

EveryChild Ukraine

**Evaluation of Lviv Foster
Care Project & review of
the Lviv Programme**

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Preface

The evaluation of the EveryChild Ukraine Foster Care Project was carried out by Peter Evans, Technical Adviser in Lviv and Kyiv between 28th May and 9th June at the request of Jo Baskott, Regional Programme Director, EveryChild. In addition, Jo Baskott asked that consideration be made of the contribution the European Children's Trust (ECT) and EveryChild programmes have made to the development of children and families services and policy change in Lviv Oblast.

This report was completed on 16th June and a draft sent to Volodymyr Kuzminsky, Country Director, EveryChild Ukraine and Sonya Stavkova, former foster care project manager and guide for this assignment.

Acknowledgments

The help and assistance of Sonya Stavlova, former manager of the Foster Care project is gratefully acknowledged. She gave her time freely and generously and without her help and assistance the assignment could not have been completed. Volodymyr Kuzminsky, EveryChild Ukraine Country Director provided valuable background information to create a context to the project. Tatyana Marochko, EveryChild Administrator ensured arrangements went smoothly.

Most of all, my thanks must go to the social workers, their managers, officials, foster carers and families whom I met in Lviv. Their enthusiasm for the project was very real and their welcome most friendly.

Executive Summary

EveryChild began operations in Lviv Oblast in 1998 or 1999 as the European Children's Trust. Over the following seven years a series of projects were implemented that derived from a model of combining the provision of material aid to social work support to vulnerable children and families.

Later projects aimed to demonstrate improved practice in an internat, support mothers at risk of placing their babies in the baby home, capacity building of the League of Ukrainian Social Workers and supporting coordination between humanitarian departments of the Oblast administration. The last project to be initiated aimed to demonstrate the feasibility of foster care.

EveryChild closed the Lviv programme and office in March 2006.

Foster care is taking place in Lviv for children whose parents have been deprived of parental rights. All placements made so far appear to be long term placements. Short term foster care has not been developed. Foster care regulations are unduly restrictive.

Placements are unsystematic and not managed by social workers. Arrangements to train foster carers are fragile and rely on volunteer trainers. Supervision by social workers of foster children is fragmentary as is social work support to foster carers.

No evidence was seen of a coordinated oblast strategy to foster children currently resident in internats. Directors of internats were reported to be blocking any more foster care placements. A number of foster carers have been approved for many months but do not have placements.

Family support services do not appear to have become anymore widespread. One CSSY reported that a mother & baby shelter is being opened in that rayon. The Director of Lviv Oblast CSSY reported plans to develop shelters and centres that would reinforce social exclusion rather than promote social integration.

The absence of key documents has limited the scope of this assignment.

Recommendations are made to increase effective knowledge management by improving hard copy filing systems and computer based backup and disaster recovery plans.

Background

Foster Care Project

Sonya Stavkova and Volodymyr Kuzminsky explained that the project was intended to complement a progression of ECT and EveryChild projects in Lviv that began with a Winter Child Care Project in Lviv Oblast in 1998.

Associated projects had included:

- A pilot Family Support Project in Boryslav, Lviv Oblast
- Nutritional and psychosocial support to vulnerable children and families between 2000 and 2002.
- Baby Home project to support mothers at risk of placing their babies in a baby home.
- Support to families at risk of placing their older children in an internat.
- Support to families in crisis.
- Capacity building of the League of Ukrainian Social Workers.
- Improving standards of care and protection in Internat #2 in Lviv City.
- Supporting the coordination between humanitarian departments of Oblast administration.

The only document available about the Foster Care project was a project logframe. It is assumed that it was the final version. Partnership agreements, approved project proposals, interim progress, financial and final project reports had all been lost in several office moves. It has been necessary to rely heavily on the memories of Sonya Stavkova and Volodymyr Kuzminsky for details about the history and operation of the project.

It is understood that the Foster Care project began in May or June 2003. It is understood that partnership agreements were signed with administrations of Drogobych and Stryy rayons to develop pilot foster care services in those areas. EveryChild was to train and support social workers employed by the rayon Centres for Social Services for Youth (CSSYs) on recruitment processes, the training and assessment of new foster carers, to support a media recruitment campaign and general publicity.

According to the project logframe the following outputs were anticipated:

- Five foster families in Lviv Oblast were to be recruited, trained and caring for children.
- Systems and procedures to support foster carers were to be established by the relevant state bodies.
- A foster care procedures manual was to be published.
- A viable foster care service integrated in state administration budget and service plans.

During the lifetime of the project, support was requested by and given to CSSYs in Sokal and Zhovkva who wanted help to respond to foster care applications from their

areas. Also in the lifetime of the project Lviv Oblast CSSY asked for help to respond to requests from prospective foster carers.

