

**Development of Integrated Social Services
for Exposed Families and Children**

**Study Tour - Development of the Legislation and Regulations for
Implementation of the Money Follows Child Mechanism**

27 August – 3 September 2006

Report on the Study Tour

Introduction

The objective of the Study Tour was to support the Ministry of Family Youth and Sports to develop the mechanism for the implementation of the legislation and regulations for the Money Follows Child Mechanism (MFC) as indicated in the Presidential Decree No.1086/2005 11 July 2005, Instruction of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No.35930/1/1-05 19 July 2005 and the Law of Ukraine "On Provision of Organisational and Legal Conditions for the Social Protection of Orphans and Children Deprived of Parental Care" No. 2342 13 January 2005..

The project Developing Integrated Social Services for Exposed Children and Families is financed by the European Union and implemented by the EveryChild Consortium. Its 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 for Children Family and Youth in developing and implementing efficient integrated social services able to provide effective support for vulnerable families and children.

The project has the following three **Specific Project Objectives (SPOs)**:

- SPO 1: To develop and implement in the pilot region a basic package of social services for exposed families and children
- SPO 2: To provide assistance to the Ministry for Youth Affairs and Sport and its State Social Services for Children 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.
- SPO 3 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.

The main project partner is State Social Services for Family, Children and Youth as part of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of Ukraine. Kyiv oblast and its relevant departments, which have responsibility for the care of vulnerable children, is another important partner with whom the project works closely.

The study tour focused on learning in the sphere of legislative development, structural change within systems of management of services by State authorities and financial supports for vulnerable children, orphans and children deprived of parental care. The visit has been organised on the basis of formal and informal meetings with the opportunity to see the development of practice as well as policy. Demonstrating the links between policy and practice and funding, the visits developed the participants' knowledge base and equip them to deliver realistic and effective policy within Ukraine. The visit referenced the practice and experience of other European countries like Sweden, Denmark etc. and relevant European and international standards and conventions

In practical terms all planned visits demonstrated this within the context of social support (both social work support and social benefits) to families in crisis to prevent family breakdown and alternative family type care.

The visit provided opportunities for participants to learn about children's social services in the Republic of Latvia in particular:

- mechanisms and systems for inter-ministerial and inter-departmental working and cooperation to promote an integrated approach to service provision with specific reference to the linkages between policy development, implementation and finance
- the development and application of legislation to support community based care services for vulnerable families and children
- inspection, monitoring and evaluation - systems and methods
- funding mechanisms for redirection and targeting of resources
- knowledge and skills management within organisations to support change

The participants on the tour reflected the range of stakeholders involved in financing state support to children and families,

Fedir Grytsenko, Deputy Director of the Department of Adoption and Child Rights Protection, Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport

Galyna Vasheka, Deputy Director of the Department, Ministry of Finances

Larysa Hurkovska, Head of Service for Minors, Kyiv Oblast State Administration

Nadia Riazanova, Director of Division, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Victoria Rudenko, Director of Unit, Department of Labour and Social Protection of the Kyiv Oblast State Administration

Olena Vakulenko, Academic Secretary, State Institute of Family and Youth Affairs

Iryna Osadcha, Director of Finance and Economics Division, State Social Service for Family, Children and Youth

Natalia Synelnyk, Principal Financial Expert, Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport

Tetyana Khimchenko, Deputy Director, EveryChild Ukraine

Victor Karpenko, Counterpart Team Leader, EU Project Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children

Study Tour Programme

The content of the Study Tour was designed to address the key objectives of the project. Primarily, the programme concentrated on legislative development, structural change within systems of management of services by State authorities and financial support for vulnerable children, orphans and children deprived of parental care.

The programme covered five main areas:

- the system and mechanism in the field of children and family rights protection;
- structure of state bodies responsible for social protection of children on the national (ministries and agencies) and regional levels;
- system of social protection of families with children;
- legislation and regulations regarding placement and upbringing of orphans and children deprived of parental care;
- system of placement and upbringing of children (adoption, care and guardianship, institutions, family type services, others).

