transport for the foster parents;
- priority services at medical institutions: they have to waste a lot of time with one ill child in the medical centre while at home they have 1, 2 or 3 more children;
- preferential credits for construction, purchase or reconstruction of housing accommodations.

XIII. EVALUATION OF SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOSTER FAMILIES
One of the main indicators of the project sustainability is a positive dynamics in the growth of foster families and other substitution families. Another important indicator is a sustainable funding by the state of costs related to the support of substitution families. During the survey the foster parents indicated that they received regularly and in full all stipulated types of allowances for the child and their salaries. Today in Belarus, the existence of the substitution families does not depend on the UNICEF funding.

Besides, the country has a network of family-support centres and trained professionals to work with substitution families.

Sustainability of the project is also confirmed, in part, by the assessment of questionnaires filled by foster parents, as regards their readiness to take over new children to their families, i.e. to continue their professional activities (see Appendix No. 1). 56 respondents (24%) gave positive answers to the question about their readiness to taken over new children to the family; 71 respondents (31%) indicated that they were ready to take new a new child to their family “if they would get better payment”; 17 respondents (7.5%) were not able to give any answer to this question. 80 respondents (35%) flatly rejected the idea of taking new children.

However, there exist some risk factors. For example, in some regions (the City of Mogilev and Bobruysk District) the policy of executive authorities in the field of development of foster families in fact includes basically not the increase of the number of such families, but rather the number of children in these families. The reason for this is the fact that the salaries of foster parents do not depend on the number of foster children. Hence, there are cases when authorities do not allow transfer of one child into a foster family, but require that such family should take over two or three children. Such strategy of the development of foster families does not ensure sustainability of the project.

XIV. EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT TRENDS IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

Analysis of the focus groups and questionnaires showed that all specialists and foster parents recognise the priority of adopted before other forms of placement of orphaned children into families.

However, the surveys have demonstrated that in a number of regions there have been facts of forced placement of orphaned children through adoption, including the following types of pressure on parents by guardianship and care authorities:

1. Rejection of transfer to a foster family of children under 5 (this began in 2004 according to a letter of advice by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus). The motives here
are that such children should be transferred only through adoption procedure, though they are included into the national databank, and the foster parents are warned in advance that, if a family for adoption is found, then the child will be transferred to such family through adoption.

2. Reflection of transfer of another child to a foster family, specifying the condition that such child must be adopted.

3. Foster families may be formed only if parents agree to take over at least two children for rearing.

It should be noted that this violates the right of the child to live and be reared in a family for children under 5 (the child may wait for 5 years for adoption, but not adopted). This is especially important for children with developmental disorders.

Besides, placement of a child into an institution at this age results in irrevocable impacts on its psychological development. First of all, this means development of attachment and emotional and social development. Global practice shows that it is, in fact, impossible to make adjustments in the development of child’s attachment after the age of 5 to 6 years. Such child requires extensive efforts on rehabilitation related to its development in conditions of the institution.

Some foster families do not take decisions about adoption of children from their families, even if they are willing to do so and the children themselves are asking to do this. The underlying motives are: a child with the status of the orphan will feel better in its future independent life in terms of benefits provided by the state. For example, such child will need to pass only 3 exams to be enrolled into a vocational training institution.

During meetings with foster parents they indicated that, before they adopt a child, they wanted to feel that the child belongs to them, i.e. he is “their own” child; in other words, the foster family helps to make adoption in a strong manner with good awareness.

In the recent years, there has been a radical change in the ratio of the number of children adopted inside the country (national adoption) and adopted by other countries (international adoption) – much more children are being adopted by foreign parents.

Table 5. The dynamic of the number of children adopted within the country and outside the country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of children</th>
<th>Number of children adopted within the country</th>
<th>Number of children adopted by the countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of the statistics suggests the following trend: children adopted by parents from other countries included mostly babies and young children, while Belarusian families adopted mostly older children – this is shown by the fact that many preschool institutions for children were not filled. Possibly, this was the reason for the decreased rate of the national adoption. It is necessary to make a stricter control over international adoption and activate the work related to search of adoptive parents inside the country for children under three. One of the possible means of control in case of international adoption may include the invitation to the court of justice of Belarusian candidates for adoptive parents who did not wish to adopt the child so as to identify the reasons for this denial of adoption and clarifying whether they properly understood the medical and psychological status of the child.

**XV. PROJECT FUNDING EVALUATION**

Over the 5-year period, the total project budget was 213222.76 USD, with the following distribution by years (in US dollars):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20636.13</td>
<td>46843.91</td>
<td>38747.99</td>
<td>43958.22</td>
<td>63036.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- By training of specialists (workshops, study trips, conferences, etc.) – 70.2%;
- Equipment, consumables and stationeries – 13.5%;
- Publication of methodological literature – 2.4%
- Other costs – 13.9%

Thus, the average cost of training (refreshment training) per specialist within the project has made 33.7 USD.

During the entire project period (1999 to 2003), 1906 foster families, 1306 guardianship families, and 26 family-type children’s homes have been organised, therefore, every substitution family has received some indirect support through services provided by trained specialists, amounting to 63.9 USD.

**XVI. EVALUATION RESULTS AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The evaluation helped identify direct results and socially important outcomes of the project.
Direct results of the project at the time of evaluation included:

1. Establishment of the network of institutions for prevention of social orphanage and for follow-up of family forms of placement of orphaned children (35 family-support centres and 115 social shelters for children).

2. Development of the regulatory and legal frames for implementation of the policy on deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children.

3. Availability of trained specialists (according to the estimates based on the reports provided by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, about 3000 specialists were trained during the project period) and of methodological and material support for their activities.

Socially important outcomes of the project included:

1. Growth of the number of children placed into families (in 2003, in the majority of the regions 60% to 70% of children deprived of parental care were placed into families). The final outcomes of the project from 1999 to December 2004 included: 1906 foster families, 1306 guardianship families and 26 family-type children’s homes.

2. Reduced inflow of children to primary schools of state institutions for orphaned children (for example in Minsk Oblast, only one first grade was opened in one of eight state schools for children, while other schools did not have first grade classes) by placing preschool children into families.

3. Decreased number of cases when parents are deprived of parental rights, owing to early identification of problematic families and professional work with crisis and problematic families (for example in Brest Oblast, 61% of children who have passed through the process of rehabilitation in shelters have been returned to their biological families).

4. Sustainable development of the foster families (growing number of children in foster families: there were no such families in 1999, while as for 1 January 2004 there were 1397 foster families in the country with 1906 children).

