

# Partnerships for Every Child

## Activity Report

2014 – 2017



## ABOUT US

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The Nonprofit Organization Partnerships for Every Child (P4EC) is a localized entity of 'EveryChild Moldova' and has a clear record of over 23 years in developing and strengthening child care and protection policies, systems, services in Moldova. P4EC has been instrumental in supporting local and central authorities to reform the childcare system, supporting legislative and policy change, developing alternative childcare services, and providing extensive capacity building opportunities to social work practitioners at local and national levels. P4EC has supported the Government of Moldova to reorganize/close 20 large-scale residential institutions and develop inclusive education programs for children with special needs, develop an integrated social service system, cash benefit system for vulnerable households, inter-agency collaboration mechanism on child protection issues and primary prevention; as well as establishment of a range of preventive programs for marginalized children, youth & families.

### Vision

A world where every child enjoys the right to a childhood in a safe and caring family, free from poverty, violence and exploitation.

### Mission

We work to give vulnerable children who are, or risk being, separated from their family or community a safe and secure future. We empower children, their families, communities and authorities to create opportunities for a better life:

- We give children the chance to grow up in loving families and communities – we help to strengthen families to prevent children from being separated.
- We help children getting back into families – wherever we can, we reunite children on their own with their families; when this is not possible or against the child's best interest, we help them get into alternative family-based care.
- We protect children from abuse, discrimination and exploitation – when children are living without the care and safety of a family, most at risk of violence, abuse or exploitation, we protect them with crisis care and support.
- We make sure children are heard – we help children, their families and communities speak for themselves, take part in decisions, which affect their lives, and find lasting solutions to their problems.
- We learn to do better – we innovate to bring about lasting, positive change and then share what works with communities and governments to bring about lasting, positive change.

### Main strategic directions

**Keeping families together.** We give children the chance to grow up in loving families and communities. We help strengthening families' abilities to keep their children at home and offer them love, warmth and the best possible care and protection. We also support children and parents to reunite after a long period of separation.

**Helping babies stay with their parents and making baby homes history.** We help babies who are abandoned or at risk of being abandoned by their parents to continue to live in safe and secure own or alternative families. We believe that nurturing relationships since the first moments of live are vital to healthy development. We support and encourage communities, authorities and civil society organizations to strengthen the capacities of young parents, build up their parental skills and put in place effective early intervention services to support babies' healthy development in a family environment.

**Getting children into safe alternative families.** We support central and local authorities to help children who lost the care of their parents to find new caring and safe families.

**Ensuring institutional care is used as a last resort.** We support local and central authorities to assess a number of large-scale institutions to establish and implement transformation or closure plans. We have supported the closure/transformation of 20 institutions into community-based social services.

**Ensuring social/educational inclusion of children.** We support central and local government, civil society and other stakeholders' efforts to bring about greater social inclusion of marginalized children and their families, ensuring those who are excluded due to different reasons are able to exercise their rights.

**Building child participation.** Children are the experts of their lives. They know best what support should be developed and delivered to them and their families. Many professionals in Moldova are still reluctant to listen to young people in care nor do they see the need for it. The more we start to build a movement for the children in care, the better it is in terms of reaching policy makers and pushing on for innovative policy and practice.

**Commitment to protect children from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.** We encourage the authorities to bear primary responsibility for preventing and responding to violence against children, to implement actions in all sectors. Establishing and maintaining a child safe environment is the main consideration in all our activities, including the services that are developed at local level for children and families. We help central and local authorities and the civil society to improve the understanding of the problem, to build the evidence base on this phenomenon, and devise multi-disciplinary and inter-sectorial strategies, services and policies to address family violence, child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

## Our people

Our employees are the most valuable resource of the organization. The total number of staff is 29 persons. P4EC has a consolidated team with vast experience, known to local and international stakeholders. The team has a strong image in the Republic of Moldova as an organization that has been implementing important reform projects, providing consultancy, as well as delivering services to children and families. The team has solid relationships of collaboration with local and central government authorities and has a positive reputation among international agencies. The team is one of the main players in the civil society, being the founders/active members of different Alliances.

## Partnerships

P4EC's partners includes the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Local authority partners: Chisinau Municipal Directorate for Child's Rights Protection, district Councils of Cahul, Calarasi, Falesti, Orhei, Ungheni, Telenesti, Singerei, Causeni, Nisporeni, Rezina and Sorooca, Tiraspol.

Local and International organizations and NGOs: Lumos, CCF Moldova, Keystone Human Services International, Terre des hommes, NCCAP, Alliance for the Protection of Children and Families, Oxford Policy Management Ltd, Mellow Parenting Foundation, HealthProm, the Alliance International Centre for Therapeutic Care, etc.

## Donors

The programs implemented by the organization were supported financially by UNICEF, USAID, European Union, World Childhood Foundation, Oak Foundation and other donors. The local donors and supporters include a number of private companies, such as Union Fenosa, Metro Cash&Carry, Fourchette and others.

Important assistance comes from private donors and individuals who permanently support P4EC through their donations into the boxes placed in shopping networks.

It is very important to mention the partnership between P4EC and Moldovan media that has supported P4EC's activity as devoted media partners (for example, Teleradio Moldova public company, Pro TV, TV 7, Jurnal TV, Publika TV, MIR company, Saptamina newspaper and INFO Prim NEO news agency).



## OUR HISTORY

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### 1990s

- 1995** The year when EveryChild started to work in the Republic of Moldova, namely in the Municipality of Chisinau, implementing an EU-funded project (Overture).
- 1997** The Directorate for Child Rights Protection was set up as the first structure of this type in Moldova as a result of the EU project implemented with Chisinau City Hall.
- 1998** The first team of 15 social workers were recruited and trained to pilot the Family Support and Reintegration Service in Chisinau.
- 1999** The first Small-Group Home for children with disabilities without parental care in Chisinau was established. EveryChild extended its activity to Cahul and Tiraspol to replicate the Family Support and Reintegration Service.

### 2000s

- 2000** The first Foster Care Service pilot was launched in Chisinau, in collaboration with the Directorate for Child Rights Protection;

**2002** The first Day-Care Center for children with disabilities was opened in Cahul, in collaboration with UNICEF and Cahul local authorities.

The EveryChild program was extended to the 4<sup>th</sup> region - Ungheni district, implementing, in collaboration with UNICEF and Ungheni District Council, a program for the development of integrated social services for children and families.

**2003** The Republican Center for street children was reorganized into a child-friendly service.

Every Child started to implement a large EU-funded Tacis Project "Capacity building in social policy reform".

**2004** The EveryChild program extended to the 5<sup>th</sup> region – Orhei district. The gate-keeping legislation and methodology was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and tested in 3 districts.

**2005** A successful awareness raising and advocacy campaign on the need to reform the childcare system was implemented, with the slogan "Call Your Future Back Home".

The Expenditure Analysis of Residential Care of Children in the Republic of Moldova and Cost Benefit Analysis of Residential Care and Community Services were carried out. The findings were presented to the national government to influence changes in the system. The first 3 institutions were assessed and local level strategies to reform the child care system were developed.

**2006** The national reform on reorganization of the residential childcare system was launched by the President of the country at a national conference organized by EveryChild, in collaboration with UNICEF and the President's Office.

