



European Union Programme for Ukraine

**DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED SOCIAL
SERVICES FOR EXPOSED FAMILIES AND
CHILDREN**

Assessment Report

by Ian Sparks

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INTRODUCTION

This evaluation was commissioned by EveryChild Ukraine in partnership with the EU project – Development of Integrated Social Service for Exposed Children and Families – in which EveryChild is a lead partner.

It was timed to occur towards the end of the project's life and the brief was to concentrate on qualitative matters as follows:

- Given the terms of reference for the EU project -**
- What was achieved?**
- Is it sustainable?**
- What are the key messages for the participants?**

The evaluation took place over 5 working days between 24th and 30th July 2007 and also drew on some interviews conducted during a previous visit in April 2007. During this time 42 people were interviewed (details in Appendix 1) to cover the following areas:

- Key figures at State, Oblast and international NGO level
- Representatives from the Kyiv Oblast State Centre for Social Services
- Staff from the EveryChild EU project team.
- Representatives at various levels from three of the pilot sites involved in the project.

Two of the pilot sites visited – Brovary City and Vyshgorod - offer the full range of integrated services while the third – Baryshivska – offers family support, reintegration and early intervention services.

I am grateful to all of the people who gave their time for the interviews and discussed the project with interest and enthusiasm. I am also grateful to Svitlana Zholobaylo and Iryna Iurchuk who translated our discussions so well. Given the short time available for all this work I also want to thank Serhiy Kabanets and Volodymyr Shchepakov who drove us to our appointments and made sure we were always on time.

Ian Sparks
21st August 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The project's aim was to reduce the number of children in residential care by developing a model of integrated social services and training and supporting staff to implement it.
2. The project benefited from good planning, effective work with the key agencies and committees and a strong partnership with the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport.
3. Infrastructure both gave people a sense of worth and the resources to put the new system in to action.
4. There was a radical change in attitudes with a strong commitment to ensuring children grow up in families and an understanding that the best interests of the child come first.
5. The training programme was carefully planned and implemented and provided the skills that managers and social workers needed to put the new system into effect.
6. Social workers were doing effective, mainly practical, work within their level of training and development. This work was delivering real benefits to children and their families. For the future there needs to be further training in child protection and in dealing with the more problematic cases.
7. Village social work has been a great success locating social workers close to families with problems and gaining the moral and financial support of village elders.
8. The concepts of assessment, Integrated Social Services and One Window have all been understood but each needs further development through training programmes and supervision.
9. The Project was active in working with the Ministry and oblast in proposing changes to laws and regulations which would support the continuation of the principles of the Project such as assessment, gatekeeping, family support.
10. There was a well-planned campaign to change public opinion. This reached a lot of people but it is likely that more will need to be done to achieve a radical change in the views of the general public.
11. Respondents were uncertain about the future of the internats. What is clear is that the current lack of clarity and state of limbo is in no-one's best interests.
12. More attention needs to be given to collecting and analysing statistical information. Without this there is no way of knowing what is happening to children generally.
13. There are positive signs that some, if not most, of this work will continue to be funded. The real concern is whether there is the political will both to support the new service and to promote it to other oblasts.
14. Above all else the project has already made a significant difference to the lives of some children and families.

THE PROJECT'S AIMS

The project was launched in April 2005 to run for 2½ years until October 2007. The project's title is Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Children and Families.

The main aim is:

to reduce the number of children placed in boarding institutions and social orphanages in Kyiv oblast by assisting the State Social Services Centre for Youth in developing and implementing efficient integrated social services able to provide effective support for exposed families and children.

It is worth noting at this stage that, although the main aim is to reduce the number of children in boarding institutions and social orphanages, the process for doing this is by developing a programme of social services for children and families. In other words, the project is not directly tackling the issue of reducing the numbers in internats, rather it is trying to divert children away from the admission process.

There is a good, pragmatic reason for this. Although the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport has overall responsibility for the welfare of children it does not directly control any residential institutions itself. These are controlled by other ministries – Education, Labour and Social Policy, and Health – and one of the challenges of the project has been how far these ministries can be engaged with the process.