5. Cooperation between concerned departments, institutions and organisations at the municipal and regional levels in the field of the organisation of prevention of social orphanage.

Some problematic fields have been identified during project implementation.

Despite all efforts to introduce patronage education as a form similar to fostering, the patronage institution has not been developed in Belarus, because there was no sufficient legislative frame.

The state institutions for children, in fact, do not apply the main principle of their work – they should be institutions for temporary placement of children deprived of parental care pending their placement to families for education and upbringing.
There is no system for training of graduates for independent life and for their follow-up after they leave state institutions.

**General recommendations for further development of the project**

1. Further development of alternative forms of family placement of orphaned children, above all, through the establishment of a system of services for patronage education and upbringing.

2. Establishment of a motivating system of fees, preferences and compensations for foster families and national adoptive parents.

3. Establishment of a system for follow-up of children after they leave state institutions for children, taking into account interdepartmental cooperation.

4. Development of a plan of actions for realignment of state institutions for children and advanced training of specialists working in such institutions.

5. Organisation of work with mass media to develop positive public opinion about family placement of orphaned children.

6. Enhancement of work for early identification of problematic families and development of interdepartmental cooperation at all levels of authorities.

Particular recommendations regarding all spheres of evaluation are given in respective sections.
XVII. INFORMATION SOURCES USED:

1. Project documents submitted by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus;
2. Research made by commission of UNICEF:
   - “Reasons for institutionalisation and future fate of young people graduated from state institutions”;
   - “Monitoring of the situation of children in social shelters”;
   - “Observance and pedagogical support of the rights of children deprived of family care”, 2003;
   - “Attitude of society to the rights of the child with special emphasis on vulnerable groups (children with specific psychic and psychical development, children deprived of parental care, street children and children infected with HIV);
   - “Analysis of the situation of children in state institutions”;
3. Documents related to the national policy on children and national reports;
4. A brief analytical review of the national legislation which regulates legal relations on protection of the rights of children in terms of fulfilment of commitments on bringing this legislation in harmony with the norms of international treaties and generally recognised principles of international law (over 2002 - 2003), made by UNICEF;
5. National and regional statistics;
6. The newsletter “Problems of social orphanage in figure over 1990 -2003”;
7. National legislative and regulatory frames.
APPENDIX 1

ANALYTICAL NOTE ON THE POSITION OF FOSTER FAMILIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

The evaluation of UNICEF activities within the project on deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children and the development of alternative forms of family placement aimed at identification and analysis of the position of foster families included distribution and collection of questionnaires among 226 foster families living in different regions of Belarus.

Questionnaires have been distributed among:
- 33 foster families in Brest Oblast;
- 33 foster families in Vitebsk Oblast;
- 32 foster families in Gomel Oblast;
- 42 foster families in Grodno Oblast;
- 35 foster families in Minsk Oblast;
- 32 foster families in Mogilev Oblast;
- 19 foster families in the City of Minsk.

Given the fact that as for 1 November 2004 there were about 1500 foster families in the country, the sample used can be considered representative, while the data obtained during the processing of questionnaires can be considered valid and characterizing, with a great probability, the position of all foster families in Belarus.

Two types of questionnaires have been used: the first questionnaire included 50 items related to various aspects of activities of foster families, and the second questionnaire included 70 questions aimed at identification of the legal position, health status, psychoneurological status, speech and psychosomatic development, development of attachments, specific behavioural development (sexual behaviour, aggression, social behaviour, aspects related to failure to abide by the established norms of behaviour) of foster children in the above families.

The questionnaires were processed by means of statistical counts.

The questionnaires were developed by G.V. Semya, Doctor of Psychology, Professor of the University of the Russian Academy of Education (Moscow).

The questionnaires were collected, processed and analysed by N.S. Pospelova, Senior Inspector of the National Adoption Centre.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOSTER FAMILIES (I)

The questionnaire includes 5 sections:
SECTION I. Socio-demographic characteristics of foster parents (questions 2-9):  
- quantitative and age characteristics of children in foster families (questions 10-11).

SECTION II. Organisational aspects of performance of foster families:  
- training of foster parents, and assessment of training quality (questions 14, 15-17);  
- motivation of the establishment of the foster family (questions 18, 20), information sources (questions 13, 32), relationship between the trends towards adoption and establishment of a foster family (questions 19, 21, 21a);  
- assessment of the follow-up of the foster family (questions 22-26).

SECTION III. Educational attitudes in foster families:  
- styles of education and upbringing in foster families (questions 28-31);  
- inclusion of foster children into the system of additional education and development (question 27);  
- the system of contacts between foster children and their biological parents (questions 33-35);  
- relationship between foster and biological children in foster families (questions 46-48).

SECTION IV. Financial situation of foster families:  
- incomes of foster families (questions 36-39);  
- access to basic benefits and social guarantees for foster families, and use of local opportunities for support of foster families (questions 40-43);

SECTION V. Stability of the foster family as a social institution (questions 44-45, 49-50).

THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF ADAPTATION OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER FAMILIES (II) The following sections in this questionnaire have been identified:  
Section I. The socio-legal position of foster children  
Section II. Problems of physical health of foster children  
Section III. Psychosomatic disorders  
Section IV. Sexual behaviour problems  
Section V. Social adaptation  
- aggressive behaviour  
- social behaviour  
- failure to abide by the established norms of behaviour  
- problems in relations with brothers/sisters

RESULTS OBTAINED FROM QUESTIONNAIRE I
SECTION I. General characterisation of foster families

- socio-demographic characteristics of foster parents (questions 2-9);
- quantitative and age characteristics of children in foster families (questions 10-11).

Among 226 respondents the majority was represented by women: women made 92.5 % (209 respondents), while men made 7.5% (17 respondents).

The majority of interviewed foster parents were from the 40-49 age group, i.e. 50% or 113 respondents; 28% (62 respondents) were from the 30-39 age group; 8.8% (20 respondents) were from the 50-55 age group; 11 respondents (5%) were from the 20-29 age group; 6 respondents (3%) were from the 56-60 age group; and 3 respondents (1.3%) were older than 60.

The questionnaires were distributed among 149 foster parents from urban areas (66 %), and 77 from rural areas (34 %).

Among the interviewed foster parents at the time of the interview the majority (159) were spouses (70%); most of them had been married for over 15 years (96 respondents or 42%).