A comprehensive package of gate-keeping and family-based alternative services were developed in 3 districts and the lessons were disseminated to 50% of districts of Moldova, 2432 children from 3 districts were prevented from institutionalization, 245 children were reintegrated with their parents and 55 children were placed in foster care. The EveryChild program extended to the 6<sup>th</sup> district – Soroca, supporting the local authorities to develop an integrated system of social services for children and families.

**2007** The first residential institution was closed in Cahul as a result of EveryChild and UNICEF advocacy campaign. The second institution (also in Cahul) began the transformation process.

The Gate-keeping and Foster Care Regulations were approved by the Government. This legislation facilitated the reduction of the number of children in residential care.

The implementation in Chisinau and Ungheni of a program to prevent abandonment of children at birth was launched.

EveryChild, in collaboration with UK-based Oxford Policy Management, started a project funded by DFID and SIDA "Support to the development of effective and efficient social assistance services" to support the Government to implement social assistance reform.

**2008** The National Program for the Development of the Integrated Social Service System and Foster Care Quality Standards were approved by the Moldovan Government.

The Law and Regulations on Social Aid (means-tested benefit) were approved by the Parliament. 9 more districts established the gate-keeping system as a result of the approval of the national legislation.

**2009** The Law on Social Services was approved by the Parliament. The cash benefit legislation is implemented nationally; monthly around 16,000 households (most of them families with children) received financial support.

The Parent-and-Baby Units established in Ungheni and Chisinau become fully operational providing specialized support to babies and their parents to prevent abandonment.

In Cahul, the first phase of the reorganization of the institution finalized: all children were integrated into mainstream schools; 47 children out of 131 were reintegrated with biological and extended families, a small scale family-type placement center was established and fully operational.

## 2010s

**2010** A model of inclusive education for children with special needs placed in residential care was piloted (in Falesti and Ungheni); 91 children were reintegrated or placed into alternative family care and integrated into mainstream schools; 148 headmasters and deputy-headmasters of 74 community schools in 2 districts were trained in inclusive education;

80-hours training to 800 community social workers and 220 employees of the Community Social Assistance Service and Home Care Service nationwide was provided with DFID support in collaboration with OPM and Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family. 8 more districts were covered by providing technical assistance to local authorities in the development of foster care and gate-keeping system.

EveryChild started to implement the USAID-funded Project “Protecting children of Moldova from family separation, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation”, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child, Ministry of Education and local authorities in Calarasi, Falesti and Ungheni, working in 7 residential institutions for children and developing gate-keeping and family based alternative system.

**2011** An Action Plan on implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children was developed based on the analysis of national legislation and integrated in the governmental action plan. A Child Friendly version of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children was developed by children, published and distributed.

EveryChild extended its program on residential care reform and development of community-based family-type services to 2 new districts: Singerei and Telenesti. 5 out of 8 residential institutions in 4 districts were closed. 322 children were reintegrated with their families or placed into alternative family care. In addition, 112 children placed in the institution for hard-of-hearing children and 126 children from the health facility for children infected or affected by tuberculosis were assessed and care plans were devised.

77 schools from the three pilot sites were supported to pilot the inclusive education model for children with special educational needs.

In Cahul, a Community Center for Children and Young People was established. It includes Social Apartments for care leavers and Vocational Workshops: sewing, cooking/confectionery, carpentry and computer literacy. A “Life Skills Educational Program” and a Vocational Program were developed. The capacities of the center’s staff in the provision of permanent support to children and youth in the re/integration in the family, school and community were consolidated.

9 other districts were covered by technical assistance to local authorities in developing foster care and the gate-keeping system. A model of short-break foster care for children with disabilities was developed and tested in two pilot sites – Orhei and Chisinau.

**2012** The Regulation on the reallocation of funds from residential care to social and educational services developed in partnership with Lumos Foundation, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family was approved by the Government;

The Child’s Help Line was designed in collaboration with local authorities and children and piloted in two districts (Falesti and Ungheni); EveryChild model, particularly the Regulation and Minimum Quality Standards were used by MLSPF in the development of the National Child’s Help Line legislation.

An analysis of child protection legislation was carried out. The findings were presented to local and national project partners and were used to develop the new child protection legislation (Law on Special Protection of Children) and its implementation mechanisms such as the inter-agency collaboration on cases of child abuse and neglect.

A survey of the perceptions of professionals and general public, including children, on child abuse and neglect was carried out to identify the attitude towards the concepts of abuse, neglect and exploitation. The survey also included an in-depth analysis of child protection services from the point of view of providing a safe and secure environment for children and their protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as identification of image indicators to help model messages for the future communication campaign.

Partnerships for Every Child was launched officially as a public association.

**2013** The Law on Special Protection of Children at Risk and Children Separated from their Parents was approved by the Parliament. The Instructions on the inter-agency cooperation mechanism for the assistance and monitoring of children – victims and potential victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation, traffic was piloted and proposed for implementation at the national level.

## AREAS OF ACTIVITY AND THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

April 2013 – December 2017

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P4EC continued promoting the right of the child to grow up in a loving family or in a family-like environment. Our priorities continue to be the reduction of the use of residential institutions for children in difficulty, by implementing alternative social services, mainstreaming inclusive education and demonstrating the efficiency of family support in the community and consolidating the capacity and confidence of children and the community in their own forces to control their own future.

Our endeavors were mainly focused on supporting Central and Local Public Authorities in charge with child and family protection to improve their collaboration, to help families strengthen their capacities and to ensure the wellbeing to every child in the country.

Through capacity building, the National Authorities have been supported to develop, approve and implement nationwide a number of national primary and secondary legislative measures including:

- Law 140 on Special Protection of Children and Instructions on the inter-agency cooperation mechanism for the assistance and monitoring of children – victims and potential victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation, traffic;
- The Family Support Regulation and Minimum Quality Standards;
- The revised Foster Care and Gate-Keeping Regulation;
- Inter-ministerial mechanism to review all cases of children proposed for institutionalization;
- Instructions on the inter-agency cooperation mechanism for primary prevention to ensure every child's wellbeing;
- Strategic vision of specialized child protection services by the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family;
- Strategic vision and Action Plan on the development of educational and special support services for hard-of-hearing children and their families.
- Practical guides on Case Management, Family Support Service, Foster Care Service, Gate-Keeping Commission and Professional Supervision;

### *Key achievements in deinstitutionalization and inclusive education of children:*

- 13 residential institutions were assessed. 11 of them were closed;
- 1045 children were assessed and 695 children were deinstitutionalized;
- 11249 children from mainstream schools trained to accept children reintegrated from residential care;
- The capacity of 1073 school administrators and teaching support staff, 105 psycho-pedagogical assistance staff, 207 residential institution staff were built to support deinstitutionalization and inclusion of children in mainstream schools;



### *Key achievements in prevention of children from separation from their families:*

- Over 60000 children were supported to stay with their families, by means of primary and secondary support. Of them, 11600 children were supported to prevent family separation and institutionalization;
- 1423 children who could not be prevented from separation from their families, were supported to be placed in safe and secure alternative family-based care;
- Over 35000 families were supported and strengthened to provide appropriate care to their children by means of primary and secondary support;
- The capacities of 1270 community social workers and over 24000 local decision makers and child protection specialists were built in different topics aimed at improving social services system;
- The Psychosocial Support Program supporting children living in alcohol dependent households (Panda) was developed, tested and implemented in 9 LAs.
- 9 LAs supported to implement the Mellow Parenting Program – an attachment-based and positive approach program, aimed at helping families improve their communication with children and strengthening adults' parenting skills;
- The National Practice Model “Getting it Right for Every Child”, integrating wellbeing and family strengthening approaches developed and piloted in 3 districts and integrated into the national policy.