There are three specific project objectives:

To develop and implement in the pilot region a basic package of social services for exposed families and children

To provide assistance to the Ministry for Youth and Sport and its State Social Services for Family and Youth to elaborate recommendations for the improvement of the existing legislation that should facilitate the implementation of the new forms of social services and social care included in the package.

To increase the capacity of the staff of the State Social Services Centre and its regional branch in Kyiv oblast in implementing the new model of integrated social services for exposed families and children by launching training programmes and public awareness campaigns.

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED

Planning

Working alongside the project team it is noticeable that there is a sense of quiet purposefulness about its work. Team members are clear about their tasks and go about them with confidence without having to refer to constantly to the team leader. The Team Leader's view of this is that if you give people clear tasks from the start and a good understanding of how the overall aims and the day-to-day tasks fit together, then they will operate with confidence and energy.

This sense of clarity and order was confirmed by the interviews. Deputy Minister Tolstouhova described it as "the most successful of all the projects in Ukraine" and particularly singled out good preparation, efficient management and skill in involving all of the bodies necessary to achieve its objectives.

It is worth remembering that there have been complex political changes during the life of the project but the team has always managed to have access to key people and retain their influence. One of the reasons for this was the management of the work of the Steering Committee which was an effective tool for bringing ministries together and resolving issues especially in the first 18 months of the project. Another reason was the close involvement with key bodies – the Co-ordinating Council, the Commission for Children and the various rayon and city authorities.

The EU project team also play a part in strengthening links with the pilot sites. Each of the team members is responsible for liaising with a number of rayons. They make site visits, meet staff and write reports. The Project Co-ordinator takes part in oblast meetings with directors when she is able to propose ways of developing the service.

The chairman of the Steering Committee – Volodymyr Vovk – commented that the project had also been successful in changing how Ministries operate. He particularly noted that the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy had been ordered to co-operate in dealing with problem families, the Ministry of Health had produced an order on the issue of abandonment and the Ministry of Education was now giving social support to care leavers.

The fact that the project was based within the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport was clearly an asset and a number of respondents observed a strong partnership between the project and the State.

Infrastructure funding and databases

It is important not to ignore the importance of this. People in the pilot sites are immensely pleased with the resources of cars, computers and office furniture and are proud to display the EU logo on the various items!

But this is more than pleasure in new equipment. The infrastructure funding both made it clear that this was a new way of working and made it possible to achieve this new way. Proper offices reinforced the importance of the work people were doing, computers made proper record keeping and data bases possible, and cars made staff mobile and more able to visit families and villages.

A good example of the way the Project promoted the use of these resources followed an analysis of the database in June and July 2006. This indicated that staff in the Centres of Social Services did not have the skills to use the database effectively and that the database did not record the assessed needs of clients or record progress in implementing the care plan.

The Project's legal expert proposed ways of improving the database, new computers were bought and a training programme was put in place. A second database had been developed by the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport in 2004 and this was updated in 2005. Data is gathered by Services for Children at rayon, oblast and state levels and can be accessed via the Internet.

Changing attitudes

Nadiya Tatarчук of the Kyiv Oblast State Administration summarized this best:

There has been a significant change in the approach to family problems. We used to work with families in great crisis and so removed the children. Now there is more preventive work and early intervention. Everyone now understands

that children should grow up in an family and the other systems in the oblast understand that the best interest of the child comes first.”

The work of the three rayons providing integrated social services was described as

“a world away from what they were doing before, they have different priorities and are clear about them.”

The message of change was repeated at various levels. The recurring themes were:

- A strong sense of ownership
- A radical change in attitudes.
- A belief that it was possible to help families to deal with crises.
- A willingness to “do everything we can” (as one respondent put it) to stop a child going to an internat.

It was certainly clear from interviews with senior officials in the pilot sites that there was an understanding that a new way of work – which focused on supporting families and keeping children in families - had come into being.

However, there was also an element of caution. Some respondents felt that the new ways of working were too recent for them to be convinced that they would continue in the future. There was a strong feeling that extending the project for a further 12-18 months would reinforce the changes which had been made and ensure they were bedded in properly.

The EU Project trainers themselves recognised that changing the attitudes of practitioners was not easy and their training programmes had to be followed up by visits to social workers to reinforce their learning. Added to this there was the simple fact that staff change regularly at social worker level because of poor pay, job pressures or because their training makes them more attractive to other employers. There have also been many changes at more senior levels because of political changes.