47 respondents or 20% had been married for 10-15 years; 38 respondents or 16% had been married for 5-10 years; 23 families or 10% had been married for 3-5 years; 9 families or 4% of the respondents had been married for 1-3 years; and 13 respondents or 5% did not have record of married life.

The following groups of families were identified among the respondents:
- biological families with many children (i.e. family rearing or having reared three or more biological children) – 44 families or 19 %;
- biological families without children – 33 families or 14 %;
- single mothers with many children, i.e. rearing or having reared three or more biological children – 11 families or 5 %;
- families formed by single mothers having many children – 14 families or 6 %;
- families formed by single parents having many children – 2 families;
- families of single mothers rearing or having reared 1-2 biological children – 38 families, or 17 %. When this group was analyzed, the reviewers did not take into account record of married life.

The majority of foster families were foster families with a single child – 139 foster families or 61%, i.e. they reared one foster child.

53 foster families reared two foster children (23%).

34 foster families were foster families with many children, i.e. rearing three or more foster children (16 %).

The survey included foster families with different records of rearing of foster children: 63 foster families had a record of 1-2 years (28%); 48 respondents (21%) had a record of 2-3 years; 38 respondents (17%) had a record of 3-4 years; and 11 families (5%) had a record of 4-5 years, i.e.
they were the “oldest” foster families organised after the introduction of the institution of the foster family. 39 families (17%) indicated that their record was over 5 years; of course, these were the families which, in the past, worked as guardianship families and after 1999 received the status of the foster family.

The majority of the respondents had a permanent employment at the time of interview: 165 women (wives) (73 %), and 136 men (husbands) (60%). Among foster parents, only 36 women and 14 men indicated that they did not have employment; and 25 women and 7 men indicated that they had only temporary jobs.

Interviewed foster parents indicated that they had 104 children aged 5-10 years (34%); there were 121 children over 10 but under the legal age (40 %); 34 children in the foster parents were 3-5 years of age (11%); and 47 children were under 3 (21%).

Biological children of foster parents basically had reached their legal age (107 children); 57 children were 10-17 years of age; and 27 children were under 10.

Summary: the foster family is formed, as a rule, by spouses who have a significant record of family life, living mostly in urban areas and who have reared biological children till the adolescence or the legal age.

The share of latent or possible adoptive parents among foster parents (by social and demographic status) is about 20%. Analysis of the questionnaires filled by this group of people indicated that their families, as a rule, reared foster children of preschool or young school age.

The model of the family of foster parents (by the number of children) is not the determining factor when foster families are established: about one-sixth of foster parents are spouses who have many children.

SECTION II. Organisational aspects of performance of foster families
- training of foster parents and assessment of training quality (questions 14, 15-17);
- motivation of the established foster family (questions 18, 20), information sources (questions 12, 13, 32), relationship between trends to adoption and establishment of foster families (questions 19, 21, 21a);
- assessment of the follow-up of foster families (questions 22-26).

The overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated that they did not face problems in the arrangement of documents when they established the foster family: this was indicated by 209 respondents or 92%. 17 respondents or 7.5% indicated to red-tape and related problems.

168 respondents (74%) were trained to establish the foster family; of them, 147 respondents assessed training as qualified; 21 respondents indicated that training was not qualified (their training
did not help them solve the problem of the foster family). 58 respondents (25%) did not have training related to the establishment of the foster family.

It should be noted that 173 respondents (76%) indicated that they had to wait for less than one month; 40 respondents (17%) indicated that they had to wait for up to three months; 6 respondents (2.6%) had to wait up to six months; and 5 respondents (2%) indicated that they had to wait up to one year to have foster children in their families. Two respondents had to wait for more than one year.

114 families (50%) indicated that both spouses were the initiators of the idea to establish a foster family; 109 families (48%) indicated that the initiator of the idea was the wife. Husbands were more cautious and only three husbands initiated the establishment of the foster family.

As regards sources of information, the majority of the respondents received information about the foster family from social specialists (educators of social education institutions or from social workers) – this was indicated by 71 respondents or 31%; 64 respondents (28%) indicated that they received information from mass media; 41 respondents (18%) indicated that the source of information was state institutions; and 39 respondents (17%) indicated their acquaintances or other foster families.

It is interesting to analyse the points of view of the respondents about attitudes of their acquaintances whose opinion about the establishment of the foster family was important for the respondents: 170 people who recommended establishing a foster family indicated that their acquaintances were right to establish the foster family. Some of the advisors established their own foster family (15 persons). However, about the same share of acquaintances and people whose opinion was important for foster parents thought that the foster family was a burden. 59 respondents indicated to a negative opinion of advisors as regards the establishment of the foster family.

Before establishing the foster family, 129 respondents (57%) had expressed their wish to become adoptive parents. On the other hand, 88 respondents (39%) did not express such wish. Following the establishment of the foster family, only 37 respondents (16%) expresses a stable wish to adopt children, 81 respondents indicated that they had lost such intention, and 65 respondents stated that they were thinking about the idea of adoption.

The respondents indicated that they were quite sure that the lack of resources prevented them from taking a decision on adoption of children. This was indicated by 64% of the respondents. The overwhelming majority of the respondents from this group were sure that adoption, followed by the loss of the orphan status and all more or less substantial social guarantees, would not give families opportunities to provide for a normal future life of such children (including training in secondary special and higher educational institutions, social living accommodations provided by the state and other benefits), despite the fact that in practice the financial support given to a child in the
foster family and in the adoptive family till the age of 16 is equal. 74 respondents expressed their fear for the future of the child; 56 respondents indicated that adoption of the child should be a secret. 46 respondents (20%) indicated that significant social recognition and support to the foster family was a factor that prevented them from the idea of adoption of a child. 16 respondents (7%) were concerned about possible infringement upon inheritance rights of the biological children which may take place when other children are adopted.

147 respondents (65%) indicated that the reason for the establishment of the foster family was compassion with the children deprived of parental care. Many respondents indicated that “they once took a child for the weekend from a nearby children’s home and were unable to return the child back”. 64 respondents (28%) indicated among the leading reasons for the establishment of the foster family “opportunity to be employed and be useful to other people and society”. 29 respondents (13%) indicated that the reason for the establishment of the foster family was financial support and allowances paid to children in the foster family. 19 respondents (8.4%) indicated that they were pushed to the establishment of the foster family by information from newspapers or radio and television. 44 respondents (19.5%) indicated that they established the foster family because they did not have their own biological children.