### *Key achievements in child participation:*

- National and Local Authorities supported to integrate child participation approach into child protection policies, through capacity building, development of relevant local and national policies and establishment of Advisory Boards of Children as child participation platforms.
- 10 district Advisory Boards of Children and 1 National Advisory Board of Children established and trained.
- The initial and follow-up training to 28 members of the NABC and 466 ABC members were provided. The services (Foster Care, Guardianship, Placement and day care centers), the deinstitutionalized children and children with educational special needs were monitored by ABC members.
- The First Summer School for youth-in-foster-care group was organized. Summer Schools for ABC members were organized every year.

### *Key achievements in communication:*

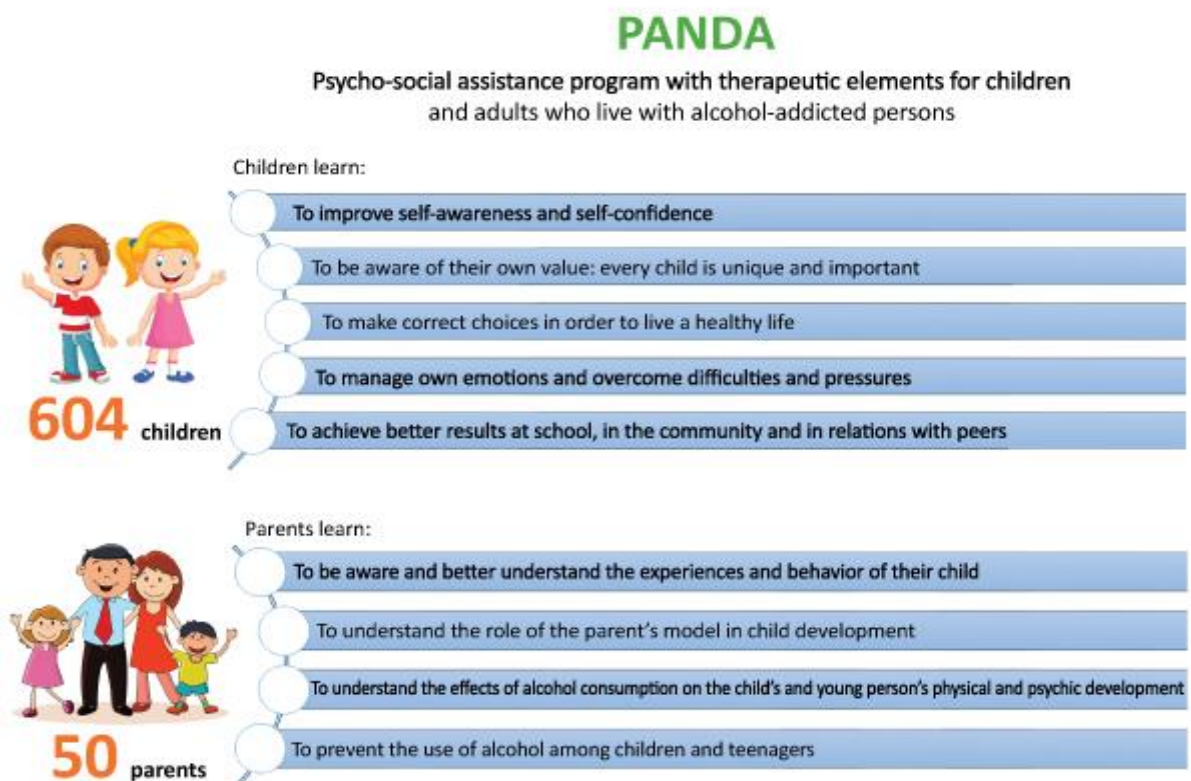
- 11 districts supported to develop their communication plans; national awareness campaign through weekly radio and bimonthly TV programs, TV spots, newsletters, magazines; local decision-makers from 11 districts in communication with the media and planning the communication work; around 300 community social workers from 11 districts trained in communication with the media;

- The e-child web communication platform was developed, uploaded on the web-hosting server and launched (<http://www.e-copil.md/>) with the aim to facilitate the exchange of experience and continuous learning for all those interested in child's wellbeing and family strengthening. The platform hosts a virtual space of interactive communication and is dedicated both to professionals working in child and family protection field as well as parents and children.

## Innovations

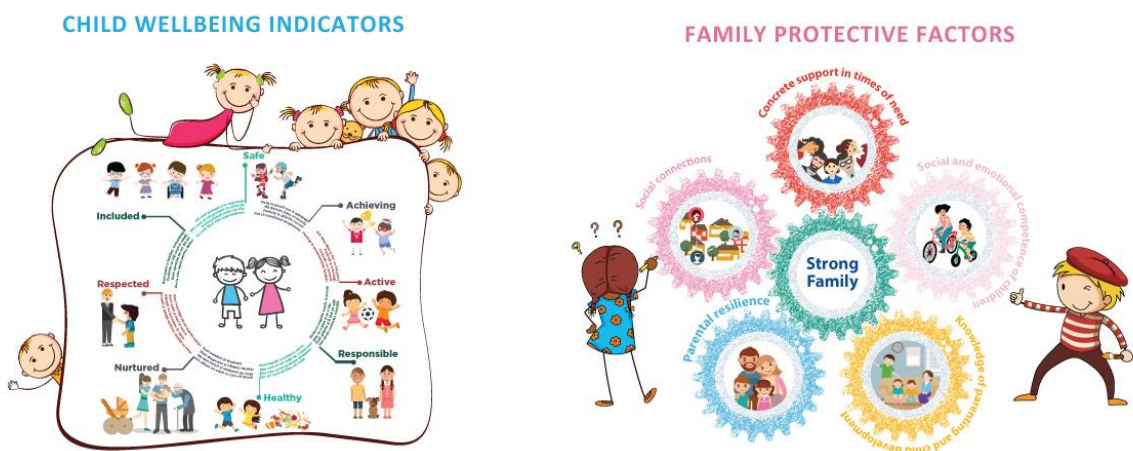
An important organizational approach of P4EC is to learn to do better and bring about lasting, positive change in children's life. In the reporting period, based on the best practices and programs in other countries, P4EC modeled and adapted to the Moldovan context several programs that were tested and integrated into the national child welfare system.

**PANDA** is an evidence-based program of psycho-emotional support with therapeutic elements for children and adults who live in the same environment with an alcohol-addicted person. The outcomes for children are their improved self-image, changed attitude towards their situation and the situation of their family, better achievements at school, in community and among peers, awareness raising on the harmful effects of alcohol consumption, promotion of a healthy lifestyle and prevention of alcohol consumption, etc. The Panda Program was modeled after the Swedish program developed by the NGO Ersta Vandpunkten. The program was piloted and adapted at the national context and integrated into the existing service system by revising the Family Support Regulations.



