

IN FOCUS

> On 29 March, 2005 a consortium of organisations led by EveryChild – an international development charity, began implementation of an innovative project in Ukraine, "Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children", financed by the European Union. Its aim was to develop and implement alternative models of integrated social services for vulnerable children and families, in order to prevent institutionalisation of children and to ensure that wherever possible support is provided to enable children to grow up in a safe and loving family environment, with a secure future.

The objectives of the Project were:

- to develop and implement innovative models of integrated social services for vulnerable children and families in Kyiv oblast;
- to develop and improve legislation

which will support the new models of social services and to improve existing family and child protection legislation in accordance with European standards;

- to increase the capacity of the staff of State Social Services for Family, Children and Youth so that they are able to deliver and continue to develop the new services – through specialised training programmes and public awareness campaigns.

The Project was involved in reform of the system of State childcare by developing new models and approaches in provision of social services in Ukraine.

During the last thirty months the project has been implemented in the pilot area of Kyiv Oblast. Currently, in Autumn 2007 the Project has reached its closing stage. This issue of the Newsletter reflects on the progress, the successes, achievements and outcomes of the EU Project.



From the outset this was an ambitious project; planned activity in 35 rayon and city administrations on a tight budget and more importantly a commitment to changing hearts and minds. However from my perspective that has been our greatest achievement. There is a now a genuine understanding of the role that integrated social services play in keeping families together and real commitment at government level to preventing admission of children to institutional care.

The project built on the work and relationships developed by EveryChild in Ukraine since 1998 and in a fragile political environment managed to keep all of the partnerships intact and committed. My thanks are due to those partners, in particular Ministry of Family Youth and Sport, State Social Services for Family Children and Youth and Kyiv oblast State Administration.

Thanks are also due to all of the personnel involved in project implementation from our drivers and administrators right through to experts and managers. However the actual work of supporting children and families to stay together has been carried out by social workers in the towns and villages of Kyiv oblast. Working in difficult circumstances and

conditions, faced with complex problems and managing on minimal salaries it is the social workers who have made a real difference to the lives of real people and it is them to whom we owe our greatest debt. ■



Elayn Sammon,
Team Leader, EU Project
"Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children"

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ABOUT SERVICES

> Today the development of an integrated approach in provision of social services is gaining more importance. This mechanism of establishing innovative systems of social services at community level includes:

- Providing complex social services based on assessment of the needs of children and their families;
- Active participation of clients in social services planning and monitoring;
- Involving community resources to enable children and their families to overcome difficult life circumstances;
- Enhancing inter-sectoral co-operation in making decisions in best interests of the child.

One of the main objectives for the **EU Project "Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children"** was to develop and implement an **integrated model of the social services**, which in close partnership with all the community institutions

could provide direct help for vulnerable families and children at the community level, based on an integrated approach.

During 2005-2007 the Project was active in developing services in 35 rayon and city administrations in Kyiv oblast. These operate within the structure of the Centres of Social Services for Family, Children and Youth (CSSFCY). Social workers and managers were trained in innovative international and national approaches, technologies and mechanisms in provision of the social services and financing of the services is assured. This successful implementation of the integrated social services model is now being adapted for development of social services in villages throughout the oblast.

The range of social services provided depends on the needs of clients; thus services are established and provided based on those most appropriate for supporting clients according to their specific circumstances.

Integrated social services can include:

- **Family Support Services (FSS)**
- **Early Intervention Services (EIS)**
- **Alternative Family Care Services (AFCSS)**
- **Services on Reintegration and Socialisation of Children Leaving the Institutions (SRSCLI)**
- **Services on Support of Children in Conflict with the Law (SSCCL)**

Based on the needs of families and children and availability of local human and financial resources in local communities, other services can be included into the model of the integrated social services (e.g. family support services for parents and/or children affected by HIV, family support services for families and functionally disabled children etc.)