Social specialists very often visit foster families: 152 foster families (67%) were visited once a month; 57 foster families (25%) were visited 1-2 times a year; and 17 foster families (7.5%) were not visited at all by specialists.

According to their opinions, foster parents were very active and asked for support of specialists on their own. This fact was indicated by persons (56%). 79 persons (34%) did not ask for support of specialists.

Foster families most often ask for support by a psychologist. It was indicated by 77 respondents (34%). 56 respondents (25%) requested support and visits by doctors; 48 respondents (21%) asked for support by educators, and 32 respondents (14%) asked for support of social workers. 87% of the respondents wanted to get mainly financial support.

Those who provided real support to foster families included specialists and educational institutions as well as family-support institutions (family-support centres, social shelters for children, and correctional teaching, development and rehabilitation centres); most often positive contacts with foster families are established by specialists from education departments on childhood protection and representatives of some civil organisations (mostly they indicated the NGO “Parental House” and the foundations that send children to other countries for health rehabilitation).

As regards denial of support, foster families faced this problem when they applied to organisations providing social services to population, credit institutions (banks) and housing and communal authorities (47 of the respondents indicated to such facts).
Summary. Data of Section II suggest that in the majority of cases the socio-demographic follow-up of the processes of establishment and operation of foster families are systematic and of good quality. However, absence of training of foster parents should be considered as very negative fact (this was mostly indicated to by the respondents from Brest Oblast). Specialists from the bodies of child protection who are facilitating issues of foster families should be more attentive to the above facts. It is recommended to involve psychology specialists to the follow-up of foster families, based on the real demands for such specialists.

Consideration of relationship between trends towards adoption or establishment of the foster family by citizens of Belarus demonstrates that in the current conditions social support of foster parents and of foster children staying in foster families is a factor that predefines a significant number of potential adoptive parents becoming foster parents. Of course, if services related to rearing of children in a family are paid by the state and the child retains the status giving benefits, then it is more preferable to establish foster families than to adopt children, because it is in the interests of the family budget. In this connection, contemporary socio-economic realities justify the common opinion about “known commercialism” of the process of establishment of foster families and can be considered as reasonable.

We think it expedient to carry on targeted work to create a positive opinion about people who have become foster parents among their close surrounding. It is important that the institution of the foster family in our country should be approved not only by specialists, but, more important, by people living close to foster families or working with members of foster families at the same workplaces. To this end, it is required to place special emphasis to the topic of foster parents in publications and TV and radio programmes.

The foster family which has become a feasible potential for family rearing of children deprived of parental care is a stable form of substitution parenthood, which should be for the benefit of children but not for prevention of adoption.

SECTION III. Educational attitudes in foster families

- styles of education and upbringing in foster families (questions 28-31);
- involvement of foster children into the system of addition education and development (question 27);
- the system of contacts of foster children with their biological parents (questions 33-35);
- relationship between foster and biological children in foster families (questions 46-48).

It is obvious that many of the respondents use democratic style of education in their families (174 foster families, i.e. 77%, indicated that they tried to resolve conflicts with their foster children by peaceful discussions of the matter). This is quite justifiable keeping in mind good experience of
the majority of parents in rearing their own children and a good life experience among those who do not have their own children. A small part of the respondents indicated that they try to insist on their own stand based on their own experience (41 respondents or 18%). There was a small number of “liberals” (11 respondents or 5%) who allows children go their way because they thought that children could acquire their own experiences through tries and errors.

The above trends are supported by the fact that the majority of parents rearing foster adolescents gave them pocket money.

According to 150 respondents (66%), the most painful problem in the adaptation to the family and in education and upbringing of foster children is the problem of development of interests to school studies and overcoming of difficulties in education; eradication of bad habits requires also great efforts (this was pointed to by 115 respondents (50%)); 97 respondents (29%) indicated to problems in establishment of discipline among foster children; 43 respondents (29%) indicated to problems related to establishment of confidential relations with such children. About the same proportion of respondents indicated problems of overcoming negative experience related to rearing of children in their biological families, problems in sexual behaviour of the child, stresses related to withdrawal of the child from its biological family or caused by various forms of child abuse.

Schoolchildren reared in foster families are, as a rule, included into the system of additional education and development: the overwhelming majority of them attend different groups according to their interests, sport groups, swimming-pools, dancing, music or art studios.

The majority of the respondents were sure that their foster children were equal with their biological children (only one respondent expressed some doubts to this respects); in fact all the respondents were sure that foster children liked staying in their families (only 4 respondents indicated that children “did not like much” staying in their families).

10 respondents indicated that their own children were at alert when new children appeared in the family; one respondent indicated that the biological child in the family was opposing to this idea. The remaining 95% of the biological children supported the idea of taking over of children into their substitution families (and in some cases they even insisted on doing this).

There were no problems or controversies between biological and foster children in the majority of such families. 37 respondents indicated that such problems occurred only during the initial months of work of the foster family. However, in 4 families there still existed jealousy between biological and foster children.

It is indicative that in the majority of foster families children do not have contacts with their biological parents. The foster parents themselves do not prevent such contacts. Only in 16 families children have contacts with their biological parents; in 18 families such contacts are rare, according to the foster parents.
Summary. Different styles of rearing of foster children in foster families can be confirmed by availability of a significant life and child-rearing experience among foster parents, which indicated to the stability of the foster family as an institution of education and socialisation, from the point of child rearing. This is also facilitated by involvement of foster children into the education infrastructure at the place of living.

We presume that for optimisation of the child adaptation in the new family, it is recommended to train biological parents of children who can become foster children and/or foster parents (and/or to organise psychological and pedagogical follow-up). This would allow reducing problems of adaptation of foster children in the new family.

It can be suggested that specialists from family-support centres and childhood protection authorities should activate the work with the contact network, namely with biological parents of foster children. This will give more opportunities for improvement of biological families of foster children and, probably, will create some preconditions for restoration of parents in their parental rights and return of children to their biological families.

SECTION IV. Financial position of foster families

- family incomes (questions 36-39);
- access to main benefits and social guarantees for foster families and use of local opportunities for support of foster families (questions 40-43);

There were no well-to-do people among the interviewed foster parents (36 respondents indicated that their income was equal to 5 or more sustenance standards; however if we analyse the composition of their families, we will see that only small amounts were available per capita).

The average total income of the families (without allowances paid to foster children) is as follows: 87 families (38%) had up to 260,000 roubles per month or up to 2 sustenance standards; 62 families (27%) had up to 390,000 roubles per month (up to 3 sustenance standards); 41 families (18%) had 500,000-520,000 roubles per month. There were no families with the monthly income less than 1 sustenance standard.