The programme also looked at the financial mechanism of social protection of families with children:

- social allowances for families with children;
- planning, allocation and spending of funds for placement and upbringing of children;
- mechanisms of financing of vulnerable children.

Outline of the Visits made and discussions held - see Annex 1 – Study Tour Agenda.

Details of the Visits made and discussions held

Ministry of Family and Children Affairs

The Study Tour opened with a meeting with the representatives of the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. At this meeting the following issues have been addressed:

1. Objectives and tasks of the Ministry;
2. Forms of out-of family care – legislation and procedure of financial support for vulnerable children:
 - Adoption
 - Guardianship
 - Foster families
 - Institutions
3. Social guarantees for children deprived of parental care;
4. System of child rights protection:
 - Legislation on child rights protection
 - Institutional system of child rights protection
5. The role and functions of the Inspection of Child Rights Protection and activity of “Children Hotline”
6. Objectives and tasks of the Maintenance Guarantee Fund providing social guarantees for families

Key Lessons learnt

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is very active in development and promotion of the family type services for children, mainly national adoption and fostering. The following problems in Latvia were the most important to solve in the introduction of such services:

1. General attitude of the public and policy makers to the system of state institutions. It was a firmly held belief idea that these institutions are very effective in provision of care for and support all needs of children. The children themselves were considered as “special” and in need of isolation from society.
2. Attitude of staff of institutions and their opposition to any reform. A lot of training and information activities were conducted to explain them a necessity of changes and their possible new roles in provision of family type services.
3. Legislation and regulations in the area of the support of families and children had to be improved to correspond to the norms and standards of the European Union.

These three directions provided the basis for the development of the deinstitutionalisation strategy in the Republic of Latvia.

It was very informative and interesting for the participants to learn about activities of such institutions as the Inspection of Child Rights Protection and the Maintenance Guarantee Fund which are working under supervision of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.

Ministry of Welfare

On Tuesday 29 August study tour participants visited the Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia. The activities of this Ministry are similar to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of Ukraine. The presentations were focused on the following topics:

- Social guarantee system for families and children in Latvia in general;
- Social assistance in Latvia – legislation and institutional mechanisms
- Social services in Latvia - legislation and institutional mechanisms
- Implementation of the MFC mechanism in Latvia

After presentations and discussion participants visited municipal orphanage in Plavnieki region of Riga. This visit gave a possibility to learn practical aspects of the operation of municipal institution providing care for orphans, its services and financing.

Key Lessons learnt

According to the information of the Ministry of Welfare there are two main principles of the MFC mechanism in Latvia:

1. provision of social services on the basis of purchase of service from appropriate service provider, and
2. delegation of financial functions to the level of the local self-governance.

From the point of view of deinstitutionalisation the Ministry of Welfare is using the following main directions:

- Support of the development of social services for vulnerable families with children to prevent possible break down;

- Limiting the maximum number of children in each institution (now the largest orphanage in Latvia has 90 children);
- Provision of re-training possibilities for the staff of institutions enabling them in provision of new family-type services

According to the Director of the municipal orphanage in Plavnieki the main priority of this institution is to prepare children for the national adoption. She also emphasised the importance of the trainings provided for the staff which demonstrated them possibility to work effectively in new environment without prospective to lose a job.

Social and financial support of families and children in the health and education sectors

On Wednesday 30 August meetings were conducted with the representatives of the Ministries of Health and Education and Science. At these meetings participants were presented with the main principals of operation and financing of health care and education services in Latvia both on national and local levels.

Key Lessons learnt

These meetings have demonstrated once more the role of the local self-governance in provision of services for children and families. Both in education and health MFC mechanism is being implemented on the basis of agreements between the municipalities and this or that municipality has a choice either to provide service for community members or to “buy” appropriate service from another municipality.

Municipality of Riga

On Thursday 31 August participants of the tour had meetings at the Riga municipality. These meetings provided information about experience of Riga in provision of social services and social assistance for families with children.