9 Social Assistance Departments from the pilot districts have fully accepted responsibility for current and future implementation of Panda as part of their teams' responsibilities and service attributes. Panda teams have capacity and skills required to continue implementing the program. National and regional officials and professionals recognize the importance of Panda Program and acknowledge this major service gap. The roll out of PANDA has been particularly effective, as the methodology has seen considerable commitment from local government stakeholders who run and implement this mechanism. Early signs indicate on positive outcomes in children's psychosocial health. The PANDA program innovation is a significant attempt to address alcohol abuse – one of the most challenging protection issues in Moldova and around the world, mainly helping children and parents who live in alcohol co-depending relationships to focus on and care for their own wellbeing, instead of living according to the needs of the alcohol-abusing parent. It is to be noted that PANDA program was recommended for nationwide replication by the UN Committee in the Rights of the Child (in its concluding observations to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> country report<sup>1</sup>).

**National Model of Practice (NMP)** is another innovation developed by P4EC team in partnership with local and national partners that was inspired by Scottish and American experiences. After 3 years of development and testing, P4EC managed to combine child wellbeing and family strengthening approaches into a new methodology for early identification of risks by universal services and social work case management tool for more uniform and clear-cut assessment and action. This tool is adapted from the child wellbeing framework Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) used by the Government of Scotland for the last decade, and a USA family strengthening framework from the NGO Center for the Study of Social Policy, which worked for over 12 years to develop the strengthening families approach that is now broadly used in child and family service systems in the USA and in a number of European countries.



The National Model of Practice (NMP) was developed, piloted and integrated into the existing service provision for children. NMP establishes a mechanism for early identification of risk. The model builds on the earlier joint work foundations of inclusive education and multi-disciplinary team development. The essence of NMP, which is a settled practice in Scotland, is providing the education and health sectors with skills and tools to identify early risk in the settings where they can observe and interact with children – such as schools, clinics and home visits. “Named” or “known” persons are given

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.refworld.org/publisher,CRC,,MDA,5a0ed42e4,0.html>

responsibility to observe or track children or groups of children. As risk is identified, procedures in the NPM then prevent further escalation. Many of the existing services and supports at the local level can potentially be brought into action as needed. NMP was developed with the participation of key government stakeholders in social protection, health, education, law enforcement and others, using the best practices in training leaders and professionals in these sectors in an early identification and coordinated multi-disciplinary response, within a context of preventing risks from escalating to child separation from families, school abandonment and other social crises. The coordination and adaptation of a national practice system will take time, resources and fine-tuning, but it is based on global best practices.

**Mellow Parenting Program** is a new relationship-based early intervention program focused on improving parent-child relationships that is implemented by P4EC and local public authorities with EU and Childhood Foundation support. Mellow Parenting is a 14-week attachment-focused parenting program delivered separately to mothers or fathers and underpinned by the attachment theory, social learning theory and elements of cognitive behavioral therapy. The program's major objectives are: improved parent-child relationship, parental mental health and wellbeing, self-confidence, reduced challenging behavior and increased pro-social behavior among children.

The methodology was piloted in Scotland in 1996 and has spread with many different applications for mothers, fathers, expectant parents and different age groups of children. The Scottish organization began working with P4EC in 2016 to prevent the abandonment of babies and improve support for vulnerable parents to better meet the needs of children. These are parents and children dealing with mental health, substance abuse, child protection and learning disability issues. Reflective and practical techniques are used for parents to address their personal challenges and the challenges they face with their children. Fun activities between parents and children are facilitated. Videos of parent-child interaction are used for strengths-based feedback on positive parent-child engagement. The model does not aim to directly solve the participants' problems but enable collaboration between group members. MP has proved to be an efficient family strengthening program aimed at preventing/removing the factors that can lead to child being at risk. Positive relationship models are demonstrated at various program levels. Evidence in Scotland and Moldova shows increases in parenting confidence and positive behavior with children, decreases in the negative behavior of their children and a reduction in the intensity of interpersonal friction resulting from challenging behavior.

Since 2016, Mellow Parenting has been piloted in eight districts (Cahul, Calarasi, Falesti, Nisporeni, Orhei, Singerei, Sorooca and Ungheni) and in Chisinau. So far, nineteen MP babies' and toddlers' groups have been delivered and evaluated. P4EC and district specialists say that the early signs of this program are promising. The local public authorities place great importance on parenting education and the need for a stronger mechanism and skills to assist vulnerable families and children and Mellow Parenting is a strong complement to prevention and family support services.

**Advisory Boards of Children.** For over 4 years, 10 LAs in Moldova have managed to overcome prejudices related to child participation and their decisions have been closer to children's interests. This has become possible due to the child participation model established in their districts – Advisory Boards of Children (ABC) with P4EC support. ABC act as a partner of the district Social Assistance and Family Protection Departments in the development, evaluation and monitoring of child welfare policies and programs. ABC development was inspired by knowledge accumulated in child participation, particularly in the UK, though it is an innovation of P4EC. Each of the 10 ABCs has about

20 members: children and young people with initiative, from various environments, with various care experiences, with the duty to promote alternative child care and child rights. A similar group of children was established at national level as a key partner of the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family. ABCs identified gaps in service provision, reviewed the existent services, identified the needs for creation of new services, making sure that the opinion of beneficiary children is heard and taken into consideration in decisions on matters affecting them.

## CHILD PARTICIPATION

**28** members of the National Advisory Board of Children (NABC)  
**466** members of 10 Advisory Boards of Children\* (ABC)

**11249** children trained in community schools  
**319** children trained / prepared for reintegration  
**5** training workshops for ABC  
**5** summer schools for ABC



- ✓ Charity acts
- ✓ Awareness activities and promotion of child's rights and social services for children

\*Cahul, Calarasi, Causeni, Falesti, Singerei, Orhei, Ungheni, Soroca, Nisporeni, Telenesti

Government stakeholders report ABC are a welcome addition to better understanding the needs of separated and at-risk children and helping in responding to their needs. ABCs are an innovative means for youth to become involved and advocate for children's rights and needs in protection. Government stakeholders are supportive of ABCs and several districts have undertaken to finance the board after the end of the project. Child protection specialists and district officials say they are learning things about children in foster and guardianship care from ABCs they did not know. This indicates that other district may have an interest in applying this child participation mechanism. It is to be noted that the ABCs model was recommended for nationwide replication by the UN Committee in the Rights of the Child (in its concluding observations to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> country report).

## PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED from April 2013 to December 2017

### Protecting children in Moldova from family separation, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in Moldova funded by USAID

*Period of implementation:* 8/1/2010 — 6/30/2014.

*Cost of the Project:* 2,900,000 USD

*Project goal:*

The Project goal was that 100,000 vulnerable children had improved access to quality social protection services, including systems to prevent and protect against family separation, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Project aimed to provide the authorities of Moldova with assistance to strengthen the child protection system, addressing the needs of vulnerable children and their families, and closing the gaps in their access to quality social services, both preventing family separation and protecting children without parental care, with focus at the national, district and local levels.