All regions of the country allocate the same amounts of money for support of the foster child (from 95,000 to 105,000 roubles per months).

According to 5 respondents, the monetary allowances for children are paid sometime with a delay; the rest of the respondents indicated that they received the money in time and regularly.

Only 8 foster parents indicated that the monetary allowance paid for the foster child was sufficient to provide a balanced diet, footwear and clothes, private toys and a private place in the flat. The remaining 218 respondents indicated that this money was sufficient only for some things (for example, only for food or only for clothes) or was not sufficient at all. To foster mothers
indicated that they had enough money in any case, since the state did not force them take such children and they understood what was lying ahead of them when they organised their foster family.

Many parents indicated that during the initial period of the foster family and especially when children were taken over from shelters “without any personal things”, they had to spend all family resources to dress and provide for the child (bed items, tableware, towels, personal hygiene, etc.).

42 foster families (18.5%) did not receive free of charge facilities for rehabilitation of health of their children, and 13 families (5.7%) indicated that they were given such facilities not regularly.

The most widely spread types of social support to foster families include humanitarian support with clothes and footwear for children and food (about 70% of the interviewed indicated that they received such support). Children staying in foster families are given a special ticket allowing them to use public transport and visit entrainment facilities. Some districts provide free meals to foster children at schools; they give free school books for foster children; families with 3 or more children pay 50% of fees for the kindergarten.

Some districts have introduced a new type of benefit for foster families, i.e. compensation for communal fees for children living in the housing facility of foster parents (this was mentioned by foster families from the City of Minsk and Gomel Oblast). The amount of compensation, probably, depends on opportunities of them local budget and varies, according to the respondents, from 0.5 to 2 minimum wages. Unfortunately, this quite justified benefit is used in a very small number of districts.

In one of the districts in Grodno Oblast local authorities found opportunity to organise free visiting of the swimming-pool for the entire families, not only for children.

The absolute majority of foster parents are convinced that the amount of allowance allocated for a child in the family must be increased. The majority of families would like to have a doubled allowance. Some foster parents indicated that they would like to receive 400,000-500,000 roubles per month.

As regards other additional benefits and services that the respondents would like to have, they indicated most often the following:
- compensation of fees for communal services;
- family visits to rest houses during summer periods or compensation paid to parents for the unused annual leave;
- free/discounted fares for public transport for the foster parents;
- priority services at medical institutions: they have to waste a lot of time with one ill child in the medical centre while at home they have 1, 2 or 3 more children;
- preferential credits for construction, purchase or reconstruction of housing accommodations.
Summary. We think that the amount of allowances allocated per foster child must be increased to the minimum living standard, i.e. to 128,860 roubles per months and must comply to it in the future.

We also think it expedient to carry work to improve health of foster children, by planning in advance vacations for their foster parents as for educational personnel, using opportunities of the state social insurance.

Giving priority services in medical institutions will not require additional monetary spending and can be regulated locally.

SECTION V. Stability of the foster family as a social institution (questions 44-45, 49-50)

One respondent indicated to the reduced time of stay of the child in the foster family, specified according to the labour contract and the contract on taking over of the child for rearing; this respondent explained that this was due to restoration of parental rights for the mother of the child.

The overwhelming majority of foster parents indicated that they intended to maintain contacts with foster children when they started their independent adult life. Two respondents indicated that they were not planning to have such contacts; two other respondents stated that they were not planning this in relation to individual children (these were the respondents who reared two or more children).

80 respondents (35%) indicated that were not willing to take over new children to their foster family; 56 respondents (24%) gave an affirmative answer to this question. 71 respondents (31%) stated that they would take over a new child into their family “if they receive more allowances”; 17 respondents (7.5%) were unable to answer this question.
QUESTIONNAIRE II. POSITION OF FOSTER CHILDREN IN FOSTER FAMILIES

This material was obtained by means of mechanical processing of questionnaires on substitution families and foster children. The total number of questionnaires received from foster families was 226; 306 questionnaires concerned foster children reared in these foster families.

General data about foster children

226 foster families rear 306 foster children under the legal age, who have been deprived of parental care.

Girls make the majority of children staying in foster families (173 girls or 57%), while boys make 133 children (43%).

The age indicators of foster children are as follows: 0-1 years: 2 children or 0.6%; 1-2 years: 19 children or 6%; 2-3 years: 26 children or 8.4%; 3-5 years: 34 children or 11%; 5-7 years: 45 children or 14%; 7-10 years: 59 children or 19%; 10-14 years: 77 children or 25%; over 14 years: 44 minor children or 14%.

The reasons of placement of minors into foster families are typical: lack of parental care because of deprivation of parental rights (14%) and other reasons (parents staying in prison; abandonment of the child or consent to adopt the child, 8%).

74 children (24%) had been treated with cruelty before they were placed to the foster family. According to foster parents, 59 minors (19%) had some record of homelessness before they were taken over to the foster family.

29 minors (9%) were taken over to the foster family from their biological families. One institution provided shelter to 232 children (76%) before they were placed to the foster family; many foster parents indicated that this institution was the social shelter for children; 39 minors (13%) had passed through 2 institutions before they were placed to the foster family; 6 children passed through 3 or more institutions.

22 children maintained contacts with their biological families.

According to foster parents, in relation to 12 children there had been attempts to adopt them.
**Problems with physical health**

The most frequent problem with physical health of foster children is dental problems. At the time when children were placed to the foster family, 72 minors had dental problems. This problem was, probably, caused by insufficient diet of their mothers during pregnancy and imbalanced diet of the children and lack of vitamins in their bodies at the time when they were taken over to the foster family.

69 children at the time when they were taken over to the foster family had various pathological conditions in the breathing tracts: frequent flues, bronchitis, tonsillitis, problems with larynx and lungs. These data were fully supported by the opinions of Russian researchers T.Ya. Safonova and E.I. Tsymbal, who studied health of children when they taken to shelters from problematic families.

50 minors were taken over in the state of exhaustion. Lack of inoculations as an impact of social and maternal deprivation was recorded among 31 minors at the time when they were taken over to the foster family.

24 children taken over to the foster family suffered from various infections – most frequently mentioned were urinal infections.

The most frequent organic disorders recorded among foster children, as reported by their foster parents, included lighting disorders – reported among 39 children (heterotrophy, astigmatism, hyperopia, etc.).