The project closed at the end of December 2005.

EveryChild Lviv Programme

Winter Feeding Programme

From documents provided to me it appears that the Lviv Programme began with a winter feeding project in 1998 though no details about the project are available.

Boryslav Family Support Project

In June 1999 ECT established a small project in Boryslav with the agreement of the Oblast Administration that built on the experience of the winter feeding project. There was concern that vulnerable families with poor support structures were placing their children in internats because they believed there they would be fed and clothed.

ECT proposed a project that combined the provision of material aid with social work support to strengthen family support systems and avoid admission to internats. A small team of social workers was established though it is not clear from the documentation who employed them. They were trained by a UK social worker contracted by ECT and set about responding to referrals of vulnerable families and assess their needs.

The Boryslav Family Support project ran for just six months during which time:

- Three children from the internat for children with learning difficulties were reintegrated with their families.
- One child from the internat for children with cerebral palsy and polio returned home every day.
- Four children from Boryslav internat returned home every day.
- A study tour to the UK for central government and Oblast administration officials took place in May 1999.

The project evaluation concluded that, “family breakdown can be prevented with focused social work support to families in crisis. Although longterm support is needed in some cases, even short term support enables families to take control of their lives.”

ECHO projects

Building on the experience of the Boryslav pilot project, ECT entered a partnership with the Oblast Administration and Malteser-Hilfsdienst Germany to operate a much larger material aid and family support project reaching 1,000 vulnerable families. The project was funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and ran from 1st March to 31st October 2000.

The aim of the project was, “To reverse the trend of high levels of malnutrition and chronic underlying poverty related illness for the most vulnerable and malnourished children in urban and rural areas in Lviv Oblast during the current economic crisis.”

Project objectives were:

- To provide a range of nutritious food to 1,000 vulnerable families where there are high levels of poverty related illness and malnutrition in children.
- To provide health and welfare advice to assist families in planning survival strategies in the short to medium term.
- To closely monitor household nutrition levels and to contribute information to the government that can be useful in planning health and welfare services.

The project was implemented in co-operation with the Family and Youth Department of Lviv Oblast Administration with an overview from appropriate Central Government bodies such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Health and the State Committee of the Affairs of Family and Youth.

A team of 15 workers was recruited but again, project documentation does not indicate which organisation or body employed them. They were trained by a UK specialist to assess and plan an intervention package for families assessed as being at risk of placing their children in the internat.

The families received direct food support for eight months through a voucher system. Families received help to access social welfare benefits and health services and advice on health and nutrition issues. All material aid was purchased locally and delivery was organised through a shop voucher system to ensure that each family received food appropriate to its needs. The programme aimed to ensure the provision of a balanced diet with an emphasis on a range of nutritious foodstuffs from key food categories such as fruit, vegetables and dairy products as well as staple cereal products.

The family support project linked closely with discussions at national level to develop social services for families. At the local level, the ECHO project demonstrated how social support and limited material support could effect long-term change among vulnerable families. A working group was set up by the Deputy Governor for Humanitarian Affairs in Lviv Oblast to look at ways social services could be developed to target vulnerable families and children. ECT was to provide seed funding to Lviv Oblast Department of Social Services for Youth to set up a family support service to undertake the work.

ECHO Complex Aid Project

The family support project was followed by another ECHO funded project, the Complex Aid project that began on 1st November 2000 and targeted the most vulnerable families identified in the family support project. Social work teams were based in Frankivskiy and Shevchenkivskiy districts of Lviv City and in Chervonograd city. They targeted a smaller number of families, 400 in all. Criteria to identify the target group of vulnerable families were established by the social work team and

approved by the social work specialist, project manager and local partners. The agreed criteria consisted of a series of seven indicators which aimed to identify families at high nutritional risk:

- Large families – 3 or more children aged under 16
- Families with no real income – less than 40 UAH (€8.3) per person/month
- Single parent/guardian families (legal guardians only)
- Parent/guardian with disability
- Child/children with disability
- Families paying rent for an apartment
- Families without access to a garden

Families enrolled on the previous project were reassessed against these criteria and new referrals were collected from existing information, local administrations and partners. The social workers carried out a detailed assessment of each family that met the criteria and agreed a work plan with the family. The work plan set out the work that the family and the social worker agreed to do to help the family improve their medium-term security.