*The Project objectives:*

1. National authorities (MoLSPF & MoE) were committed and actively supported the implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in Moldova;
2. 5,000 vulnerable children and their families in Calarasi, Falesti and Ungheni had improved access to high quality family support and family substitute services integrated in the wider social protection context;
3. 1,100 specialists in Calarasi, Falesti and Ungheni had an increased capacity to prevent family separation and provide effective protection to children without parental care;
4. Local authorities in Calarasi, Falesti and Ungheni prioritized meaningful child participation as a means to consult, monitor and evaluate their local child welfare policies;
5. Professional and public attitudes had shifted towards supporting vulnerable families and children to prevent separation and use of family based care as opposed to residential care for children without parental care.

The project met its qualitative and quantitative objectives. It aimed to cover 100,000 institutionalized and vulnerable children through national advocacy and public awareness. Through the new law on special protection of children, family support legislation and the national deinstitutionalization effort, all supported by this project, the chances of strong family care for children in institutions and at risk have greatly improved for Moldovan children. The new law impacts 168,000 children and, in 2013, 3810 children benefitted family support. Seven thousand children have been deinstitutionalized since 2010.

The project exceeded its targets, **directly serving 5,445 children** in vulnerable families, **preventing the institutionalization of over 3,600 children**, and **impacted over 2,800 local decision makers and professionals** through capacity building. The project **enabled to involve all 35 districts of Moldova** in training activities in preparation for the national replication of a number of services. The authorities from target districts were all able to describe future plans, strategies for the coming years, services they plan to develop and how they hope to improve their care systems, including the ongoing participation of children. The project produced a significant number of documents and methodologies that provide the

evidence base, helping to make the case for continued reform and providing the tools for nationwide replication.

National authorities have been supported to develop and finalize a number of national primary and secondary legislative measures.

#### *Key achievements in strengthening legal & policy framework:*

- National Action Plan for the implementation of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (2011);
- National Regulation on the Reallocation of Funds from residential care to community social and educational services (2012) – in partnership with Lumos Foundation;
- Law 140 on the Special Protection of Children (2013);
- National Regulation on the Organization and Operation of the Family Support Service (2013);
- Minimum Quality Standards for the Family Support Service (2014);
- Instructions for the Inter-agency mechanism of cooperation in the identification, evaluation, referral, assistance and monitoring of children victims (and at risk) of violence, neglect, exploitation and trafficking (2014) – project staff contributed;
- National Strategy for Child Protection 2014-2020 (2014) – project staff contributed;
- Revisions to regulations and standards for Foster Care, Gate-Keeping legislation, Small-Group Homes and temporary Placement Centers in approval.

The project placed a major focus on the reorganization of residential institutions, and learning about, testing and documenting the process of deinstitutionalization and development of community-based services in support of the national Master Plan for Deinstitutionalization.

#### *Key achievements in deinstitutionalization and reintegration:*

- 632 children from 8 institutions were assessed;
- 6 residential institutions were closed;
- 425 children in 7 residential institutions were deinstitutionalized;
- 322 families were supported to reintegrate their children;
- 318 deinstitutionalized children were integrated into community schools, 120 of them with Individual Educational Plans and benefitted from support of teaching support staff.

*The project developed and implemented an active communication campaign that aimed at shifting professionals' and people' attitudes on childcare. Newsletters, TV and radio programs were developed to cover the developments in the reorganization of the childcare system in Moldova.*

#### *Innovation of the project*

*Local authorities in 3 districts were supported to develop and approve local child participation policies, child protection policies to ensure safe child participation and build capacities to develop child*

*participation practices, including establishing and strengthening Advisory Boards of Children. Since 2011, the Advisory Boards of Children model was piloted and established in 3 districts as a form of association, where children can be involved in the process related to child rights monitoring, local level service development and monitoring, policy development at national level. Children's voices were seen as an important part of the project and the children in the focus group reported that they felt their voices were listened to and that they were able to raise the voice of children in care. The ABC members developed a child-friendly version of the GACC considered one of the first of its kind globally. The guide is addressed to children in alternative care so that they are able to understand the care they receive and actively participate in the care planning and provision. ABC members helped to raise awareness at the community level and in their schools. Their work helped the reintegrated children from institutions to better cope with school integration, because the ABC members had helped to prepare the school and their peers.*



## Children in Moldova are cared for in safe and secure families funded by USAID

*Period of implementation:* 1/1/2014 — 12/31/2017

*Cost of the Project:* 4,400,000 USD

*Project goal:*

*The Project goal was to improve the safety, wellbeing and development of highly vulnerable children, particularly those who are living without adequate family care.*

*The Project objectives:*

1. Across the country, 100,000 children who were at risk of losing family care, were living with seriously inadequate family care, or were outside family care will have increased chances to stay with their strengthened families or be placed in appropriate, protective and permanent alternative family care;
2. 4000 children prevented from unnecessary separation from their families in 11 districts;
3. 3000 children outside family care in 5 districts live in safe and nurturing families.

The project activities were divided in 4 key development areas focused on policy and legal framework revision, national capacity building, national public awareness raising and local practice development. At the national level, the project worked with the MLSPF, MoE and other relevant ministries to strengthen national child protection systems and to develop and improve social policies to address prevention of family separation and protection of children outside family care. The project also supported these ministries to provide support, guidance and capacity building to all 35 LAs of Moldova and increase general public support to childcare reform in order to ensure that national childcare and protection policies and legislations are implemented appropriately and that these policies are communicated effectively to the general public. At the local level, the project supported 11 LAs to implement family preservation programs aimed at keeping children and families together by strengthening families and increasing their capacities to care for their children, develop alternative family-based care for children and close down large-scale institutions for children, ensuring that children and families have a voice in these processes.

A comprehensive and constant support was provided to key partners to plan strategically and develop strategic visions and plans regarding policy, system and service development. The project worked at all three levels of social service system focusing on the development of primary social services (family support services) and specialized services (alternative family care), reducing reliance on the use of highly specialized services (residential care) and ensuring the distribution of resources from institutions to community-based social and educational services.

This project contributed to consolidate the results of the previous USAID-funded project implemented by P4EC and create opportunities for national expansion and replication. The project provided support to the authorities to develop a holistic system for strengthening and preserving family care for children and to ensure alternative family-based care for children without parental care. The project also fostered among the professionals and the public the importance of family for children by engaging with various

stakeholders to build capacities, strengthen coordination, build services and win public support to childcare reform strengthening the coordination in children's best interest.

*Key achievements in strengthening legal and policy framework:*

- Law on amending several legal acts in line with the Law 140 on special protection of children;
- Government Decisions on the approval of: the revised Regulation of the Gate-keeping Commission; the revised Regulation on Family Support Service and Minimum Quality Standards; the Instruction on inter-agency cooperation mechanism for primary prevention to ensure the wellbeing of children;
- MoLSPF Orders on the approval of a several implementation guides (Family Support Service, Foster Care Service, Gatekeeping Commission, Supervision Mechanism); and on the approval of the revised Case Management and its implementation guide;
- MoLSPF Order on the approval of the Strategic Vision on development of specialized child protection services;
- MoE Order on the approval of the Strategic Vision and Action Plan on the development of the educational system for deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

*Key achievements in deinstitutionalization and inclusive education:*

- 413 children from 7 institutions were assessed;
- 5 residential institutions were closed;
- 270 children were deinstitutionalized: 166 reintegrated into biological families, 59 placed in extended families and 45 placed in alternative family-type services and placement centers;
- The capacities in inclusive education of 545 teaching assistants and managers for inclusive education from 389 schools and 30 persons from the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Service in 11 districts were strengthened;
- The training to accept deinstitutionalized children with special needs was delivered to 11249 children from mainstream schools and their parents;
- The training to prepare 319 children from residential institutions to attend mainstream schools was delivered.