25 minors had signs of organic disorders of the central nervous system, including motor disturbance (some children were swinging, some were beating with their head in sleep or when falling asleep). Some children had stereotypic obsessive movements (sucking of lips, scratching, rubbing, etc.).

4 children had impaired hearing.

Many children had retarded motor development; 2 children had psoriasis; 5 children had convulsion syndromes; 1 foster child had epilepsy; 2 children were disabled from their childhood.

The above problems of physical health were rather stable: for example, dental problems still are present among 20 children; 18 minors still have breathing disorders; 21 children have sighting problems; motor disorders are rather stable and are recorded among 13 children.
Psychosomatic disorders

The most worrying problems for foster parents were problems related to sleep: 48 children had such problems at the time when they were taken over to the foster family; 12 children have such problems now. Parents indicated most often such disorders as problems with falling asleep, troubles sleep or nightmares.

31 children taken over to the foster family had frequent involuntary urination, enuresis or encopresis. 11 children have had such pathologies during the entire period of their staying in the foster family.

52 minors have problems with overeating and insatiable hunger, which is also typical of children who suffer from maternal, sensorial and social deprivation. This problem remains for 7 minors despite a significant period of stay in the foster family.

19 biological children have complained of frequent headache from the beginning of their stay in the foster family; 5 children suffer from this till now. Dizziness and vomiting were typical among 16 children (when they started their life in the foster family); now 2 children suffer from this.

Problems of speech development

The above problems – primarily organic and social problems (underdeveloped speech) – were typical of 53 children at the time when they were taken over to the foster family; today, they are typical of 13 minors.

55 children when they were taken over to the foster family made frequent mistakes in writing (now 22 children have such problem). This problem is, as a rule, based on bad development of hearing analyzer, lack of attention and bad memory.

Among functional speech disorders most frequently mentioned by foster parents is dyslalia (reported among 24 children).

School problems

The most frequently mentioned problem here is problems with making of home tasks – reported among 61 schoolchildren at the time when they were taken over to the foster family; now this problem is reported among 22 children, despite a rather long period of staying in the foster family. Foster parents indicated that the main aspect of this problem was lack of discipline and lack of duties when making home tasks, bad memory and lack/problems with voluntary memorisation and attention.

Bad school results were initially reported among 38 children; after staying in the foster families only 9 foster children had bad results in some of the school subjects. According to foster parents, many children need strict and permanent control when they do their home tasks.

Relevant problems related to the development of attachment
The most frequently reported problem of this group was fears of foster children to lose the new family (73 children). During their stay in the foster family this problem still persisted among 22 minors.

46 children at the time when they were taken over to the foster family demanded too much attention and devotion by their foster parents (44 children), however with time passing by this problem persisted among 18 children.

33 minors were too demanding to unknown people – after their stay in the foster family this problem persisted among 4 children. Therefore, after some time in stable family conditions the habit of spontaneous search for close and important people, acquired in the institutions, is eliminated.

Psychological estrangement from foster parents at the start of their life in the foster family was reported among 16 children; emotional blackmail of foster parents was reported among 9 children; and 11 children displayed obvious emotional preference to one of the foster parents.

Problems related to the previous life

The most frequently reported was the problem of repeated recollection of the past – this problem was reported among 51 children at the time when they were taken over to the foster family (for 10 of them, this problem remained significant later).

23 children showed, initially, concerns about their biological siblings, but with time only 6 children reportedly had this concern.

11 children idealised their past at the time when they were taken over to the foster family, but with time only 2 minors displayed this.

Difficulties in building a new life

15 children were taken over to the foster family with denial of their past; one of them still denies the previous life experience.

14 children have obvious lack of clarity about their previous history; 21 children had strong emotions when they started talking about their past; 2 children had high aggressiveness to their new parents; 6 children had strong emotions when they were talking about the new family.

Probably, difficulties in building a new life are related not only to difficulties of personal identification, characteristic of the majority of deprived minors, but also to lack of targeted work by foster parents to develop the network for contacts of foster children.
Problems of sexual behaviour

26 minors were very concerned about sexual issues at the time when they were taken to the foster family. With time passing by, 9 of these minors were still concerned with this issue.

12 children were shy and reserved without any obvious reason, while for two of them this problem still remains important.

4 children demonstrated sexual behaviour. Possibly it was due to their previous living in family conditions far from traditional understanding of marriage and family decency and morals.

Social adaptation; aggressive behaviour

10 minors were aggressive towards adults; three of them remain aggressive even now, despite a long period of staying in the family.

16 children used aggressive words in relation to adults; 7 of them remain aggressive in this way today.

20 children tried to solve their conflicts with peers through fights; 4 of them remain aggressive although they have lived in good family surrounding. 24 children were aggressive in words towards their peers; 7 of them still remain aggressive in this way.

At the start of their living in the foster family 8 children had destructive behaviour; one child remains destructive till now.

19 children had complications in their relations with peers; 5 remain in this state. In the past 19 minors were shy in their relations; today 10 of them – mainly girls – remain shy in their relations.

Failure to abide by the established norms of behaviour

According to foster parents, the most often form of this is lie and deception – 61 children were reported to have this behaviour. 23 children have retained this form of misbehaviour, despite living in the foster family.

Problems related to money and thefts were reported among 23 minors at the initial stage of their life in the foster family; later, 4 children had such problems. 24 children misappropriated things of other people at the time when they were taken to the foster family; 5 children still had these problems.

Reasonable demands of parents regarding making possible homework were initially ignored by 18 children; 11 children still remained unwilling to do work about the house.

43 children did not abide by hygienic rules and requirements; 15 children retained these bad habits.

47 children did not observe table manners; 19 of them retained this deviation due to their childhood in unfavourable conditions.
At the initial period 22 children did not abide by the rules of watching TV and going to bed; 19 still retained these problems.

12 adolescents taken to the foster family were unwilling to abide at all; 4 of them retained thin unwillingness.

Two adolescents while staying in the foster family tried to escape from the family and were excluded from school.

Jealousy, aggression and fights with breathers, both biological and foster brothers, were observed initially among 15 children; with time passing by this problem remained important for 3 minors.

**Summary.** Analysis of data about foster children suggests that commonly observed features in their psychic and psychical development, behavioural deviations and problems related to adaptation of foster children are the consequences of the deprivation syndrome and availability of bad life experience and aggravated heredity.

Many of the outlined problems, even despite a positive living experience in the foster family, still remain relevant for them.