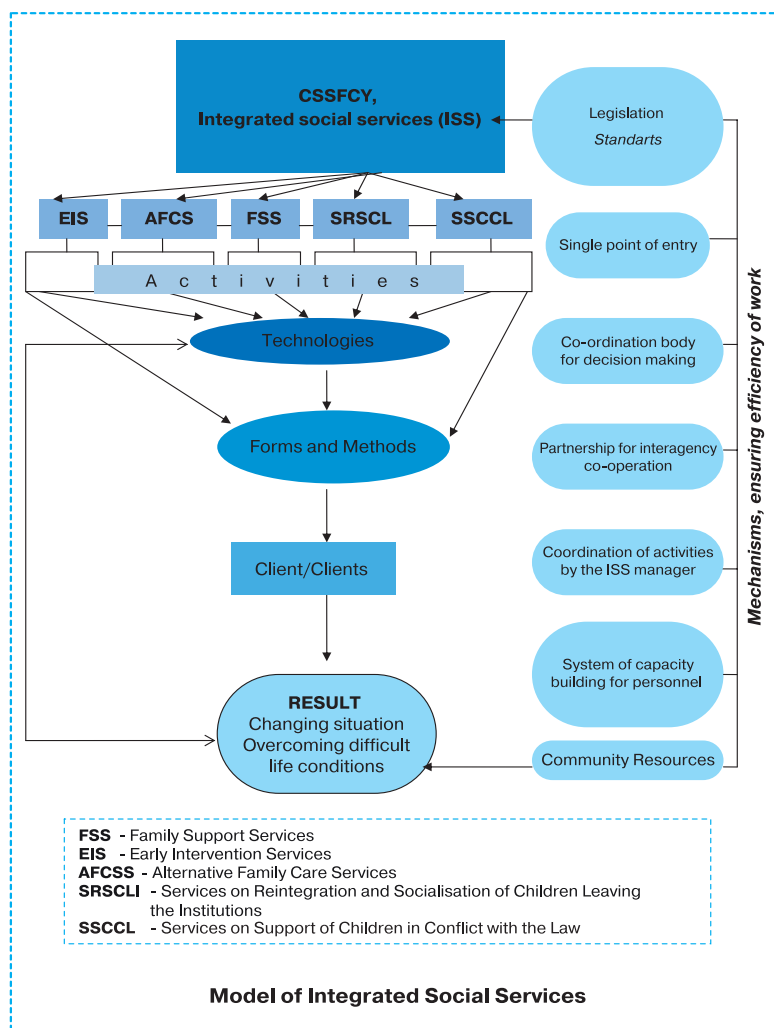
In general, the model of integrated social services can be represented with the following scheme:

FACTS and FIGURES

Kyiv oblast consists of **35 rayon** and city administrations. Its total population is **1 751 126** people, total child population **321 021**¹. During Project implementation:

- ▶ Specialist social services providing help to vulnerable children and families were developed in 24 rayons and 10 towns of Kyiv oblast
- ▶ One-Window Integrated Social Services developed in Brovary city and Vysnhorod rayon
- ▶ 36% reduction in the number of children separated from their families because of deprivation of parental rights (2005-2006)
- ▶ 29 foster families and 4 family type children homes were developed
- ▶ 42 children placed in foster care and 153 children adopted nationally
- ▶ 182 children re-integrated to their birth families
- ▶ Kyiv oblast Training Centre was established, 26 trainers were trained on different aspects of the social work with families and children
- ▶ Two-fold increase in personnel of the Centres of Social Services for Family, Children and Youth
- ▶ 95 computers and photocopiers, 40 sets of office furniture, and 43 vehicles were procured for the social services
- ▶ Within the project framework local authorities allocated around 1,000,000 UAH for the direct financial help for vulnerable families and children

¹Data provided by Kyiv oblast Department for Family and Youth and Kyiv oblast Service for Children (formerly Service for Minors) as of 09.08.07



Based on the materials of the book
 "Integrated Social Services: theory, practice, innovations"



SUCCESS STORIES

Looking at the lovely 3 year old Bohdana now, it's hard to imagine that when she was born the hospital staff decided not to register her because they were so sure she wouldn't survive. She weighed less than one kilo and had been abandoned by her mother.