The first Complex Aid project ended on 31st July 2001 but a second Complex Aid project followed in August 2001 and ran until 31st March 2002. In May 2002 Trefor Williams undertook an evaluation of the project taking account of the impact of the two previous family support projects. He commented that although the project had not achieved its purpose, *To reverse the trend of high levels of malnutrition and chronic underlying poverty related illness for the most vulnerable and malnourished children in urban and rural areas in Lviv Oblast during the current economic crisis*, it had achieved its intended results. The project was designed to achieve the following:

- To provide a range of nutritious food and complex aid to 400 families where there are high levels of poverty related illness and malnutrition in children.
- To provide medical aid and essential household items appropriate to the needs of individual families.
- To provide health and welfare advice to assist families in planning survival strategies in the short and medium term.
- To closely monitor household nutrition levels and contribute information to the government which can be useful in planning health and welfare services.

Parasolka Group

The working group established by the Deputy Governor to examine ways to help vulnerable children and families met together for a three-day planning seminar in March 2001 by which time it had renamed itself the Parasolka Group. Membership included:

Head of Department of Youth, Sport & Tourism, Lviv Oblast Administration
Deputy Head of Department of Social Protection, Lviv Oblast Administration
Head of Department of Education, Lviv Oblast Administration
Head of Lviv City Department of Education

Deputy Head of Department of Health, Lviv Oblast Administration
Head of Juvenile Bureau
Semi-Colonel, Lviv Oblast Militia, Juvenile Branch

ECT programme managers attended the seminar together with two consultants engaged by ECT. The group was chaired by the Deputy Governor with responsibility for humanitarian affairs.

The aim of the seminar was to:

1. Develop mutual understanding between the Oblast humanitarian departments and ECT and to develop a common programme.
2. Co-ordinate activities of the humanitarian departments for the benefit of children.
3. Find ways of demonstrating to the children of the Oblast that the Oblast structures were working for them.
4. Develop a joint, tangible and achievable strategy for children's service for the Oblast.

According to a report of the seminar, participants discussed key issues for vulnerable children, examples of the main areas of risk and vulnerability for children, the CRC, and a SWOT analysis of the group. The group resolved to work together on four strategic blocs of works:

1. To change community attitudes to vulnerable children by changing the psychology of current thinking.
2. Ensuring all children experience the positive effects of family life.
3. The eventual elimination of child beggars and homeless children.
4. Development of a programme of leisure activities to enable vulnerable children to switch from anti-social behaviour to positive behavioural patterns.

It appears that following the March 2001 seminar ECT at least, developed its programme within the framework of the four strategic blocs of the Parasolka Group.

In December 2003 the Parasolka Group was formally established as the Co-ordinating Council on Family Issues & Social Protection of Lviv Oblast State Administration.

HSCP project

In August 2000 ECT applied to the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to fund a project to demonstrate the potential to reform child care systems in Lviv Oblast. The Lviv Internat project as it was called, was intended to demonstrate four critical reforms of the internat process:

1. Diversion or prevention of admission by offering family support.
2. Reintegration of children to their families.
3. Provision of foster care for children unable to return to their families.
4. Improving opportunities for children in the internat and preparation for independence.

The project began on 1st June 2001 and was planned to run for two years. In the event it was extended to 30th November 2003. Project indicators were to be:

- Reduction by 20% of the number of children in the internat. More physical space & improved staffing ratios for the children who remain
- Restoration of a minimum of 80 children from internat to family
- Reduction in numbers of new admissions.
- New arrangements for flexible use of institutional care (day, week-day or weekend care) to meet individual needs
- Leaving care programme set up and after-care support system offered to all children graduating from internat six months after project set-up
- Reduced costs of the institution identified.
- Effective operation of inter-sectoral co-ordination group reporting to the Deputy Governor of Lviv Oblast
- Planning underway for application of learning from the demonstration project and extension of new community-based support services.
- Foster care service established - subject to implementation of national legislation.

A team of social workers was employed by Lviv Oblast Centre of Social Services for Youth, a sub-body of the Oblast Department of Youth, Sport & Tourism, and located in Internat #2 in Lviv City. The social workers and internat staff were trained by a specialist social worker contracted by ECT.

The project was monitored by an outside contractor in November 2002 and evaluated by Ian Sparks in November 2003. Quoting at length from his report:

“The overall goal was

to demonstrate within three years that this system of child care can be radically changed without the permanent injection of new financial resources.

This goal will not be achieved partly because large systems cannot be changed in such a short period of time and partly because the current financial systems do not easily allow the redeployment of financial resources. Nevertheless there have been very significant achievements which have laid the foundation for the continuing development of more effective child care systems.

The greatest achievement has been the recruitment and training of the family support social workers. Despite the fact that there are at present only three social workers rather than the six envisaged (three social workers left the team but they are to be replaced), their work has been influential in many aspects of the project:

- They have carried out preventive work with families thus reducing the need for children to go to the Internat.
- They have supported families so that children can return home from the Internat.
- They have been effective as members of the Admissions Committee in

preventing inappropriate admissions.