There was also concern about varying levels of commitment. Some sites were seen as very committed with no children going to internats, no babies being abandoned and families receiving support. Others have not grasped all of these issues although the TACIS team continued to try to persuade them. There was a big difference between signing an agreement (which would bring immediate benefits such as equipment and training) and believing and understanding what integrated social services is about.

Training

The training programme was provided by three specialist trainers in the training centre in Kyiv together with 26 freelance part-time trainers spread across the oblast. They work in local rayons supervising and monitoring outcomes. They were described as people who have practical experience and so can relate to the problems the social workers face.

The process was managed by a EU Project team of two local experts on training. The EU Project team began by identifying the needs of social workers through interviews and round tables in various parts of the oblast and they then followed this up with questionnaires and focus groups.

As the training involved some people with a background in psychology and teaching they began their programmes with the basic principles of social work – early intervention, family support, reintegration, prevention and the background to family work – crises, assessment, legal basis for the work..

The main training now has four modules:

- Theoretical basis of social work
- Operation of integrated social services
- Basic social work techniques
- Main direction of integrated social services.

The Centre has also carried out training for senior staff in rayons on the implementation of integrated social services and ways of managing change as well as inter-agency training on areas such as the integration of internat graduates and juvenile delinquency. There has also been a programme focused on village social work..

The perspective from the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport was that the training had changed social workers' attitudes. They understood the need for individual work with families and had the skills to carry it out. They also understood the need for supervision, how to manage risks as well as the need for quality standards.

The trainers visit a sample of social workers after the training to see how it is being applied and how the programme might be improved.

The team is now working on collating all of their material into a training manual with a CD-ROM carrying examples of their training materials for use after the project finishes.

The overall impression was of a carefully planned and implemented programme of work which took close account of the learning needs of the participants but which was also committed to the change agenda of the EU project.

The next stage of the evaluation process was to see how this was being applied in practice.

Social work practice

Twelve social workers and five senior managers were interviewed as part of the evaluation. Social workers were asked to describe a case from their current work as a way of understanding how they approached their work. This is a rough and ready method but the request was made without preparation on the basis that social workers might be more likely to describe the case which was most in their minds at that moment rather than a carefully prepared ideal case.

The interviews with the senior managers clearly indicated that they were committed to the objectives of the project. Most produced statistics about their work which were difficult to verify (see the note on statistics later) but the message was always the same - fewer children going to internats, more children reintegrated with their families, more foster families recruited, fewer babies abandoned.

A lot of the work that the social workers do is strictly practical – sorting out registrations, securing benefits, making sure children retain or regain the rights to their family home, getting small grants, teaching housekeeping skills. These are more akin to what a family aide might do in the UK but they have three particular benefits.

Firstly these issues are real and pressing problems for the people they work with. Losing registration, having gas or electricity cut off or losing the right to a house are important issues to the families. They cannot go on to think about issues of raising children when these problems are hanging over them. Secondly these tasks are carried out in the context of the principles of the TACIS project. Social workers relate them to their aims of enabling a child to be reintegrated or preventing the removal of parental rights. Thirdly, and possibly most importantly, these tasks are within the competence of the social workers.

Although the training programme for the social workers was thorough and carefully thought-out it was basic. Some staff will have done a degree level programme of social work training but this will not have had a rigorous programme of supervised practice. Practical social work is also new in the oblast and so these practitioners are being scrutinised to see if what they claim is a reality, particularly in the villages where there has been more reluctance to invest in social workers.

A general conclusion would be that this group of social workers understand the principles of what they are trying to achieve and are working effectively within their level of competence. As the Head of State Administration in Vyshgorod put it “they do practical work not empty philosophy”. There are, however, a few concerns.

The first is child protection. There is such a difference between the previous model of removing children as soon as there was concern about standards of care (whether verified or not) to the current one of doing much more to keep children in families that there is always the danger that more subtle forms of abuse might go unnoticed. This also goes for foster care where there do not seem to be robust systems everywhere to ensure that children are seen separately from foster parents. It is important that supervisors are alert to the possibility of social workers operating beyond their level of competence when there are complex problems or indicators of abuse.