In this connection, it is necessary to improve training and selection of foster parents.

It is necessary to adjust the number of foster children in the foster families if one of such children has problems related to adaptation. Appearance of new children in the family can have negative effects for all family members, thereby making the foster family a socially vulnerable unit.

Specialists from family-support institutions and childhood protection authorities should organise profiled and targeted socio-pedagogical and psychological follow-up of foster families depending on the specifically important problems.

Another important aspect is good work to train a child for entering a foster family. This especially concerns children taken over by foster families from shelters where, by objective reasons, they do not have time for social adaptation to new conditions of living and future family changes. It is obvious that when a child is taken over to a foster family from a shelter or from the biological family, family-support specialists and psychologists of educational institutions who supervise such foster family should pay more attention to follow-up and support of the child in the new family, rather than only the parents.

To identify relevant needs of the foster families and of children living in such families, we think it necessary to organise regional interviews, using questionnaires, among these categories of people.

It is expedient to draft variable seminar programmes related to follow-up of foster families, depending on the identified problems, age and specific features of the children (including biological children).
Of equal importance is the issue related to the establishment and strengthening of a contact network for foster children. This network will allow the child to feel his/her identity, increase self-assessment and improve the position both within the foster family and elsewhere. Impact of contacts with relatives is favourable also for the relatives, which has been proved by many research made by Russian and Swedish researchers. The foster family represents an open system, and it is not expedient from pedagogical points of view to “close” the foster child only on his/her foster parents. Broad relations of the child deprived of parental care are important for the child throughout the entire life.

Establishment and expansion of a network for contacts of the foster child requires coordination between specialists working in temporary institutions for children (state institutions and family-support centres), workers of the educational system who exercise current supervision of foster families, the foster parents themselves and relatives of the foster child.
APPENDIX 2
FOR FAMILY-SUPPORT CENTRES AND SHELTERS

THE UNICEF QUESTIONNAIRE ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION, AS WELL AS ACTIVITIES FOR SUPPORTING THE FAMILY AND PLANS OF ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE IN BELARUS

UNICEF Programme evaluates its 5-year activities related to supporting of the ministries and organisations dealing with the reformation of support given to children and families. To improve future work and obtain information about efficiency of the work done, we rely on your cooperation and ask you to answer the following questions. You can also include additional information which, in your opinion, will be useful for us. Specialists on evaluation who gather such information by means of this questionnaire are independent from the UNICEF project.

PROCEDURE:

1. Every member of the focus group has one copy of the questionnaires.
2. The leader of the group records the common opinion of the group in a separate sheet, indicating the question number, and hands it over to the evaluator at the end of the sitting (in about 1 hour).
3. The leader of the group records different points of view but not only the opinion of the majority, for example, “Some participants think that … others think …”.
4. Rules for the discussion: brainstorm: every member of the group has the right to be heard, should criticise other people’s opinions, and should not interrupt other participants when they present their points of view. As far as possible, the leader of the group must try to listen to every participant on every issue.

NAME OF THE ORGANISATION: ____________________________________________

DATE: ____________________

NAMES OF THE RESPONDENTS: ____________________________________________

1. What is the role of your institution in prevention of social orphanage?

2. What categories of population and children (target groups) does your centre work with?

3. Evaluate the degree of coverage of those who need help of your institution?

4. What other services provide support to the family and children in your town or district? How is cooperation between all these services organised?

5. What services are provided by your centre to problematic families in practice? Please, make the list of these services. What other services should be added?

6. What work related to early identification of family problems is done by your centre?

7. What new technologies of prevention of social orphanage have appeared in your centre? What are the sources of these technologies? What is their effectiveness?
8. In what cases is your centre unable to give support to a family or a child? Why? Please, give most illustrative examples.

9. What should be done to reduce the number of social orphans in your area or in the country?

10. What is the essence of the policy of deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children?

11. What forms of placement of orphaned children do you think are the most appropriate for orphaned children?

12. Please, describe the model of search and selection of foster parents used by your service. What problems exist? What should be done to improve this work?

13. Please, describe the model of follow-up of the foster family? What problems exist? What should be done to improve this work?

14. Please, compare effectiveness of different forms of child placement used by your centre from the point of protection of the rights of the child and the conditions of rearing.

15. Do all orphaned children want to live in the foster family, in your opinion? Why?

16. Can orphaned children be transferred to alternative forms of family rearing?

17. What can the foster family give to a child? What parameters should be used to evaluate effectiveness of child rearing in the foster family?

18. What are the salaries of foster parents? What are the salaries of specialists in your institution?

19. Have there been cases when orphaned children have been returned to institutions from families?

20. Do you think that your children feel psychologically and socially safe in your institution?

21. What are the differences between the following technologies: 1. return of the child to the biological family; 2. adoption of the child; 3. placement of the child to the foster family?

22. Have there been cases, in your practice, when people who wanted to adopt a child changed their decision and preferred to arrange guardianship or establish a foster family? How many times? Why did it happen? What was the position of the specialists from your centre?

23. Please, give illustrative examples of successful and unsuccessful placement of a child into the substitution family.

24. Please, characterise the mechanism of cooperation of you institution with other concerned services on the protection of the right of children. What is needed to organise effective cooperation?

25. Please, characterise the use of mass media in our work.

26. Have specialists of your centre been trained? Who, where and when? Who conducted the training?
27. What has been changed in their work after training?

28. What innovative methods been developed and put into use?

29. What has been changed in the work of the centre after the training of specialists?

30. Has there been any improvement in the support provided over the last 5 years (please, give the criteria for such output)?

31. Is there a sufficient number of methodological manuals and incentives for your work? What materials do you get from UNICEF? What other methodological manuals and developments are required?

32. Does your centre have enough equipment for its work? What equipment have you received from UNICEF? How is it used now? What other technical support is needed for your centre?

33. How do you train your graduates for their future independent life?

34. Please, describe technologies of work with your graduates.

35. Who provides them with support after they graduate from your institution?

36. What authorities and other institutions provide you with support and aid? Do they include nongovernmental organisations?

37. How does your institution cooperate with other institutions (please, enumerate them) on prevention of social orphanage and giving support to crisis families and orphaned children? Please, evaluate this cooperation. What should be done to improve cooperation at the town, district and national level?

38. What changes should be made in the regulatory frames regarding activities of family-support centres and state institutions for prevention of social orphanage and placement of children into families?

