

IN FOCUS

Children Rights

The international day of child protection has been celebrated on 1st June in Europe for more than 50 years. This date reminds adults, of the importance of children's rights: to live and be brought up in a family, to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to education, rest and leisure as well as to protection from violence. Since 1991 when Ukraine ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the State has guaranteed to secure and protect children's rights.

> President Victor Yushenko said this year "It is the sacred duty of our society, the state and individuals to do everything possible to ensure that Ukrainian children are happy and content; to support gifted children and to encourage those with special talents and to develop their personalities. Together we must advocate for and stand up for our small citizens". He also

officially declared 2006 the Year of Child Protection in Ukraine. One of the steps toward providing child support is an 11-fold increase in the financial grant to

mother's on the birth of their children. He voiced a hope for a 2-fold increase in financial support for mothers taking care of children under the age of 3 years old, which the State is considering. The President highlighted the commitment of State authorities to overcoming child homelessness, to support for families in crisis, for the development of family type

children homes, and to deliver assistance to families caring for orphans. The goals of the Ukrainian State as outlined by the President are concurrent with the aims of the EU Project "Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children" which, starting from 2005 is being implemented in Kyiv Oblast by the Representative Office of "EveryChild" in Ukraine. The main goal of the Project is to reduce the number of children living in residential institutions and to support family based care for children. Newly developed Integrated Social Services have been established in 32 rayon and city administrations throughout Kyiv Oblast.

You can read more about their activities and achievements in supporting vulnerable families and children in this edition of the Newsletter.

Work of Integrated Social Services

> During 2006 a range of services to ensure the right of the child to live in a family have been developed within the framework of the Project. Each of the services is aimed at either supporting families to care for their own children or where this is not possible finding substitute families for them. Early Intervention Services (EIS) and Family Care Support Services (FCSS) are

for children who cannot live with their own families to live in a family environment, either through adoption or foster care.

Promoting foster care and adoption and providing, training and support for such families are the main tasks for FCSS. Information campaigns initiated by the social workers from FCSS have been effective in identifying 120 residents of Kyiv Oblast who have expressed a desire to become foster carers or adopt a child. 20 people have completed the training

and 10 have been recommended as foster carers or adoptive parents. FSS are operational in 31 rayons and city administrations of Kyiv Oblast and provide assistance to families in crisis. This year 837 families have been referred and supported. 60 social workers are working for 31 EIS, preventing abandonment of the newly-born children. In 2006 there were 27 attempts of abandonment registered in Kyiv Oblast. 8 cases are successfully prevented (Kyievo-Svyatoshynskyy, Bohuslaskyy, Borodyanskyy

ers with their children. 6 infants require substitute family care.

The pilot sites of Vyshhorod and Fastiv were the first rayons where the programme "A Family for Every Child" (so called Plan of Action for the local authorities in terms of the EU Project) has been developed and implemented. The programme was discussed at the extended meeting of the Coordination Councils for Childhood Protection and approved by the Heads of rayon State Administrations. In the above-mentioned rayons as well as in Borodyanskyy, Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky and Skvyrskyy rayons the Project was officially presented to Heads of Village and Township Councils to include them in the activities.



Working meeting of Project Team Leader **Elayn Sammon** with foster families in Vyshhorod

working predominantly to prevent the breakdown of a vulnerable family, providing short term intervention or long-term support, while Family Care Support Services (FCSS) are finding possibilities

Rayons, Fastiv and Brovary towns). 13 mothers applied for temporary placement of the children to residential institutions and receive continuing social work support to reunite the moth-

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ACTIVITIES OF SERVICES

Family Care Support Service

> *Preamble of Convention on the Rights of the Child says that "for the full and harmonious development of child's personality, he or she should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding". Family Care Support Services (FCSS) are aimed to ensuring possibility for the children-orphans and children deprived of parental care to be brought up in a family environment. Services are developed in the framework of the EU Project and operate in Kyiv Oblast.*

EU Project Assistant Oleksiy Kurka describes the services and their work in more detail.

FCSS have been created and are operational in 19 rayons and towns of Kyiv Oblast. In accordance with the agreements signed between Representative Office of EveryChild in Ukraine and oblast/rayon leadership, social workers employed to provide Integrated Social Services are required to undertake training to ensure they have the necessary skills to provide innovative and complex social services

In cooperation with specialists from Kyiv oblast Training Centre the technology for development and support of foster carers, and family type homes has been formulated and training in this methodology has been provided to social workers since April 2006. The initial training was dedicated to methods of assessing the capacities of the potential foster carers and parents-educators of Family Type Children's Homes. The training also covered the legal aspects and implications of foster care.