The second issue is of families with long-standing, intractable problems. Many of the cases had responded well to limited involvement and the warmth and interest of the social worker but there were other cases which were more complex involving serial relationships, family violence, homelessness and drug abuse. Such cases try the skills of the most experienced workers and these social workers will need good supervision to manage their involvement appropriately.

The third issue, related to the second, is the length of their involvement. The Head of the Centre for Social Services in Baryshivska Rayon was clear that early intervention cases ran for 3 months and then moved to a family support social worker if necessary. Family support would then run from 6 months to a year with visits to families at least twice a month. However, there was less clarity from the social workers generally when they described their cases and this confirms the view of Ingrid Jones, who carried out an assessment of a number of centres during March and April 2007¹. There needs to be greater clarity about the point when early intervention has to move on to longer-term involvement and a clear process for managing this change and doing the necessary planning so cases do not just drift.

The fourth issue, which is structural, is to do with the number of social workers in each rayon. This is controlled centrally so that Vyshgorod Rayon, for example, was entitled to 10 social workers. It had employed an extra three during the time of the project but would have to return to the national standard. Only Brovary City, which was able to fund social workers from its own resources was able to go beyond the national standard – in their case 15 instead of the approved number of 8. This is an issue which needs consideration at national level. The number of social workers approved for each rayon is based on a traditional view of social work. This new model requires more staff and the model of integrated social services will not be effective without the staff to carry it out.

Village Social Work

Allowing for the reservations on practice set out above this is one of the important innovations of the EU project. Apart from a few major centres Kyiv oblast is overwhelmingly rural and most of the population live in villages. The Village Council has a great degree of independence and is able to fund some of its own services and so establishing social work in the villages was a challenge. An easier approach might have been to place social workers in major centres with them visiting clients in villages but this would have been wasteful of resources and would not have engaged local sympathies.

The Deputy Governor was clear that the most vulnerable families were in the villages and he was anxious that the Village Councils should be persuaded to continue with their social workers. It was clear that senior managers at local level had worked hard to convince Village Councils of the value of social workers. The strategy for recruiting social workers had also helped to make the policy successful. Village Councils were required to tender for a social worker. They had to hold a public meeting to get general agreement and explain how the post would be funded after the EU funding ended. All of this helped required the Village Council to make a public commitment of support and helped to generate public understanding of the post. The Village Head at Korzh said that they looked for someone with skills and a heart for children and the process meant that there were high expectations in the village of what the social worker would achieve.

Added to this applicants for the post of social worker had to be existing residents in the village. This meant that they were quickly accepted into their new posts and had an immediate understanding of the village's attitudes to family with problems.

Models of work

The project and the training programme had introduced three important concepts for this work. They were assessment, integrated social services and One Window. It was clear that everyone interviewed was familiar with these concepts and they were regularly mentioned during discussions.

Assessment is core to the concept of treating each child as an individual and staff described assessment as an important part of their initial piece of work. Each case began with an assessment sometimes in partnerships with other Ministries. In common with Ingrid Jones in her report in April² I was unsure how

¹ Ingrid Jones: Development of Integrated Social services for Exposed Families and Children - a Rapid Assessment Report. 4th April 2007

² Op cit

far the assessments were truly individual as distinct from falling into the trap of using traditional groupings such as “drug and alcohol problems” to describe behaviour. This may partly be because they work with other agencies e.g. the Militia who have not had the same training or developed the same approach. Social workers had moved a long way towards full assessment but it is a concern that they may not receive the continuing training that would enable them to establish this approach fully.

Integrated social services is also a concept which people understand and are committed to. So each team had staff responsible for various aspects of the integrated services and talked about how they worked together. This is a good start but the concept has not fully taken root. There still seems to be a tendency to treat integration as bringing together a range of specialist services rather than having a seamless flow between different specialities as the need arises. This is a more sophisticated idea which people need to work toward but it needs to be recognised that what has been achieved is the beginning of the road and not the destination. The other difficulty is that truly integrated social services calls for a seamless flow between Ministries as well as within one Ministry. There is some evidence of this happening but this is more difficult with the political issues involved.