*Key achievements in prevention of child separation from their families:*

- Over 55000 children were supported to stay with their families by means of primary and secondary support. Of them, family separation and institutionalization was prevented for 8000 children;
- 1423 children who could not be prevented from family separation, were supported to be placed in safe and secure alternative family-based care;
- Over 35000 families were supported and strengthened to provide appropriate care to their children by means of primary and secondary support.

### *Key achievements in capacity building (through training across the country):*

- 806 mayors were trained twice in applying the newly approved and revised legislation (on their role as guardianship authority as per Law 140 and on the amendments to a number of legal acts in line with Law 140);
- 556 professionals received initial and follow-up training helping them to understand and implement collaboratively the protocols on child abuse and neglect;
- 373 members of the 35 GKC received initial training on the revised regulation (as per January 2016) and follow-up training on GKS role in foster care and family support services;
- over 1000 community social workers were trained on new case management procedures and family support service, integrating child wellbeing and strengthening families' approaches;
- 108 foster care practitioners, including 23 members of the National Accreditation Council received a training program developed in line with the new Regulations and Quality Standards;
- 75 specialists from Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Service received two trainings: on wellbeing and strengthening families approaches in the direct work with children and families in pre-schools and schools and on planning and time management.

### *Key achievements in child participation:*

- The Regulation of the National Advisory Board of Children (NABC) was developed and approved;
- The Child Participation & Protection Policy was developed and approved by 7 District Councils;
- The ABCs in 10 project districts were established;
- The initial and follow-up training to 28 members of the NABC and 466 ABC members was delivered;
- The services (Foster Care, Guardianship, Placement and day care centers), deinstitutionalized children and children with educational special needs were monitored by ABCs members.

### *Innovation of the project:*

*A new care and support model of strengthening families and communities* to care for children and families was designed around two main approaches – *child wellbeing and strengthening families*. These two approaches were incorporated in the new case management methodology developed for all child care service providers, as well as in the inter-agency mechanism developed for social protection, health, education and police to work together to safeguard child's wellbeing. Throughout the project life:

- the model was piloted in 3 project districts, involving 9 communities (urban and rural), 29 institutions, 5386 professionals, including 256 named persons and around 6000 children; the piloted results was evaluated and the model was adjusted accordingly;
- the training on the new model to about 15000 professionals from education, health, social protection and police sectors across the country was delivered.

*A new Psycho-Social Support Program for children living with alcohol-addicted parents (PANDA program)* was modeled based on a Swedish program developed by the NGO Ersta Vandpunkten and adjusted to

the Moldovan context. The program dealing with alcohol co-depending relationships is based on scientific research and results found through implementation of prevention programs. The PANDA program innovation is a significant attempt to address alcohol abuse – one of the most challenging protection issues in Moldova, and around the world, mainly helping the children and parents loving in alcohol co-depending relationships to focus on and care for their own wellbeing, instead of living according to the needs of an alcohol-abusing parent. Throughout the project life:

- a training program was developed and delivered to 56 facilitators;
- the program was piloted in 1 district; the piloted results were evaluated and the program was adjusted accordingly; the program was replicated in 8 other districts;
- 604 children and 50 parents attended the program;
- 314 community social workers were trained in the aim, theory that underpins the program, how it works and what the benefits of the program are for children and their parents.

*The child participation model* tested and established in the previous USAID project was strengthened and extended to 10 districts of the country. The project incorporated child participation in all its activities. Children and their parents/carers were empowered to influence strategic decisions in the process of developing models of support, care and protection, through their meaningful participation in decision-making and policy dialogue. The project team's tasks were to facilitate the process of communication with children by using a pool of tools and methods and adopting them for individual children.

Due to the establishment of the ABCs, the project has managed to ensure that service users are empowered to influence the decisions that have an impact on their life by developing a framework for meaningful participation of children and their parents/carers in decision-making. The project supported 494 children and young people to express their expert opinions in relation to children's needs in social services and the quality of the provided services. In doing so, the project built the capacities of the LAs to develop and institutionalize sustainable child participation programs. Another most empowering action for children and adults implemented within the project was the activity of the Advisory Boards for Children that was expanded to 10 project districts and at national level. ABCs are groups of children who review services and consult with children who benefit from them, reporting back to the LAs. The LAs use these findings to revise the provision of the childcare services.

*An e-child web communication platform* was developed, uploaded on the web-hosting server and launched (<http://www.e-copil.md/>). In the development process, the project established connections with different stakeholders – potential members of the platform (NGOs, academia, practitioners, media, etc.) and clear cooperation partnerships in exploring the platform as a key tool for promoting child wellbeing and strengthening families. The platform was created especially to facilitate the exchange of experience and continuous learning for all those interested in child wellbeing and family strengthening. The platform is dedicated both to professionals working in child and family protection field and parents and children.

## Establishing child protection systems at local level to ensure the protection of children from abuse, neglect and exploitation in the Republic of Moldova funded by OAK foundation

and co-financed with USAID-funded project, implemented by P4EC in collaboration with Terre des hommes Moldova.

*(Only activities supported by Oak Foundation are shown)*

*Period of implementation:* 06/01/2011 – 02/28/2014

*Cost of the Project:* 541,781 EUR

### *Project goal:*

The Project goal was to improve access for 2000 vulnerable children and their families from Falesti and Ungheni districts to family support and child protection services, including systems to prevent and protect them from family separation, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

### *The Project objectives:*

1. The preventive and protection models of child protection mechanisms designed, tested, incorporated into current service provision and capacities built to integrate these models into the child protection system in Ungheni and Falesti;
2. The professional and public attitudes and behaviors changed from stigmatizing towards supporting vulnerable families and children to prevent child separation, neglect, abuse and exploitation.

### *Key achievements at system level:*

- Prevention models developed and incorporated into local level service provision;
- A mechanism for early identification and prompt intervention developed, tested and proposed for national replication. A common monitoring framework developed and tested at local level;
- Community-based multi-disciplinary groups established and strengthened to support vulnerable children and their families;
- Child protection mainstreamed in childcare service provision at local level;
- Family-based alternative care services strengthened to provide safe care and protection to children who were separated from their birth families due to ANET;
- The Child's Help Line developed and integrated into local level service delivery and mechanism for interagency collaboration on ANET;
- Child participation mainstreamed in child and family service delivery at local level.

### *Key achievements in prevention:*

#### *Children:*

- 5479 children had an increased awareness about ANET (informed);
- 1336 children had an increased capacity to identify and report ANET cases (trained);
- 4040 children including 1105 children victims of ANET were supported through educational programs aimed at building and strengthening cognitive, emotional and social skills;
- 5654 children were supported to prevent abuse, neglect and unnecessary child-family separation through case management work (primary family support service).