Maryna and Yevhen P. have daughter Dasha, who is 6 years old. The family have been very involved in charitable activities not only providing material assistance to children but also much needed care and attention. So it was not surprising when it occurred to Yevhen that they might foster a child. It took Maryna and Yevhen almost a year to consider their intentions, make their decision and begin negotiations. During this time they had met little Bohdana, whom they provided with humanitarian assistance in the hospital - and fell in love with the little girl at once.



Since no one at the hospital recognised Bohdana as having a promising future, her birth was not registered and she had no birth certificate. This caused complications when the P. Family applied to become Bohdana's guardians - she did not legally exist. The medical staff and social workers worked together to obtain her birth certificate. Meanwhile, Maryna and Yevhen kept on visiting little Bohdana in the hospital.



The one person in the family, who had the final decision regarding fostering Bohdana, was their own daughter Dasha, who, while watching TV together with her parents, had seen a film about the children living in Ukraine without parents. It was Dasha who suggested fostering one of these children.

Maryna and Yevhen applied to Brovary City Centre of Social Services for Family, Children and Youth for assistance and following an initial assessment were referred for the training so that they could develop the necessary skills to acquire foster parents status.

Dasha was delighted when her new little sister came home, so delighted that she presented her with a piece of paper saying "this is official permission for Bohdana to live in our family from now on". Happy and affectionate, Bohdana has thrived in her new family and everyone says they cannot imagine what life was like without her.

The family continue to be supported by a social worker, who heads the Centre for Social Services Foster Family Service which was established with the support of EveryChild. She says "each visit to this family is like looking into the cradle of happiness, welfare, joy and hope that every child can be saved and warmed with parental love and care". ■



ALTERNATIVE FAMILY CARE SERVICES

Ensure realisation of the child's right to grow up and develop in family environment through development and support of the family-based solutions for orphans and children deprived of parental care.

The objectives are:

- ✓ to protect rights and interests of children, placed into family-based solutions;
- ✓ to promote re-integration of children from the foster families and family-type children homes into their biological families
- ✓ to promote observance of the state guarantees regarding social protection of the children
- ✓ to ensure realisation of the child's right to grow up and develop in family environment by means of selection and training of the foster parents, caregivers, guardians, adoptive parents and through training of children before their placement in the family-based solutions.

Two years ago Svitlana just couldn't cope any more. Her house was old and in need of repair, she couldn't pay her bills so the gas and electricity had been cut off. Like many people she tried to hide from her problems by drinking. Her neighbours were really worried that Svitlana's children, Anton (11) and Ihor (7) weren't being properly looked after and reported the situation. Someone came to take the brothers to an institution but their Granny refused to let them go.

This was around the time when new social services were being set up and so a Social Worker from the Family Support Service, based in the Centre of Social Services for Family, Children and Youth then became involved with the family. She helped Svitlana to restructure her debts and get the power switched back on, she found her help to stop drinking, and she made sure that friendly neighbours were around to help Svitlana when she felt as if life was getting too difficult.

What a difference two years can make! Now when you visit the family you can see how happy they are. Anton loves showing off his

models and his Mum says he's a great help around the house. Ihor has been at school for a year and is very good at maths and reading. Svitlana has a new boyfriend and he's helping her make repairs to the house. The family



Social Worker says that they are a perfect example of how a little bit of straightforward support can keep children safely with their families. ■

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Provide social support and complex social services for vulnerable families and children.