39. What changes have taken place in your organisation over the last 5 years?

40. What could have been done differently to make the outcomes more significant?

41. Please, discuss your vision of the future development of your centre.

42. What is the authorised institution (authorised guardianship and care authorities)? What do you know about them?

THANK YOU!
APPENDIX 3

FOR CHILDREN’S HOMES AND STATE SCHOOLS FOR ORPHANED CHILDREN

THE UNICEF QUESTIONNAIRE ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION, AS WELL AS ACTIVITIES FOR SUPPORTING THE FAMILY AND PLANS OF ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE IN BELARUS

UNICEF Programme evaluates its 5-year activities related to supporting of the ministries and organisations dealing with the reformation of support given to children and families. To improve future work and obtain information about efficiency of the work done, we rely on your cooperation and ask you to answer the following questions. You can also include additional information which, in your opinion, will be useful for us. Specialists on evaluation who gather such information by means of this questionnaire are independent from the UNICEF project.

PROCEDURE:

1. 1. Every member of the focus group has one copy of the questionnaires.
2. The leader of the group records the common opinion of the group in a separate sheet, indicating the question number, and hands it over to the evaluator at the end of the sitting (in about 1 hour).
3. The leader of the group records different points of view but not only the opinion of the majority, for example, “Some participants think that … others think …”.
4. Rules for the discussion: brainstorm: every member of the group has the right to be heard, should criticise other people’s opinions, and should not interrupt other participants when they present their points of view. As far as possible, the leader of the group must try to listen to every participant on every issue.

NAME OF THE ORGANISATION:________________________________________________________

DATE: ______________________

NAMES OF THE RESPONDENTS: ______________________________________________________

1. What is the degree of openness of your institution as a system for upbringing (rearing) of children?

2. What forms of placement of orphaned children do you think are the most appropriate for their development?

3. How many orphaned children are staying in your institution?

4. How many of them have been transferred for different types of family placement:
   returned to their biological family _______; adopted_________; transferred for guardianship and care _________;
   placed to the foster family__________

5. Have there been cases when children were returned to your institution?
6. What do you think were the reasons for it?

7. Please, compare advantages and disadvantages of stay of the child in the institution and in the foster family

8. Do you think that your children feel psychologically and socially safe in your institution?

9. Do you prepare children to live in the substitution family?

10. Do you think that all children are willing to live in the foster family? Why?

11. Can all children be transferred for alternative family forms of rearing?

12. What can the foster family give to the child? What parameters should be used to evaluate effectiveness of rearing in the foster family?

13. What are the salaries of foster parents? What are the salaries of specialists in your institution?

14. If all children are transferred to families, then what will happen to your institution and to you in person?

15. Have specialists of your centre been trained? Who, where and when? Who conducted the training?

16. What has been changed in their work after the training?

17. What innovative methods been developed and put into use?

18. What has been changed in your work?

19. Has there been any improvement in the support provided (please, give the criteria for such output)?

20. Is there a sufficient number of methodological manuals and incentives for your work? What materials do you get from UNICEF?

21. What equipment have you received from UNICEF? How is it used now?

22. Have there been graduates from your institution?

23. How do you train your graduates for their future independent life?

24. Who provides them with support after they graduate from your institution?

25. What authorities and other institutions provide you with support and aid? Do they include nongovernmental organisations?

26. How does your institution cooperate with other institutions on giving support to orphaned children?

27. What changes should be made in the regulatory frames regarding activities of state institutions for prevention of social orphanage and placement of children into families?
28. What changes have taken place in your organisation over the last 5 years?

29. What could have been done differently to make the outcomes more significant?

30. What is the authorised institution (authorised guardianship and care authorities)? What do you know about them?

   Thank you!
**APPENDIX 4**

**WORKING NOTEBOOK OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS**

*(FOR SPECIALISTS WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN UNICEF EDUCATION PROGRAMMES)*

Name and surname_______________________________
Place of work___________________________________
Profession and specialisation________________________

Category and degree of your certification________________
How many working hours per week do you have________________________
The record of work according to your current specialisation_____________________
The total record of work in this institution______________________________
The total record of work__________________________________________

Specialisation of your training _____________________________
Where have you been trained_____________________________________
When__________________________________________________________________

*Dear colleague, your opinion and experience are very important for the future work.*
*We rely on your active involvement in the evaluation of the training programme outcomes*

**Unit 1. Professional knowledge and skills**

Dear colleague, the table below includes possible results and effects of your training programmes. This table may omit some of the results and effects. Please, indicate them in the lines in Table 1.

Scores:
0 – not important
1 – of minimum importance
2 – of moderate importance
3 – expressly important
4 – very important

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results and effects</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Importance of the state policy in the field of deinstitutionalisation of orphaned children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Competence in psychology of child development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Competence in working with risk families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Competence in working with foster families. Organisational and legal principles for the establishment of the foster family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Competence in organisation of work related to adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Competence in working with guardianship families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Competence in working with orphaned children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Skills in diagnostics and evaluation of the development of the child, family and family problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Skills in counselling and correctional development work with the child and the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Skills in prevention work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Development of the strategy of support of children and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Optimisation of cooperation with other organisations and specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Summarisation of one’s personal professional experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>New approaches to the evaluation of one’s own activities and setting of targets for support of children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unit 2. Conditions for the use of acquired skills and knowledge**

Below are given possible conditions for the practical use of training outcomes in the professional activities. Some conditions may have been omitted. Please add other missing conditions in items 10-11.

1. Understanding and acceptance of new ideas by your professional environment.
2. Support of new ideas and forms of work by the institution management.
3. Availability of methodological support.
4. Effective encouragement to practical use of new knowledge and skills.
5. Relative independence in the selection of strategies and methods for support of children.
6. Financial and technical support for your activities.
7. Convenient labour conditions.
8. Opportunity for regular improvement of your professional competence.
9. Availability of the legal; frames regulating the institution’s activities on the foster family and adoption.
10. ____________________________________________
11. ____________________________________________

Please, fill Table 2.

Table 2
Unit 3. Ways of use of acquired knowledge and skills

Below are given different ways of use of your knowledge and skills in your professional practice. Some ways of use of your professional experience may have been omitted. You may add your own versions of answers in items 5-6.

1. Use of the results in your own practice.

2. Exchange of experience with your colleagues. __

3. Organisation of in-process work. __

4. Promotion and popularisation of new ideas about support of orphaned children and children of risk groups among broad public (together with authorities, mass media, organisations, individuals) __

5. ______________________________________________

6. ______________________________________________

Thanks!