#### *Parents:*

- 7880 parents received family support service to prevent abuse, neglect and unnecessary child-family separation;
- 3312 parents were supported through programs aimed at strengthening positive parenting skills.

#### *Professionals:*

- 8550 persons had an increased awareness about ANET;
- 6748 professionals had an increased capacity to identify and report ANET cases and the professionals to successfully resolve the cases.

### *Key achievements in protection:*

- 2033 cases of children at risk or victims of abuse and exploitation were managed;
- 950 cases successfully assisted and closed, 391 of them being highly difficult;
- 774 complex child abuse cases solved through inter-agency collaboration.

The impact of the psychosocial approach is considerable and has a long-range perspective. Children and parents see the psychosocial activities as a way of forming the feeling of confidence and openness and as a possibility to improve the communication based on the mutual knowledge and positive relations. The teachers trained to deliver group activities with children and parents have consolidated their skills of identifying children's needs and building confidence-based relations. All these represent changes in attitudes and behaviors.

### *Project Innovation*

**Local Child's Help Line.** *The project supported local authorities to develop and run a Child's Help Line (CHL).* The creation of CHL created new opportunities for children and adults to report cases of ANET, to access the existing services and, as a result, the network of services and opportunities for the beneficiaries has been extended. Due to the CHL, the usual practice of identification and settlement of cases of ANET, from general community-based services to specialized services located mainly at the district level, has added a new possibility to identify cases by a specialized service and refer them to the community level for assessment and handling. Thus, the functional and operational aspect of the child protection system has started working in two directions – upwards and downwards. The effectiveness of CHL has been consolidated by a massive awareness

raising campaign for adults and children and by displaying materials in all the public places. In addition, the success of the CHL has been ensured through the methodology of operation and strict monitoring of cases until their settlement with a view to create successful experiences for the beneficiaries that will be disseminated by word of mouth as a guarantee of the service efficiency. 1157 calls were received and 416 cases of abuse were identified and solved. The large number of calls demonstrates that it meets people's needs and shows the high level of confidence in this service. The smaller number of calls made by children as compared to adults at the beginning of the process showed that it takes longer to gain children's trust in the service and to change their cultural representations and stereotypes that determine the lack of confidence.

Local authorities have managed to integrate CHL in the service delivery at local level; it is institutionally and financially supported by local authorities. Local authorities highly regard the new service and consider that CHL has considerably improved the identification of ANET and the prompt intervention in these cases. For children, CHL is a new opportunity to report cases or concerns, to receive psychological counselling; it gives a sense of increased protection for children. For professionals: CHL helps to prevent ANET; is a resource/support for the community social workers; has increased identification and settlement of ANET cases; the cases are solved early and promptly; CHL is an additional tool to monitor the activity of professionals from different sectors. For decision-makers: CHL is a catalyst of collaboration; increases the stakeholders' responsibility in the process; has become a tool to monitor the quality of services delivered by different state actors. According to the CHL providers, "CHL is easily accessible, non-stop and corresponds to the needs of children"; "it is free of charge for children and cost-effective for local authorities".

## For a violence free life for children in Moldova funded by Oak Foundation

and co-financed with USAID-funded project, implemented by P4EC in collaboration with Terre des hommes Moldova.

*(Only activities supported by Oak Foundation are shown)*

*Period of implementation:* 1/2/2015 — 1/31/2018

*Cost of the Project:* 274,000 USD

### *Project goal:*

The Project goal was to improve the safety, wellbeing and development of highly vulnerable children, particularly, children without adequate family care and potential victims of abuse, including sexual abuse.

### *The Project objectives:*

1. Improving the legal and technical framework in child care and child protection and strengthening local capacities for its implementation *(co-financed with USAID-funded project)*;
2. Developing replicable community prevention and protection approaches and services for highly vulnerable children and their families;
3. Supporting children to participate in the development of child-friendly programs and services at local and national levels *(co-financed with USAID-funded project)*.

The project consolidated the results achieved in the previous Oak and USAID-funded projects (2010-2014). This project enables translating the considerable policy progress into significant improvement of technical capacities at the national, regional and community level and ultimately delivering better care and protection to children. Further, the portfolio of locally available and easily replicable prevention and protection services, approaches and community level interventions should grow and broaden to ensure that child protection is “owned” in communities and led locally. Finally, it is important that children and young people have a voice in shaping policies and services that concern them.

### *Key achievements:*

#### *Specialized child protection services:*

3 Child Assistance Units (specialized services) to work with victims of abuse were established in 3 pilot districts (Calarasi, Falesti and Ungheni). The design of the service was based on the findings of the needs assessment survey in relation to specialized services conducted with project support. Regulations for the 3 local Child Assistance Centers were developed and approved by the district Councils. The skills of the center staff were built through formal and informal trainings. An initial comprehensive training in child abuse was delivered to the staff of the centers. The skills of the staff of the specialized units in working with children victims or potential victims of abuse were strengthened by the UK company KCA. A 7-day training was delivered in April and December 2017. The training focused on trauma recovery, which integrates narrative, coaching and maladaptive modules.



- 96 children victims of abuse and neglect were supported to overcome the trauma and re-victimization in the newly created services in 3 pilot districts.

The evaluation of the new service established in the districts conducted by P4EC has shown the efficiency of the training program in improving the professionals' skills, including a change of attitude and perception towards the beneficiaries.

*"The training benefited me, I learned many techniques and methods I did not know and I can easily use them" (psychologist, Falesti).*

*"I could not understand why it is so difficult to ask for help when you are a victim, but, after the trainings, I understood that it is very difficult for a victim to make this step and ask for help" (psychologist, Ungheni).*

The service model created in the 3 districts demonstrates synergy between the prevention and assistance services and programs. According to the Centers' managers, the efficiency of the new service is obvious, especially, in combination with the implemented prevention programs (Panda, Mellow Parenting) that bring about changes in parents' attitude towards children by thanking parents for the achieved results. In addition, children realize the importance of a healthy lifestyle, without alcohol and tobacco and their behavior improves.

### *Gender child protection community programs*

The project has formed a network of 62 local professionals/agents of change committed to addressing gender issues in child protection.

- 97 adolescents, including 42 boys, from project communities have improved knowledge about gender equality, leadership, violence prevention and are engaged in promoting gender equality and preventing violence in their communities.
- 4900 children in 28 rural communities benefited from a safe/child friendly space for learning, playing and overcoming gender bar

The project has developed, piloted, and made available on-line and off-line a series of training materials and tools for addressing the gender gap in child protection at the community level. The following training materials and tools were developed as part of the project to promote gender equality, non-violence, and engagement of men and boys in violence prevention:

- Training program/manual for teenagers
- Training program/manual for specialists on "Conscious Gender-Sensitive Parenting"
- Two board games for children under 12 years old aiming to diminish stereotypes and prevent violence and discrimination among children "Memo's world-without stereotypes" and "Buum-stereotypes"

## Supporting local authorities of Moldova to provide alternative family based care to children without parental care, funded by World Childhood Foundation

*Period of implementation:* 4/1/2009 — 3/31/2015

*Cost of the Project:* 350,784 EUR

### *Project goal:*

The right of vulnerable children to be protected and cared for in their own family or in a family type environment which secure the right to education, health care and minimum standard of living is ensured in 100% of the regions of the Republic of Moldova.