One Window has been enthusiastically embraced especially in Brovary City where the location of the service, the signposting of the office and the whole ethos promotes the idea. The only problem here is that One Window is not a true gatekeeping system and it is clear, in particular, that other routes are being found around the One Window system to get children admitted to internats.

Changing legislation

The Project drafted and supported a number of byelaws, regulations and amendments to legislation which were adopted by local, regional and national authorities. These ensured that important principles from the Project’s practice were incorporated in laws or regulations.

For example a joint order was issued in December 2006 by Kyiv oblast promoting inter-agency working and gate keeping. This required local authorities to ensure that no child was admitted to an institution unless a comprehensive assessment had first been completed by a social worker from Centre for Social Services.

Project staff provided substantial support to the Ministry of Family Youth and Sport in the drafting of the Law on Social Services for Families. This legislation guarantees for the first time that any Social Services intervention will be based on a full and comprehensive assessment. It also defines the concept of supervision for families, the legal basis for social workers to undertake a ‘case management’ approach with families and provides the legal basis for the new services developed within the Project.

Other changes in legislation which the Project promoted included:

- Requiring for the first time that State authorities must act in the best interests of the child and this must be based on a thorough assessment.

- Making training mandatory for those awarded guardianship of children.

- Requiring that all foster parents who had been assessed as suitable to care for a child should attend an initial 32 hour training course and attend re-training courses at regular intervals.

In the area of adoption the Project advised on making it possible for Ukraine to ratify the Hague Convention on international adoption and provided a legal opinion on target times for in-country adoption of babies abandoned at birth.

The Project carried out a detailed study of the issue of ‘removal of parental rights’ looking at the best international experience and the relevant international standards and conventions. The study highlighted the barriers this issue presents to the development of community-based services for vulnerable families and children and in particular its impact on the numbers of children removed from the care of their parents. The study made recommendations on the measures Ukraine can take to prevent family breakdown and to maintain parental rights wherever possible including recommendations for changes to existing legislation, by-laws and regulations.

The Project also produced a monthly digest and analysis of current and developing child and family legislation. This was posted on the website and provided to all social workers in the pilot oblast.

Public Opinion

This project is a radical change from general public attitudes which are generally critical of families with problems and supportive of the use of internats for children. Changing such attitudes is a long-term process and it is unrealistic to expect the project to have achieved such a change in a programme lasting 30 months. What could be expected is a well-thought-out approach to communicating the new way of working and this is a great challenge where there were widespread groups of rayons and teams involved in the process.

What the project did achieve was a co-ordinated campaign concentrating on a few key messages. Research showed that the general public had little understanding of social work with families. However they did understand that any family could find itself in crisis. The other important finding was that people trusted their local media most. This was important in a situation where the temptation to use national television is strong.

The result was an overall campaign with the strapline “Every child needs a family” which concentrated on working through each rayon and their local media. This was supported by a set of materials – posters leaflets, stickers, calendars and sometimes videos. These covered three areas:

- Early intervention services
- Family support services
- Family care and reintegration services

All participating municipalities were given a local media plan with training and support. There was a detailed plan for using the posters and a programme of feeding stories to the local media through the local administration. Feedback about the campaign was analysed along the way and the strategy modified.

There is no analysis of the changes in public perception at this stage and, in any case, experience is that such campaigns can raise awareness temporarily but there needs to be a sustained programme to change attitudes permanently. What is of interest is the fact that each team interviewed reported more families coming forward asking for help and more people asking about being foster parents. This is likely to be a combination of a number of factors but the campaign will have played some part in that.

Internats

A reduction in the number of children in internats is the overall aim of the project but, as explained earlier, this cannot be tackled head-on.

The interviews identified mixed views about the internats. Some were clear that they had no future and would close. Others thought they might perform other functions as social hostels or rehabilitation centres, or be used only for emergency placements. One respondent suggested that falling numbers were the result of economic growth so that as the country grew more wealthy the need for internats would fall away naturally. What was clear was that in the pilot sites occupancy was dropping and internat directors knew change was unavoidable.