- They have worked with young people preparing to leave the Internat and with the small number of true orphans in the Internat.
- They have set up meetings for care planning and case reviews which involve staff in the Internat, parents and sometimes children themselves.

The social workers' posts are now funded from the State budget and their work will continue in these areas.

There have been a number of other areas of achievement as follows:

- The reduction in admissions to the Internat and the growth in the number of pupils attending on a day basis but living at home.
- The development of a child protection policy initially for Internat #2 that is to be used as a guidance document in all child care institutions in Lviv Oblast. EveryChild has been asked to develop it as a document for all of the authorities in the Ukraine.
- Consideration of the particular needs of children in planning the new Internat with the aim of it becoming a more child-friendly environment.
- A greater level of public awareness of abuse and the need to be alert to child protection issues.
- The publication of three manuals on fostering by EveryChild. These cover the recruitment, selection and training of foster parents, assessment of the foster parents' children and an information booklet for foster parents.
- A programme of training by Step by Step for teachers and carers in the Internat covering child-focused education and the integration of disabled children into mainstream schools.
- A programme of training and advice for children in the Internat by the NGO *Brotherhood of Orphans*.
- A study tour to the UK which gave the participants a greater insight into family-focused services."

Ian Sparks remarked,

"The greatest disappointment has been the failure to start a fostering programme during the life of this project. From the interviews it is clear that the obstacles have been to do with legislative and organisational problems rather than the lack of will to do it. The legislation and funding is now in place and there are plans to start recruitment of foster parents in three towns in the Oblast in the coming months."

Referring to changes in the Internat, Ian Sparks said,

"The other disappointments have been in the Internat itself where, despite some training input, there has not been the development of care practice which was envisaged nor has there been the re-training for posts in the community. Against this must be set the fact that the Internat is a large, well-established institution with staff who have worked there for many years and some of whom were Internat students themselves."

Baby Home Project

ECT launched a new project in April 2001 to support vulnerable mothers at risk of placing their baby in the Baby Home. Funded by the Human Rights Project Fund the project aimed:

To prevent the abandonment of babies and young children to institutional care by providing support for vulnerable mothers and alternatives to institutional placement.

Project outputs were to be:

1. System introduced to identify vulnerable pregnant women at risk of being unable to care for their babies.
2. A range of social work services to support vulnerable mothers set up.
3. Day care set up within existing facilities.
4. Short term foster care for babies or mother & babies together set up.
5. Investigation into need for supported accommodation for mothers completed.
6. Befriending service of former service users and volunteers set up.
7. Information about services available to vulnerable mothers accessible.
8. Increased public awareness of the problems facing new mothers.

The project was to run for two years until 31st March 2003.

Project progress reports on the Baby Home project were not available, nor was an evaluation report, though a document that was available indicates an evaluation was completed at some point.

Truskavets Family Crisis Service

In April 2001, ECT entered a project partnership with the Administration of Truskavets Rayon to support the creation of a Family Crisis Service. ECT funded the employment costs of three social workers to be employed by the Truskavets CSSY on condition that the rayon Administration assumed responsibility for their employment costs at the end of the project. The CSSY Director was to manage the service with ECT providing technical assistance and material support.

The Truskavets Family Crisis Service was evaluated in May 2003. The evaluators concluded that:

- “as a result of project implementation in Truskavets city there has been created and now operational a model of Crisis Centre;
- at present Crisis Centre as a type of social services is very urgent in Ukraine and all necessary efforts should be made to maintain its effective functioning and implementation of Crisis Centre’s model in the network of social services in Ukraine;

- there is qualified staff working in Crisis Centre that underwent necessary training and acquired social work experience;
- the mechanisms of interdepartmental cooperation have been established on all levels of local authorities;
- effectiveness of support provided to families by Crisis Centre is considered to be very high. 100% of families consider that their situation has improved after they started cooperating with social service. Cases in which child's institutionalisation has been prevented prove a high level of support provided;
- printed materials and articles about project's outcomes in local media raised public awareness that in turn caused more referrals of families in crisis;
- it is difficult to measure and evaluate such important project's result as change of public attitude towards state social services, as Crisis Centre's workers have managed to prove that state social service was able to provide quality service to families in crisis at crucial point.

Final conclusions will be made with a time; however, today Crisis Centre "Care" is independently operating structure, which has made a contribution in development of social system of Ukraine."

The evaluator considered that the absence of a written methodology of how the service operated was a weakness; that if people left the project, they took their knowledge with them. This is true not just for the Crisis Service but for any operation, especially in the early years. On the other hand not having a codified way of doing things allows space for new people to do things better, to experiment and learn from past mistakes, to allow the service to evolve. This is where formally established social education and training is important to store knowledge and transmit it to the next generation of social workers.