The objectives are:

- ✓ to promote positive changes in family environment, to enhance parental skills and capacities
- ✓ early intervention and prevention of domestic violence, child trafficking, child's involvement into the worst forms of the child labour
- ✓ to respond urgently towards situations where the child is considered at risk of immediate harm
- ✓ to work with the families and their closest environment in overcoming difficult life conditions, including preventing institutionalisation of children
- ✓ advocacy on behalf of the vulnerable families and children



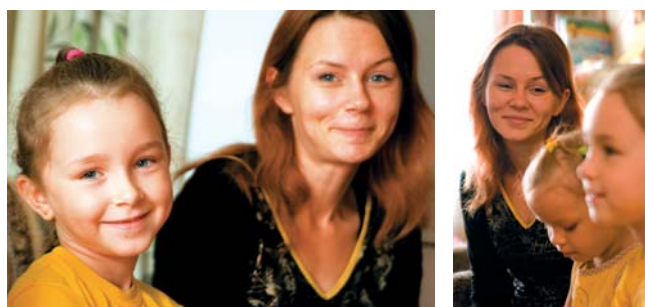
SUCCESS STORIES

These beautiful girls are called Karina, (6 years old) and Diana (she's 3). They live with their Mum, Nataliya and Dad, Victor. They rent one room in a hostel and share the bathrooms and kitchen with other families. It's small but homely and they've even found room for Karina's budge to live with them too.

Not long ago things got very tough for the family. The girl's parents couldn't find jobs and they found life very difficult living on top of each other. They started to drink heavily and began to neglect their daughters. Fortunately one of the neighbours noticed what was going on and alerted Social Services. A Social Worker visited them and after completing her assessment she recommended that Karina go to live temporarily in a local institution. Then she helped Nataliya and Victor to begin to sort out their problems.

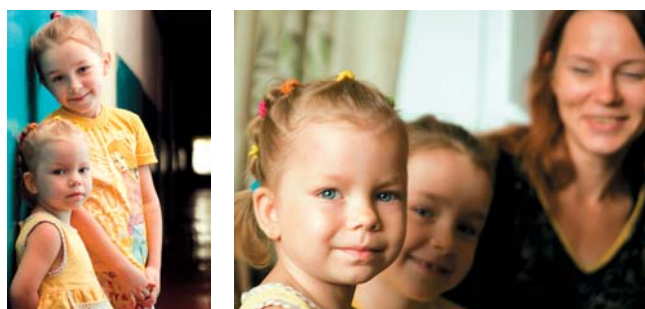
Nataliya was really sad about living without Karina. She knows what it is like to be separated from your family because she and her sister had grown up in an institution. They got moved around at different ages and now Nataliya doesn't know where her sister is. She was really determined to make sure that didn't happen to Karina.

The family is back together now. Nataliya and Victor have stopped drinking, and Victor has a job. They



have decorated their home as nicely as they can and have used some of the girl's paintings to brighten things up even more. Karina can't wait to go to school so she can learn to read properly but Diana says she doesn't need to read because her Dad tells her stories. The local Social Worker is keeping in regular touch with the family to make sure that everything is OK and at the moment Nataliya is very glad of this support. If they hadn't lived in an area where the new types of social care were being developed this family would probably have been permanently separated.

Although in some people's eyes they don't appear to have much, Nataliya and Victor, Karina and Diana are rich in the love and happiness of their life together as a family. ■



SERVICES ON REINTEGRATION AND SOCIALISATION OF CHILDREN LEAVING THE INSTITUTIONS

Provide a range of social services for children leaving institution and their families in order to return them into biological families. They train children leaving institutions for the adult life, establishing their own families and acquiring parental skills.

The objectives are:

- ✓ to renew and strengthen relations of children leaving institutions with their biological parents and relatives
- ✓ to promote return of children leaving institutions into their family environment
- ✓ to train children leaving institutions for the adult life
- ✓ to provide social support for children leaving institutions
- ✓ to promote observance of the state guarantees regarding social protection of the orphans and children deprived of parental care

When Lyudmyla was 5 she was separated from her parents because of deprivation of parental rights and placed in a children's home. She stayed there until she was 17 when she took up a place at a vocational training college.