The overall position is complex. Funding is still biased towards funding internats and the Ministry of Finance is not committed to any process of reforming the budget codes and processes. Also there is no clear strategy for the process of reform. The responsibility for this lies mainly with the Ministry of Education which is not ready for reform and resists any attempt by the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport to get involved in this area. One important element in the mix is the Joint Order on the placement of vulnerable children in residential institutions. This has been signed by the five key Ministries and controls the admission of children to internats. This may be the first step towards a proper strategy for making assessment and gatekeeping a reality for all vulnerable children.

Internat directors themselves are worried and the Ministry of Education knows this. The directors can see that the world is changing fast and they do not know what their future is. One of the by-products of the process of integrated social services is that the most able and healthy children are being reintegrated or placed for adoption while the internats are left with the more difficult and more handicapped.

One respondent identified the root of the problem as a lack of clarity about what might happen next:

“The issue of deinstitutionalisation is in limbo because there is no consensus on how to move forward. The issue is not just moving budgets or re-training staff, there are also the issues of the re-use of buildings and land and the cost of change. If the Prime Minister were persuaded then change would take place but will he get the right advice?”

Statistics

Most of the managers interviewed quoted figures demonstrating the success of the project. The difficulty is that each set of figures was for a different period of time and a different location so it was impossible to gain an overall view.

Generally it is clear that the three pilot sites visited have seen an increase in the number of families coming to them and that they have all been successful to a greater or lesser extent in reducing the abandonment of babies, preventing the break-up of families and recruiting foster parents.

The EU project team has the most reliable figures and they show that during 2005 in the pilot sites 531 children were removed from families following deprivation of parental rights and, of these, 293 (55%) went into residential care. In 2006 the number removed from families dropped to 337 (a reduction of 37%) of whom 151 (44%) went into residential care. One reason for this change is that over the same period the number of social workers increased from 103 to 279 – all of whom will have received some training in family support and preventive work.

There are two main concerns about statistics. The first is that, despite all of the preventive work and family support, the overall number of children going to internats is not reducing significantly. This would suggest that the gatekeeping and “One Window” systems are not picking up all of the children and that children are going into internats via other routes. If this is true then the current initiative is leading to net-widening where more children and families are drawn into the system rather than diversion where the number of children would remain the same but they would move from institutions to family support services.

The second concern is the lack of a comprehensive system for recording what is happening to children. Individual teams may be keen on collecting their own statistics but until these are combined into an overall system it is impossible to know what effect any initiative is having.

IS THIS WORK SUSTAINABLE?

This needs to be considered in a number of sub-sections.

Is it financially sustainable?

There were many positive messages about this. The Deputy Governor was aware of the challenge of continuing funding but was clear that there was no lack of will because municipalities now see the need for the service.

Some services at city and rayon level are already financed at local level, for others there are issues of changing budget codes and persuading village elders to make commitments to funding. There are also political issues which are familiar from other countries e.g. how much should be spent on children with problems and how much on gifted children who will be of more obvious benefit to society.

Overall local managers were optimistic about finding the money to keep the services going.

It is regrettable that, in the words of Jeremy Hartley, UNICEF Representative in Kyiv, “the issue is marginal to the EU”. Sergiy Poliuk confirmed that the EU’s future focus will be on finance, infrastructure and the environment rather than the social sector.

Is it generally sustainable?

This service is newly established and there are real concerns that it will lose momentum as the support services are withdrawn. At present there are regular training programmes to reinforce the project’s message, the EU project team support and encourage administrations in their work and the TACIS leadership is able to apply pressure at national level on difficult issues.

There are some positive indicators. Overall attitudes have changed greatly and there are more specific processes to support change e.g. the One Window approach to service delivery and performance indicators for executive bodies now requiring information about the position of children in the local administration e.g. the percentage of social orphans. National indicators like this have potential for continuing to promote change particularly if they include information about the percentage of children in internats, educational achievement and child health.

The general anxiety was reflected by a respondent who asked what would happen after the project began by saying “Don’t lose hope.” But then added “Some people support the vision but they are not sure if it will become a reality.”

Can it be replicated?

This is the real challenge. The price of failing to reform social services so that children continue to go to internats at the current rate is too awful to contemplate. Not only does this damage the lives of thousands of children every year, it will also produce a new generation of inadequate and dependent adults who will contribute little to the economic development of Ukraine.