League of Ukrainian Social Workers project

From available documents it appears that there was a project partly located in Lviv Oblast to strengthen the capacity of branches of the League of Ukrainian Social Workers to be a professional training resource. The only document available about the background to the project is an evaluation made in November 2005 that provides very limited information about how and where the project operated.

No other information was made available about projects in Lviv. The EveryChild Lviv office was closed at the end of March 2006.

Purpose of the evaluation and methods used

The original Terms of Reference for the assignment were,
to assess the impact and outcomes of the Family Support Service Project and Foster Care Project on its beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The requirement to evaluate the Family Support Service was subsequently removed. Instead a requirement was made,
to consider what contribution has the ECT/EveryChild programme made to the development of children and families services and policy change in Lviv Oblast.

In essence, the assignment had two separate but related components; to evaluate the Foster Care project, and consider the impact of the ECT/EveryChild programme in Lviv.

Methods used included a desktop review of available project and other documents, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and visits to project sites and family beneficiaries.

The following documents were consulted:

Project	Document	Description
Boryslav Family Support 1999	Final project Report, Jo Rogers	
Internat Project	Project Summary Sheet, Jo Baskott	Early version of project proposal
	Project log frame	
Mother & Child Project	Project Summary Sheet, Jo Baskott	Early version of project proposal
	Partnership Agreement	Early draft
	Project log frame	
	Comments of Richard Carter on evaluation report	
Parasolka Group	Report of March 2001 seminar	
	Joint Strategy for Vulnerable Children (Parasolka Project)	Draft document tabled for discussion?
Truskavets Crisis service	Project Summary Sheet, Jo Baskott	
	Project log frame	
	Evaluation report	
ECHO 1	Final report & annexes	1 st ECHO project 1 st March 2000 - 31 st October 2000
ECHO 2 (Complex Aid)	Final Report & annexes	2 nd ECHO project 1 st November 2000 – 31 st June

<i>Project</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Description</i>
		2001
ECHO 3 (Complex Aid 2)	Final report & annexes	3 rd ECHO project 1 st August 2001 – 31 st March 2002
	Evaluation report of all three projects	T Williams June 2002
HSCP	Project application	August 2000
	Independent monitoring report	November 2002
	Several files of comments on the monitoring report	
	Independent monitoring report	December 2003
	Interim reports	
	Final evaluation report	Ian Sparks November 2003
League of Social Workers	Evaluation by Richard Carter	April 2006
General	EvC Ukraine Strategic Plan 2004-07	
	EvC Ukraine Annual Report 2004-05	

Meetings and interviews took place with the following people:

Igor Deshchakivsky	Director, Sokal CSSY
Zoryana Shtykalo	Social worker, Sokal CSSY
Foster carer & children	Sokal
Maria Khrystynych	Deputy Head, Sokal Administration
Gennardij Bardovskyy	Director, Lviv Oblast CSSFC&Y
Taras Gurey	Head, Lviv City Department of Minor Affairs
Andre Dobryanskyy	Deputy Head, Lviv Oblast State Administration, Department Family & Youth
Galyna Herasym	Lviv Oblast Training Centre
Iryna Tril	Lviv Oblast Training Centre
Oksana Bilan	Yavoriv CSSY
Family support beneficiary	Yavoriv
Petro Petrovych Luzhanytsia	Former Director, Truskavets Crisis service
Mrs Luzhanytsia	Director, Truskavets Crisis service
Family beneficiary	Truskavets
Mr & Mrs Sakvuk	Foster carers, Lviv city
Mr & Mrs Karacheva	Foster carers, Lviv city
Oksana Matchushyn	Director, Drogobych CSSY

Oksana German	Social worker, Drogobych CSSY
Mr & Mrs Oryshchuk	Foster carers, Drogobych
Family support beneficiary	Drogobych
Slava ?	Team leader, Stryy CSSY
Ulyana ?	Social worker, Stryy CSSY
Iryna Sas	Social worker, Stryy CSSY
Foster Carer	Stryy
Foster Carer & children	Village Gijche
Svetlana Tolstoyokova	Director, State Social Services for Children & Family & Youth

Due to the lack of documentation about the foster care project I decided it was not possible to draw any standard evaluation conclusions about its quality, relevance, effectiveness, impact, cost effectiveness or sustainability. In order to evaluate a project certain documents are essential; the approved project proposal or project initiation document, interim or progress reports, final project report, associated financial reports, partnership agreements, etc. Desirable documents include minutes of project management meetings, project products such as procedures manuals, training manuals, etc. Very little can be deduced just from a logframe.