Chairperson of the Riga Orphan Court provided presentation about this municipal institution which is playing the leading role in Latvia in the issues of children care and guardianship. Orphan Court is similar to such Ukrainian institution as the Service for Minors, but its functions are wider and more advanced. It is responsible for such issues as adoption, care and guardianship, establishment of fostering families, deprivation and restoration of parental rights etc. The main principal of the Orphan Court is the best interest of a child and its decisions are obligatory for appropriate body of self-governance. In its activities the Court is cooperating constantly with the representatives of the Inspection of Child Rights Protection, social services, education, health etc.

Key Lessons learnt

Meetings in the Municipality of Riga provided information about the practical use of the MFC mechanism on the level of self-government. According to the Deputy Director of the Social Department the main priority is given to the assessment of current needs and planning of the future expenses, because city budget for social sector is being allocated not on the basis of potential clients, but on the basis of the services to be provided. Also the importance of inter-agency cooperation has been highlighted, first of all with such institutions as Orphan Court.

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Internal meeting of the participants of the study tour

In preparation of the study tour the national finance expert of the project developed two documents describing possible approaches to the MFC mechanism (see Annex 2 and 3) and some practical tasks for participants (see Annex 4). After meetings on Thursday 31 August participants of the study tour conducted a meeting to discuss these documents and to assess preliminary results of the tour.

Key Lessons learnt

See Minutes of the meeting – Annex 5.

Social and Financial Support of Families and Children on the Local Level (visit to the city of Rezekne)

On Friday 1 September a visit has been conducted to the city of Rezekne situated about 240 kilometres far from Riga. The main goal of this visit was to learn how social and financial support was provided for families and children on the level of the local self governance. The following institutions were visited in Rezekne:

- Municipal orphanage
- Social day care centre “Special Child”
- Family support centre

Director of the Social Service Department of the Rezekne municipality provided general overview of services available for children and families. Social Service as a department of municipality operates for ten years. At the initial stage they simply provided social allowances to their clients. But after learning experience of other countries like Denmark, Sweden and others, they started introduction of family-type preventive services. Now they use the “single-entry” model of integrated social services when a social worker provides registration, data entry and paper work for all cases of provision of social services.

Key Lessons learnt

A model of activities of Social Service of the city of Rezekne is very similar to the model of the integrated social services being provided by the EU Project in the Kyiv Oblast and demonstrates effectiveness of such approach both in social and financial terms.

There are such interesting forms of short-term fostering in Rezekne as weekend and summer foster families. These forms provide a possibility for orphans to get an experience to live in family and get live skills. And for many of orphans such service is the initial stage for future adoption.

Evaluation of the Study Tour by its Participants

All the participants evaluated the Study Tour as interesting and useful (see Annex 6). All of them liked the proposed agenda and content of the presentations and discussions. They found this tour not only interesting from the professional point of

view but also as an opportunity to learn culture, history and people of the Republic of Latvia.

Extended meeting of the working group on development of “Money Follows Child” mechanism

As a follow-up of the study tour an extended meeting of the working group on development of the Money Follows Child Mechanism was conducted on 13 September 2006 (see agenda and list of participants – Annex 7 and 8).

The purpose of the meeting was to bring together representatives of the institutions involved in MFC development.

1. The main goal of the meeting was to consider current status of the MFC development and results of the study tour to Latvia on MFC. Main presenters were Liudmyla Volynets, Olena Vakulenko, Larysa Hurkovska and others. After the presentations discussion started with participation of both Ukrainian counterparts and experts of EU Project.

Conclusions of the meeting:

Study Tour to Latvia has been recognized as very interesting and useful. Some approaches and mechanisms will be used by the working group in the process of the development.

There are still many questions to be answered. To clarify a situation the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport together with the Institute of Family and Youth and Kyiv Oblast State Administration should develop more specific plan of actions for the period from now till the end of the year. EU and national experts of the Project will provide the working group with their observations and recommendations.

The Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport has developed a document describing MFC legal status and international experience (this part is based on the report of Beate Gross). This document is available in Ukrainian and has been distributed at the meeting and participants were requested to provide their comments, updates and changes.