Two things make replication a possibility. The first is the existence of a number of successful examples of integrated social services. The second is a group of politicians, senior managers and social workers who will speak with passion and conviction about what they have done. The best advocate to a Mayor or Village Head about this new service will be their equivalent in a pilot site who understands the problems and can show how they have been overcome.

What works against replication is the fact that the project has been relatively short-lived. There has not been enough time to develop the model fully, to work out alternative models and to sort out the elements which are most suitable to city, rayon or village settings. In addition the Ministry will not have the finance, material and technical assistance which has helped to make the project successful.

However, promotion to other oblasts has been happening for a year and staff from across Ukraine have been visiting and attending staff seminars. In addition the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport is planning round tables with governors and mayors to discuss the results of the project.

Conclusion

It is impossible to be certain about sustainability. There are many positive signs not least the enthusiasm of the people involved in the pilot sites. The key point is that if they are supported at national level and integrated social services is promoted at the highest level as the way forward then it has every chance of succeeding. Without such clear political leadership it is in danger of losing direction and energy and remaining a local initiative.

Overall it is important to remember that the real success of this project is not the planning, the training programme or the number of social workers in the field.

The real success is about babies who might have been abandoned to live in baby houses but who are living at home with their mothers and father, it is about children who might have been taken from their parents and placed in large institutions far from home but who are still living safely with their families, it is about families which might have been broken apart by poverty and crises but who are still living together. And it is about children being given a chance to flourish and achieve their potential.

KEY MESSAGES

The key messages come at the beginning of this Report in place of an Executive Summary. The main report looks in detail at different aspects of the project. This section lists the messages that arise from the main report. They are interlinked but this section can be read independently of the main report.

There is now an established programme of Integrated Social Services in Kyiv Oblast with managers committed to its values and social workers trained to implement it. Attitudes have changed significantly and staff have been trained to deliver the new service. This could become the basis for establishing a modern system of social services throughout Ukraine but only if certain actions are taken.

State level

1. There needs to be a simple statement of what is the future for services for children and families in Ukraine. A model was proposed by a workshop run jointly by the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport and the TACIS project in April 2007. This proposed a core aim:

“To ensure that every child is growing and developing in a safe family environment within the community”

and one simple way of measuring this:

In 2007 95% of children in need are in State care and 5% remain with their families and benefit from family support and preventive work.

By 2012 90% of children in need should remain with their families and benefit from family support and preventive work and only 10% should be in State care.

(This model is shown in Appendix 2)

2. At the moment Integrated Social Services is a pilot project in one oblast. There needs to be a clear declaration that this is the model for the future and the key Ministries need to be directed to work together in implementing this model across Ukraine. The National Plan for Action provides a framework for this but there needs to be a more detailed strategy to make it a reality.
3. The current structure where the Ministry for Family Youth and Sport has a co-ordinating role but does not directly run any institutions may not be ideal but it is workable. The alternative of further re-organisation will only divert attention from the main task of developing a modern system of social services.
4. There has to be serious, focused attention to the future of residential institutions. The present situation is unacceptable – numbers are dropping in some areas, internat directors and staff are uncertain about their future, Integrated Social Services are promoting a model of family support instead of residential care, the general public is unclear about what is happening. There is clear research evidence internationally that long-term residential care is damaging and that no child under 5 should ever be in a residential institution – however caring it might seem. Taking action on this is complex and there will need to be an overall strategy followed by a detailed action plan for each institution. But there is evidence that alternative services will cost less and will bring economic benefits. Children who grow up in families are more likely to be productive and active citizens compared to those who grow up in institutions.
5. This action is also at State level but is more specific. It concerns the status and number of social workers. The new role of social worker is wider and more demanding than previously. This needs to be recognised in Statute. In addition the Statute on the number of social workers in each municipality does not recognise the reality of the new model of Integrated Social Services. There needs to be a review which will allocate staff in accordance with the new requirements.

Ministry for Family, Youth and Sport

1. Integrated Social Services needs to be promoted across all oblasts as soon as possible. There is now a group of Heads of State Administration and Social services managers who have seen that the model of Integrated Social Services works and are enthusiastic about it. They need to be able to promote this to their opposite numbers in other rayons and oblasts.