Instead of evaluating the project I will comment on the evidence of the project as I saw it. Similarly, an assessment of the impact of the Lviv programme is not possible from the incomplete available documentation and the limited number of meetings held with social workers and officials. Instead I will comment on the evidence for an impact as I saw it.

Results and Discussion

Foster care project

According to the project logframe, five foster care families were to be recruited, trained, approved and children placed with them during the life-time of the project. Certainly more than five families have been recruited and approved and some of them have children placed with them but it is hard to say for definite that all these families were recruited because of the work of the project. A number of families have come forward to be foster carers who might otherwise have adopted one or more children. The characteristic they appear to have in common is their preparedness to openly acknowledge that the children they care for are not theirs by birth. Their open attitude contrasts with the traditional approach to adoption in Ukraine where a family would pretend that their adopted child, usually a baby, was their birth child.

The first family introduced as a project foster carer was the the family visited in Drogobych. Talking to the husband and wife it was apparent that they had known their fostered children for many years before becoming foster carers. They had been concerned for the welfare of the children who lived in the same apartment block and had adopted the youngest child rather than see her mother place her in the baby home. Looking for ways they could get help from the local administration to care for the older children, the couple were eventually directed to the local CSSY.

They completed the foster carer training and assessment process and are now the designated carers for all the children of that family. This enabled them to receive a financial allowance and material aid to care for the children. In short, fostering was a device to regularise a pre-existing care situation; the social workers did not find the family nor play much part in placing the children with the carers.

Similarly, the third family to be approved as foster carers came from Zhovkva rayon, not one of the original project rayons. The family had presented themselves as wanting to care for children and the local CSSY asked for help to take them through the assessment and approval process. The fourth and fifth families came from Lviv city, again, not a designated project site.

Though the project has ended families continue to present themselves to their local CSSY as potential long-term carers of children. They appear to be referred for training to the foster carer training centre set up as part of the original Foster Care project. I sat in on the final training session of a group of foster carers. At the end of the session eight families were presented with certificates of completion of training.

The second output according to the logframe was to be the development of procedures to support foster carers with responsibilities clearly assigned to the respective state bodies. The evidence for this was much more hit and miss. The foster carers in Sokal, Stryy and Drogobych were clearly supported by their local rayon CSSY social workers. Support to foster carers in Lviv city was much less evident.

If I understood correctly, agreed procedures required that supervision of the fostered child should be provided by the CSSY of the rayon where the child was registered.

This appeared to work where the foster carer and fostered child were registered in the same area but it was not apparent that the roles of supporting the foster carer and supervision of the child had been split. There may come a time when the interests of the child conflict with the interests of the foster carer. Meeting those interests will be more difficult if they are to be met by the same social worker.

In the case of the foster carers visited in Lviv city, they did not appear to be supported at all. In one instance the nominated supervising social worker for the child had made telephone contact with the foster carer but had not visited the children to check on their welfare since they went to live with the foster carers as her office was some distance away. In another instance the mother of the fostered child was thought to be recently released from prison and the foster carers were understandably anxious that she would suddenly demand the return of her daughter. That sort of situation should be actively managed by a supervising social worker responsible for protecting the interests of the child.

The third output according to the logframe was to be the development of a foster care methodology. This was to be indicated by the publication of a methods and procedures manual. I was not shown a procedures manual but I was assured that prospective foster carers continue to be trained according to a curriculum developed during the lifetime of the project.

The Government of Ukraine have passed some extremely prescriptive regulations for foster care that are in effect detailed procedures that limit the scope for social work judgment and different ways of doing things. Perhaps a more thorough analysis of the regulations might reveal operational gaps that could be filled by locally produced procedures. I think the more pressing need at this stage of the development of foster care in Ukraine is fewer and looser regulation by central government to allow more creativity and innovation at a local level.

What did appear to be lacking was a mechanism or procedure for matching the needs of children in internats with the resources and abilities of approved foster carers. As far as I could ascertain from the foster carers themselves, they selected their foster children by going down to an internat, picking out a child or children and then negotiating the placement with the internat director. There are many weaknesses to this selection process, not least it puts the interests of the foster carer first before the child's. Second, as several foster carers reported and was confirmed by the social workers, it relied on the willingness of directors of internats to allow foster carers to visit and take children home.

I was told that directors of internats had closed their doors to foster carers and stopped any more placements of children. Foster carers have been approved by the appropriate body but do not have placements, meanwhile children who could live in a family continue to languish in internats. The lack of cooperation from Education Departments that have responsibility for internats is a gaping hole in the service.

Apparently procedures to pay foster carers were underdeveloped in the early days of the project resulting in delays in paying allowances to foster carers. I was told that systems have improved since then and foster carers are paid regularly and on time.