When she became pregnant the college staff, who had heard about the new types of social services, made a referral to the local Centre for Social Services for Children and Youth. A social worker came to visit Lyudmyla but found that the girl was depressed and rejected any kind of contact, help or assistance. She had no contact with the father of the baby and the social worker, taking this into consideration along with Lyudmyla's background in institutional care and currently



unsuitable living conditions considered that there was a real risk that the baby would be abandoned.

Since Lyudmyla was still under age the social worker had a mandatory responsibility to continue to supervise and support her and over time gained the girls trust. She helped her to re-establish contact with her mother and sister, registered her at the maternity centres and liaised with Service for Children on her behalf. Lyudmyla's confidence began to grow as she received continued support and after the baby was born she was helped to register the birth and apply for social benefits and allowances. The social worker also helped her to think about her responsibilities as a mother and helped her to develop her parenting skills. At the

moment Lyudmyla and her baby are living together in the Kyiv oblast Mother and Baby Unit, whilst they wait for new accommodation.

The early and timely intervention of the Centre for Social Services has meant that this family stayed together. ■

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

Promote aware and responsible attitude of young people towards establishing families and upbringing children. Provide social support for the young families with children.

The objectives are:

- ✓ to promote basic values of responsible parenthood among youth
- ✓ to promote healthy lifestyle as one of the reasons for the family welfare
- ✓ to support young families in full development of their children
- ✓ to prevent abandonment of the babies by their mothers

Full permission for publication of their stories and photographs has been provided by all the families featured; in some cases names have been changed. These success stories were provided by the social workers from the social services developed in Kyiv oblast within the framework of the EU Project.



CURRENT ACTIVITIES

> *An objective evaluation of the Project was commissioned in order to identify progress, achievements and lessons learned. In August 2007 the EU Project was assessed by Ian Sparks, EU Project Senior Expert Social Care Development (former Chief Executive The Children's Society UK). Currently he is writing a detailed evaluation report but these are some of the headlines from his visit, which Mr. Sparks kindly provided for the readers of our Newsletter.*



Ian Sparks,
EU Project Senior Expert
Social Care Development

At the end of August 2007 I completed a series of visits and interviews with people in Kyiv oblast about the EU Project 'Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children'. I have interviewed 40 people ranging from the Deputy Minister of Ukraine for Family, Youth and Sport Mrs. Svitlana Tolstoukhova to a wonderful foster mother, Julie, in Dymyr Village (Vyshgorod rayon).

My main question was whether the project had worked and, if so, why.

Everybody was convinced that the project had been a success. One reason for this was that the project team had prepared well and had involved all of the bodies necessary to achieve its objectives. I saw this during my visit that all sorts of people – including Deputy Governor of Kyiv Oblast Administration Mr. Valeriy Kondruk, the Heads of State Administration in Baryshivka and Vyshgorod rayons, Mr. Sergiy Vasylykivskyy and Mr. Oleksandr Lavrenyuk and the Head of the Village Council in Korzhi, Mrs. Iryna Stomachenko, all knew about the project in detail and were enthusiastic about its work.

With so much positive feeling about the project I asked people what were the best things about it. Here are some of

their replies:

- The high quality of the staff of the project.
- The project's ability to bring together the work of different Ministries.
- The project has changed attitudes - "we now see each child as an individual needing to be in a family".
- The focus on real children and their families such as the development of individual assessments.
- Social work practice has been raised to a higher level.
- Technical support – cars, computers, office furniture have helped people to work more efficiently.

I agree with these points but I would add a few of my own.

The work that has been done on preventing the abandonment of babies in maternity hospitals is vital. We know from research that children who are without families for the first three years of their life do not develop fully either intellectually or socially and they then suffer throughout the rest of their lives.

The practicality and energy of the social workers is another great benefit. They are still in the early days of their practice and their learning but they are applying what they have learned to the benefit of families. A lot of their work is practical -

sorting out benefits, helping mothers to improve the way they care for their children, dealing with debts – but it is effective. As the Head of State Administration in Baryshivka Rayon Serhiy Vasylykivskyy expressed it "They do practical work not empty philosophy."