Further training is planned with the objective of ensuring appropriate selection and matching of children and foster carers, provision of on-going social support of the children placed in the family type institutions, and enhancing parents' and carers professional skills in realising their responsibilities towards children.

Although the first foster placement in Ukraine was made more than 7 years ago it is only now that professional training has begun at a national level.

Amendments made to the Regulations on the Foster Family (Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 565 as of 26 April 2006) and Regulations on Family Type Children's Home (Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 564 as of 26 April 2006) require people who wish to become foster carers or parent educators to undertake specific initial, on-going and regular training. It is expected that in several years foster parents and parents-educators from the family type children's homes will develop advanced skills in caring for children and will be recognised as highly qualified professionals.

Certainly social workers play a primary role in the development of substitute family care for vulnerable children. They are responsible for conducting information campaigns, assessing and selecting carers with the capacity to care for the individual needs of children, and for training and supporting foster carers and families when children are placed. Social workers of FCSS, developed within the framework of the Project are also trained in providing complex social support to families, foster carers, parent-educators of family type homes and adoptive families.

The social workers from FCSS are currently applying their knowledge and skills in order to assess the capacity of those who have come forward as potential foster carers, and have noted an increase in those willing to establish foster families. Each month in almost each rayon and town of Kyiv oblast approximately 3 or 4 families shows a firm intention to adopt or foster a child. They are registered with FCSS where they begin the process of collecting the necessary documents in preparation for attending the obligatory training. There are 78 families overall registered in Kyiv oblast, which makes approximately 125 persons. Of these, 20 people have undertaken training, organised by Kyiv oblast Centre of Social Services for Family, Children and Youth.

Since training for the potential candidates to become foster carers can be conducted only by certified specialists from the social sector, of which there are currently only 4 in Kyiv oblast, this means that a growing number of families and children will have to await assessment selection and matching.

Ruslan's Story

> 10 year old Ruslan lives with his foster carers Svitlana and Oleksander. Energetic, active and restless Ruslan has already received 2nd category in trampoline jumps and acrobatics. He is a diligent and responsible student who enjoys playing computer games and spending weekends with his family at the dacha. Life for Ruslan was difficult after the death of his parents and he lived for some time in a children's home. Now he has a real family again he is once again enjoying life. Lyubov Tlostyuk, a social worker from Vyshhorod Family Care Support Service, is almost considered another member of the family. She was involved in training Svitlana and Oleksander and helped the family in the initial days when Ruslan left the children's home. She continues in her professional capacity to support and meet the family regularly.



Ruslan and his family

The Project therefore plans to work with the State Institute for Family and Youth Problems, which is responsible for education and certifying trainers amongst social workers in order to increase the number of certified trainers by at least 20 this year. Meanwhile the staff and Experts of the Project will continue to work to improve the theory and practice of the family types of state placement for children-orphans and children deprived of parental care and support, in co-operation with partners — national and local State administrative authorities, NGOs and community groups, parents and children.

¹ <http://everychild.org.ua/uk/laws/international/convention/>



LOCAL WORK

News from Vyshhorod

> The social-economic crisis in our country has impacted on the welfare of families and subsequently has seen conditions for children deteriorate. Vyshhorod rayon is not an exception: of a child population of 12,000, 1005 live in multi-children families, 1481 in single parent or extended families, 576 in families in crisis. 246 children are with limited abilities, 202 of them are children-orphans or children deprived of parental care. Each fourth child in the rayon needs special attention. Taking into consideration the importance of ensuring chil-



Meeting of Coordination Council for Childhood Protection, Vyshhorod Rayon State Administration

dren rights Vyshhorod Rayon State Administration was among the first which supported the idea of development of the Integrated Social

Here is what the clients of the service say:

"I am really thankful you helped me. I can't believe what life would look like now without my brother".
A young woman supported to care for her younger brother.

"Thank you. My kids are still with me. That is the most important thing".
Single mother.

Services. They began their activities in May, working in Vyshhorod, at the address Shevchenka Square, 1.

"One of the main directions of Integrated Social Services in Vyshhorod rayon is ensuring the right of every child to grow up and develop in a family or family environment" - tells head of Vyshhorod centre of social services for family, children and youth, Nataliya Rud'ko who describes in detail, the work with families in crisis. "There are 3 specialists supporting 50 families in crisis. Agreement is made with the family and a joint plan of action is defined. When a case is closed the family is asked to complete a questionnaire asking about the support they received and allowing them to make suggestions for improvement to the service.