Procedures to approve foster carers seemed a little out of proportion, certainly in the early days of the project. One foster carer in Lviv city was called before an open session of the City Council, the highest regulatory body of the administration, to answer questions about her application and motivation. Apparently a journalist was also present who interviewed her afterwards. In other places the rayon Board of Guardians is the approving body. From what I was told, some Board members have adopted an investigative and accusatory attitude towards foster care applicants and do not take account of the assessment report of the social worker.

I understand the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers has adopted some very restrictive regulations that limit the scope of foster care to meet the needs of children. For example, the regulations permit only children to be fostered whose parents have been deprived of their parental rights. Only employed persons can be approved as foster parents. Social workers referred to an Oblast regulation that stipulates that foster carer accommodation must be large enough to provide at least 2m² of floor space for each fostered child. Social workers in Stryi said an official had instructed them that no child under three years is allowed to be fostered. A convoluted calculation restricts the age of persons who could be foster carers.

Regulations that are too prescriptive limit the opportunities of social workers to identify and recruit suitable foster carers. Social workers should be given guidance on the issues to be covered when assessing an applicant, but they must be allowed to make a judgment and recommendation according to each situation. I understand that the TACIS project is advocating for changes to these regulations.

In short, methods and procedures to operate a foster care service do appear to have been developed though not all of them are in the best interests of children.

The fourth and last logframe output was to be the establishment of a viable, specialised foster care service. This was to be verified by:

1. Trained team of social workers who will deal with the whole process of creating a foster family and provide following social support.
2. Statute of service that would provide its efficient functioning .
3. Clear place of foster care service in the system of state structures.
4. Clear mechanism of state funding.

In honesty I do not think this has been achieved. There are social workers involved in the assessment and training of foster carers but they are not involved in selecting and matching children to placements. Follow-up support to foster carers is patchy and not systematic. The logframe does not indicate the scale or scope of the planned service. Was it intended to be Oblast-wide, or limited to the two project sites?

Social workers have been incorporated into the rayon CSSYs that I visited and they are being paid by the rayons but I understand social workers are not employed in the Oblast CSSY and this creates a gap in services. More investigation would be necessary to find out if the model had been replicated in other parts of the Oblast.

Foster carer training seems to taking place on a very fragile basis. Though premises in a seedy basement have been assigned by the authorities as a place for training, the

trainers are unpaid volunteers. This is not a sound basis for the service. If the trainers did not volunteer their time it is speculated that foster carer training would not take place at all.

The government of Ukraine and the Oblast administration have adopted regulations for the service but they do not result in a service that efficiently and effectively places children in foster families.

I am not quite sure what was meant by a 'clear place of foster care in state structures'. The existence of laws and regulations governing foster care indicates it is recognised by the state of Ukraine and the Oblast State Administration. But the lack of coordination with the Education authorities and the unhelpfulness of some of the regulations suggests the function and potential of foster care is not clearly understood.

I understand the TACIS project is examining state funding mechanisms.

Foster care exists today in parts of Lviv Oblast but without knowing what the project intended to achieve, ie the approved project proposal, the partnership agreements, the funding arrangements, the progress reports, it is hard to say how much was due to the project and how much would have happened anyway.

ECT/EveryChild Lviv programme

The evidence of an impact on the development of services and policies for children and families in Lviv is patchy. This is probably because it is, and because of insufficient preparation time available to me to plan a thorough investigation into the impact of the programme.

The social work methods of working with vulnerable children and families used in the early projects continue to be observable in Sokal, Yavoriv, Drohobych, Stryi and Truskavets CSSYs. Less positively, the service does not appear to have expanded. The number of social workers using modern social work methods do not appear to have increased except in Truskavets Crisis service, despite social workers continuing to graduate from local social work courses. Truskavets Crisis service has acquired a brand new mini bus to provide a mobile outreach service. I think that is very enterprising.

Only one social worker remains in Sokal CSSY. I was told pay rates are very low in CSSYs and most graduating social workers go to work in NGOs. On the other hand, the Deputy Head of Sokal Rayon Administration and deputy of the Oblast Council, Mrs Maria Khrystynych, made a point of joining the meeting in Sokal to affirm the commitment of the authority to supporting families.

Two social work teams I visited, in Yavoriv and Truskavets, claimed that no child had been admitted to an internat since they had been in operation. This is an excellent outcome if it is the case.

I failed to fully understand the structure and composition of CSSYs at the Oblast State Administration but I think I understood that social workers are not employed in the State CSSY, therefore family support and foster care services are not provided at that

level even though it appears to have a service delivery function.

I pressed the Director of Lviv Oblast CSSY several times to say what plans he had to provide foster care and family support services. He answered by saying the Oblast had plans to establish shelters for mothers and babies, social living spaces for child orphans (sic), day centres for HIV+ children, centres for juveniles released from prison, day centres for children with cerebral palsy and “other handicapped children”. Such developments, if they ever came about, would reinforce exclusion rather than counter it. He declined to say if the Oblast had any plans to support children in families.