2. The work that has been done to set up Integrated Social Services in pilot sites needs to be supported. The new model has been established but it is not yet deep-rooted. It needs an explicit commitment from the Ministry to continue this work coupled with a continuing development and training programme for managers and social workers.
3. Social workers need training to continue developing their skills. They currently work within their competence but they need to expand their skills as they take on more difficult cases. Priorities for training are further development of assessment skills, understanding child protection in family support and foster care work, and more work on case management and planning especially for difficult cases.
4. There needs to be a rigorous process of gatekeeping to ensure that every child needing a service is assessed individually and that there are no exceptions to this rule. It is clear that even in the pilot sites some children are not being assessed through the One Window system but are bypassing this and going straight to residential institutions. The gatekeeping system needs to be inter-agency and independent but committed to the principle of keeping children within their families.
5. The services which are provided to children in need should follow the priorities proposed by the TACIS project – firstly guardianship by the extended family, then national adoption, followed by fostering and finally family-type children’s homes.
6. Statistics need to be compiled in a way that is comprehensive and accurate. This is the only way to tell if Integrated Social Services is diverting children from residential care or only widening the net. Part of this process is getting local managers to understand the value of their statistical returns and also feeding back results so that local staff know what is happening.
7. Some inroads have been made into changing public opinion but this will be a long process. The general population has been so used to residential care as the only way to deal with problems that it will take time to change their minds. One way to do this would be to recruit a number of Ukrainian business leaders, celebrities, media people etc. who understand the case for family support and would actively promote it in newspapers and on radio and television.

People interviewed for the Evaluation

Svetlana Tolstouhova	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport
Jeremy Hartley	UNICEF Representative in Ukraine
Volodymyr Vovk	First Deputy Director, State Social Services
Valeriy Kondruk	Deputy Governor, Kyiv Oblast State Administration
Lyudmila Guvkorska	Former Head of Services for Children, Kyiv Oblast State Administration
Sergiy Poliuk	Project Manager, TACIS programme
Halyna Postoliuk	Executive Director, Hope and Homes for Children
Roman Koval	Director, Centre for Common Ground

Kyiv Oblast State Centre for Social Services

Lyandrea Nikolaenko	Director of Kyiv Oblast Centre for Social Services
Olga Pavluk	Training Centre Manager
Olena Leshchenko	Trainer

Baryshyivsky Rayon

Sergiy Vasylykivsky	Head of State Administration
Ianna Ignatenko	Head of Services for Children
Larysa Borzak	Head of Centre for Social Services
Oksana Drozd	Social Worker
Liudmila Novogradsko	Social Worker
Irina Koshliak	Social Worker
Irina Petrivna	Social Worker
Irina Stomachenko	Head of Village Council, Korzhi
Zinayida Deriy	Social Worker, Korzhi
Igor Stomachenko	Volunteer, Korzhi

Vyshgorod Rayon

Dmytro Bachev	Deputy Head of State Administration
Natalya Kovalska	Acting Head of Social Services
Valentyna Timoschenko	Head of Services for children
Nadia Carapysk	Social Worker, family forms of care
Svitlana Vorynets	Social Worker, children in conflict with the law
Tetyana Ovstenko	Social Worker, reintegration services
Mychail Lazarev	Social Worker, family support services
Liybort Gelsh	Social Worker, family support services
Alina Stetsenko	Social Worker, family support services
Larysa Sinchenko	Social Worker, Dymyr Village
Julie	Foster carer, Dyrmyr Village

Brovary City

Anatoliyvna Kvasha	Director of Brovary City Centre for Family, Children and Youth.
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EveryChild / EU Project team

Elayn Sammon	TACIS Project Team Leader
Zinayida Kyyanytsya	Deputy Director of Programmes
Tetyana Khimchenko	Deputy Director for PR and Fundraising
Larysa Styga	Project Co-ordinator
Maria Rostalna	Project Assistant
Ihor Nosach	Project Assistant
Oleksandr Romanukha	Project Assistant
Irina Zvereva	Senior Local Expert on Training
Zhanna Petrochko	Junior Local Expert on Social Work

Core Aim for the next five years