The FCSS is also successful. Two social workers provide information campaigns in order to promote development of the foster families. They are also involved in selection, education and support of the candidates to become foster carers. Currently there are 5 foster families developed in the rayon. Now social workers conduct work with 5 couples and 4 candidates to become foster carers; 10 children from the children's homes

have been already prepared to be placed in the foster families.

Within the structure of the centre there are three extra services developed and acting: Emergency Protection Service, Reintegration Service for those children living in residential institutions to help them return home and a Service providing support to Children who are in Conflict with Law. The system of Integrated Social Services developed in the rayon allows us to concentrate the activities of all the organisations and institutions in the rayon to provide comprehensive assistance while observing the interests of the child.

Legislation

Reviews

> Within the framework of the Project a monthly review of legislative acts and draft regulations is produced covering issues of child protection and development of innovative services. The review is undertaken and written by the Project Legal Experts and is aimed at representatives of national and international non-governmental organisations, local and national State executive bodies within the context of childcare and child welfare reform activities in Ukraine.

If you wish to receive legal reviews, please, send your request to hh@everychild.kiev.ua. You can also download them from the website of EveryChild Representative Office at www.everychild.org.ua

Children in Focus

Tarashcha Rayon

> Petrus and Ivanko Mum, Katya, had separated from her husband and had lost her job and her home. She began to abuse alcohol and subsequently the two boys were placed in children's home and were very unhappy to be separated from their Mum. The Family Support Service was alerted and began to work with Katya. The social worker helped her to receive treatment for her alcohol

addiction, to find a job and a home. She worked with the whole family so that the boys could go home. Now they are all living together happily and the social worker continues to monitor and support them.

Bila Tserkva Rayon

> Liudmyla was pregnant with her third child when her husband left her. She lived in very poor conditions, was in debt to the utilities company and had very little support from her family. She had decided that the only solution was to leave

the baby in the Baby Home. Her case was referred to the early intervention service that identified a social worker to support her. She received psychological counseling; help with repairing her home, support to obtain social financial benefits, and appropriate medical care. Working together, her social worker and the health professionals helped Liudmyla to feel more optimistic and subsequently she changed her mind. Now Liudmyla and her three children are living happily and safely together.



Training Component

> To be a skilled professional in working with children and families social workers need to understand the psychology of families, to be able to work with them as educators, help to resolve conflicts and be team players. All these key elements are integrated into practical training programs for social workers.

In April 2006 a set of regional workshop-trainings was held for the workers from Early Intervention and Family Support Services. Participants reviewed the activities of the Social Services for Families, Children and Youth within the context of the state policy to ensure the rights of the child; learned about criteria for accepting referrals, how to assess families and how to provide effective support to families in crisis, as well as methods of social work to prevent abandonment of infants. Additionally participants were



Participants of the training 17-19 of April, 2006

introduced to the Job Descriptions of the FSS and EIS social workers and the principles of inter-agency cooperation as the basis for the social support of families in crisis. As a result a further 119 social workers are now putting learning into practice.

The next step in the training programme was development of effective management skills for Directors of Centers of Social Services for

Family Children and Youth and the Heads of Service for Minors.

The main goal of the 4-day training "Management and Cooperation of the Services for Minors and Social Services for Family, Children and Youth: Strategies for Change" was to enhance cooperation and multi-agency working and to develop the professional competency of Managers. On the basis of case studies 69 participants worked to develop methodologies for resolving problems, and discussed issues of cooperation and interaction when advocating for the rights of the children. They agreed a Plan of Cooperation between Services for Minors and Social Services for Family, Children and Youth at the rayon levels, which reflects reality as it was noted by the participants that the models and situations proposed during the training were similar to those they are facing in their daily activities.

EU Project at 1st National TV Channel

> A television marathon on 1st National TV Channel described the life of the European Union and its relationship with Ukraine. Every Friday "Five out of Seven" program presented the most successful and efficient projects currently being implemented in Ukraine with the financial support of the European Union.



Kushnirenky's foster family

On 26 May key stakeholders of the EU Project "Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children" - Elayn Sammon, EU Project **Team Leader, Volodymyr Kuzminsky**, EveryChild Country Director and **Svitlana Tolstoukhova**, Head of the State Social Services for Family, Children and Youth were invited to the lively broadcasted TV program "Five out of Seven" in order to discuss "Social support to the exposed children and families". Every day in Ukraine the number of children living in residential institutions increases, although none of these institutions can substitute for the love and care of a mother and father for a child. The programme addressed this issue and discussed how the European experience is being applied to provide solutions for the care and support of vulnerable chil-



Svitlana Tolstoukhova and Volodymyr Kuzminsky in TV Programme "5 out of 7"

dren in Ukraine. A foster family spoke about their experience and the role of the social workers in helping them to become a family.

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