More time would be needed to investigate whether modern methods to support families had been adopted in other rayons of the Oblast.

The Director of Drogobych CSSY said the rayon had opened a Mother & Baby shelter without the support of EveryChild. If this represents a genuine attempt to keep mothers and their babies together and help them set up home together, then it is good news. The Director of Baby Home #2 in Lviv said Oblast CSSY social workers were employed in Maternity Hospitals to support mothers at risk of leaving their babies. Again, if this is correct, it is good news.

The Director also said that the number of mothers leaving their babies in the baby home had reduced sharply since the government had begun paying a maternity grant of 8,000UAH to new mothers. There was capacity for 85 babies in the baby home but numbers would fall to 58 later that week.

Maybe the work of ECT and EveryChild to support mothers and babies has had an impact.

If there had been enough time to prepare it might have been useful to look at the work of the Co-ordinating Council on Family Issues & Social Protection of Lviv Oblast State Administration to see how much planning and co-ordination was taking place since the departure of EveryChild

The meeting with the Director of the Ukrainian State Centre for Social Services for Youth was not illuminating apart from learning that the government had a ten year timescale for the reform of children's services.

Conclusions

Knowledge Management

This assignment was severely restricted because of the absence of key project documentation. Relevant project documents were probably stored on computers in the Lviv office before it was closed. When the computers were returned to Kyiv office the locations of the documents were lost.

Key documents were probably sent to Kyiv office during the lifetime of the programme but they too have been lost during the several moves of office. Some hard copy documents were serendipitously found in folders of shelves in the Kyiv office but they were not stored in an easily retrievable system.

Despite no longer being employed by EveryChild Sonya Stavkova and Nadia Vrublevska freely gave their time to answer my questions and show me around out of goodwill towards EveryChild. Without their goodwill the gaps in my knowledge and understanding would be even greater. Other programme staff have dispersed to new jobs, taking their knowledge of the programme with them. Volodymyr Kuzminsky and Oksana Laushnyk are the only currently employed staff who know anything about the Lviv programme. There would be a big hole in the organisation's knowledge if they left.

Perhaps EveryChild should think about how offices could be helped to develop an efficient hard copy filing system that was robust enough to survive moves of office. Perhaps EveryChild should also think about how offices could be helped to develop effective systems to store files on computer. This should be part of general administration practice to contribute to the smooth running of the office. It should also be part of a Backup and Disaster Recovery plan. If Lviv office computer files had been regularly backed up to CD, it would have been easier to pass them to Kyiv when the office closed.

Foster Care Project

As discussed above, it has not been possible to evaluate the foster care project according to standard evaluation criteria of quality, relevance, effectiveness, impact, cost effectiveness or sustainability. Foster care exists in Lviv Oblast. How much is due to the project is not clear. It does not appear to be very widespread and there are several major factors restricting its growth, not least of which is the absence of cooperation by Education Departments and Directors of Internats. Other limiting factors probably include a suitably trained workforce that is too small, restrictive regulation and underinvestment in training resources. May be there is a vision for foster care in a Oblast strategy for vulnerable children and families that is waiting for guidance from the central government.

Impact of the Lviv programme

I concluded that the impact of the EveryChild Lviv programme had been patchy. There is clear evidence that the social work methods introduced to CSSYs by ECT and EveryChild continue today. There is enthusiasm and experience in those CSSYs. That is probably the biggest impact of the programme; the existence of individuals with knowledge and experience around whom future development could grow if other conditions were right. Social work students undertake placements in those offices so the knowledge is being passed on. It is a shame that state structures do not appear to be building on that knowledge. On the other hand, though I did not visit Internat #2, Ian Sparks was less confident that significant change had been made there.

Foster care is not being developed as part of a deinstitutionalisation strategy. Instead, despite blocking by Internat directors, it is being used by families that want to permanently increase the size of their family and most would probably have done so anyway, without the structure of foster care.

It was reported that mother and baby shelters are being developed, that social workers are working in maternity hospitals but there was not time to visit them and assess their operations and effectiveness at preventing admissions to institutions.

No conclusions are drawn about the effectiveness of the Co-ordinating Council on Family Issues & Social Protection of Lviv Oblast State Administration.

Recommendations

Action should be taken to develop an efficient hard copy document filing and archive system in Kyiv office. A system to logically store and retrieve electronic files should also be developed. Consideration should be given to making the system part of an office Backup and Disaster Recovery Plan.

Other country offices might benefit by reviewing their own hard copy filing and backup procedures.

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