I think the best thing the project has done has been to place social workers in some of the villages. This has called for a big change in attitude from Village Councils but they now support this new idea fully. The social workers already live in the villages so they know the local people and they are accepted as one of the village. They are close to the families having problems and, as with all of the social workers, they are practical in what they do.

As the project comes to an end there are challenges for the Ministries and the Oblast in building on what has been achieved so far. But there is one huge challenge to be tackled. Everyone involved in the project is convinced that children thrive best in families. Despite this, babies are still going into baby houses, children are still being admitted to institutions and the overwhelming evidence is that almost all of these children could be and should be in families. When that happens we will truly be able to say that this project has been a success. ■



Sergey Polyuk,
Project Manager,
EU Delegation to Ukraine

From the very beginning the aim of the EU Project 'Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children' was to prevent the institutionalisation of children, to provide assistance with developing and improv-

ing legislation, to build the capacity of social workers and to raise awareness of the local authorities about the kind of help that vulnerable children and families in their communities needed. It was also important that plan of action was co-ordinated with the Ukrainian Government. As the Project Manager I can assure you that the main objectives have been reached. There is an inter-agency partnership mechanism established, qualified personnel are trained, and there are clear results of the work undertaken.

This Project has shown that using the same resources, but applying new approaches and methods, Ukraine has the possibility to improve the system of social protection, and at the same time to change public attitudes towards social work.



ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE PUBLICATIONS



Training Programme for the social workers of integrated social services

We are pleased to introduce a Training Programme for social workers of integrated social services. Prepared within the framework of the EU Project, the Training Programme aims to enhance the professional competency

of social workers of the Integrated Social Services in Kyiv oblast as well as to promote multi-agency working in the social sector. The material includes theory and practice alongside case studies of work with families with children. This publication is for social workers and managers of Centres for Social Services as well as representatives of the NGO sector, state authorities and local self-government. ■



Manual "Integrated social services: theory, practice and innovations"

This book deals with the theoretical and practical aspects of the development and implementation of integrated social services based in the systems of the Centres of Social Services for Families, Children and Youth. It covers innovative technologies of social work with vulnerable families and children. All the materials have been tested and piloted in Kyiv oblast during the implementation of the EU

Project 'Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children'. The book contains an introduction, four chapters of theoretical background, a training programme for social workers of integrated social services, and annexes and training modules presented on a CD.

This publication is aimed at practical social workers, students of higher educational institutions, and representatives of the NGO sector. ■



Manual 'Assessment of the Needs of the Children and their Families'

The book brings together approaches in conducting assessment of the needs of children and families. It identifies the main principles of assessment, the components, stages and methods. The publication represents not only the theory of the assessment process in general but specific methods which have been developed and tested within the framework of the EU Project "Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and

Children". Forms for the assessment of children of different ages are attached to the manual on CD. These forms have been developed using international experience and will be further adapted for use in Ukraine.

This publication is aimed at social workers and managers of Centres for Social Services for Families, Children and Youth as well as higher education institutions, representatives of the NGO sector, state authorities and local self-government. ■

In the framework of the EU Project, Legal Experts produced a Monthly Digest of legislative updates and information in connection with child welfare services. They included:

- The Law of Ukraine "On Social Work"
- Regulations on the social support to foster families and family-type children homes
- Decree "On approval procedures of for-

ming, conducting and using the State database of vulnerable families"

- Training Programme for the foster parents and caregivers
- Regulations on providing guardianship to orphans and children deprived of parental care
- State Programme of Reforming the State Care Institutions

- State Programme 'National Plan of Actions to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child during 2007 - 2016'

These reports can be downloaded in both English and Ukrainian from the Project website: http://www.everychild.org.ua/en/library/legal_digest/.

You can read the electronic version of the newsletter on the project web-site: <http://www.everychild.org.ua/en/library/bulletin/>.

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