### *The Project objectives:*

1. Local authorities throughout Moldova have improved the capacities to develop and provide high quality Foster Care Service (FCS) to children without parental care;
2. Local and national authorities, civil society organizations have capitalized on the experience in developing Foster Care Service, have adjusted the national policy accordingly and have established a sustainable professional foster care body.

Since April 2010, P4EC provided support to LPAs across the country on strengthening the role of the foster care service as an alternative family type service throughout the Republic of Moldova. These included obtaining the local public authorities' commitment for the implementation of the foster care service and the creation of foster care teams to develop the foster care service and institutionalize the gate-keeping system. The objectives of the project were set to contribute to the establishment of a functional model of the foster care service as well as the gate-keeping system at the local public authorities' level nationwide. Starting with 2012, the project extended its support to build the capacity of the community social workers in foster care service and gatekeeping system since they are the key staff providing primary family support services at the community level, to prevent child family separation.

### *Key achievements:*

- The coverage of Foster Care Service development in the country was increased;
- The capacities of SAFPDs from 26 districts, 2 municipalities – Balti and Tiraspol, and Gagauzia Autonomy were strengthened by means of training and technical assistance in the FCS provision and Gate-Keeping Commission development:
  - 51 decision makers and SAFPD specialists;
  - 64 Gate-Keeping Commission members;
  - 250 community social workers;
- The Foster Care Service in 15 new districts was incorporated into the local child protection systems;
- 107 children are receiving family care in 83 foster care families;

- The initial and follow-up training in developing short-break and emergency foster care was provided to 5 districts (Falesti, Cahul, Calarasi, Ungheni and Soroca);
- The support to the development of the National Foster Care Association and institutionalization of the child participation culture in foster care development and provision by setting up a Youth-in-Care Network continued.

### *From the research report*

*„I was helped a lot, I know how to cook and speak properly now. Mrs. Natalia’s (foster carer) words helped me a lot. She was my role model. If it wasn’t for her, I wouldn’t have had such a life now. All her words were useful to me; I often think of the things Mrs. Natalia told me. Now I can do everything, I know everything. I know how to light a fire, to cook, to talk to someone, to take care of my little girl. I want to live all the difficulties in life my mother went through. My husband wanted us to get married and to end this dating thing. I wanted to be a mother very much, to have a child. There was a risk for me not to have a child, but we finally made it, it was tough, but we made it possible in the end. When I gave birth to my little girl, I told myself: “I did not have a mother, but I will be a mother”. I struggle to give her everything she needs, as my mother didn’t give that to me, maybe she failed to give it to me; I am trying to have at least something for her. I will always do it. I will make her be like all the other children”. - Liuba, 19 years old, married, currently taking care of the child;*

*„My life was hard before I got here (in foster family). I did not like it, I grew up with my grandmother; then my auntie took me to her place, then my mother suddenly took me back from there. She took me back and made me start begging, and I was against it. I was forced to sit in a wheelchair and beg in the streets of Chisinau. My auntie saw me once in the city, took me out of the wheelchair and we went to her house, stayed there for 2 days, and then we came together here to see the social worker” - Corina, 11 years old.*

## Mellow Parenting Program for healthy and happy children funded by *World Childhood Foundation*,

implemented by P4EC in collaboration with the Mellow Parenting UK charity

*Period of implementation:* 2/1/2016 — 28/02/2019 (with possibility of extension in 2019)

*Cost of the Project:* 244,628 EUR

### *Project goal:*

To make early interventions in order to improve safety, well-being, and development of vulnerable children under 5, especially those at high risk of abandonment and separation due to a lack of adequate parental care and attachment or weak child-parent relations.

### *Project objectives:*

- Improving the knowledge and skills of vulnerable parents, empowering them to provide adequate care to their children, develop attachment and relations with their children, thus, contributing to the prevention of child-family separation.
- Promoting the “Mellow Parenting” program (MPP) so that it is provided to parents and children at risk in the whole country.

### *Key achievements:*

The “Mellow Parenting” program was piloted and delivered in Chisinau municipality in Year 1 and extended in 3 new districts in Year 2 (Orhei, Singerei and Sorooca).

- The trained facilitators from all 4 districts have successfully passed their accreditation as trained practitioners;
- 50 mothers with 50 children were supported to improve their relationship through the participation in seven MPP groups;
- MDPCR has fulfilled its commitment to secure the sustainability of MPP after withdrawal of the project support. The MPP was integrated in the provision of its services and the MPP costs were taken over by the municipal budget beginning with the 2018 fiscal year;
- The Regulation on Family Support Service was revised and approved by the Government to integrate MPP in the primary prevention activities for children and families;
- Through a communication and advocacy campaign, MPP was promoted among the national and local authorities as one of the key evidence-based parenting programs for vulnerable parents and their children under the age of 5.

The evaluation reports produced by Mellow Parenting Charity (MPC) using the MPP datasets from Moldovan groups indicate **an overall improvement in parents’ confidence, decrease in anxiety and reduction in parenting hassles and difficulties.**

*“The implementation of the Mellow Parenting program in Moldova will essentially contribute to ensuring the access of children with special needs and their families to community social and educational support services. The support provided to the parents/carers of children in early age, and even before birth, is very important in the context when we, as a country, lack parenting education services. It is also important that this model is still being piloted, and the team is testing the working mechanisms to ensure the smooth implementation and replication of the model at the country level”* - Viorica Mart, senior consultant at the Pre-University Education Department of the Ministry of Education declared.

*“I am sure that Mellow Parenting will be extended in all country and included into the social services portfolio provided at the local level. The diversity of the groups of children included into the program and the focus on the early years of life help identify early signs of concern and ensure the child’s well-being, primarily, by strengthening parenting skills. We hope that the practitioners in the pilot regions will start Mellow Dad groups soon, because fathers along with the mothers, play a crucial role in the education and development of their children”* - Stela Grigoras, Minister of Health, Labor, Social Protection and Family said.

#### *Innovation of the project:*

The “Mellow Parenting” educational program provides an early intervention method based on relations and focused on the strengthening of the parent-child relation. The Mellow Parenting groups are intense and last 14 weeks – 1 day per week. The groups cover the most vulnerable families, including those facing difficulties in the parent-child relation, mental health issues or families with substance abuse issues, families where the child’s well-being is at risk, families where parents face learning difficulties or have low literacy skills.

## Improving access to community- based early years and pre-school support services for vulnerable children with special needs in Moldova

### funded by EU Delegation (CSO-LA program)

and implemented by P4EC in collaboration with the British Mellow Parenting and HealthProm organizations.

*Period of implementation:* 1/1/2016 — 12/31/2018

*Cost of the Project:* 680,000 EUR

#### *Project goal:*

To improve access to community-based early years and preschool support services for vulnerable children with special needs (CWSN) under 7 in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

#### *Project objectives:*

1. Strengthen the capacity of and cooperation between LAs and CSOs working with CWSN, enabling them to better facilitate access to early years and preschool support services
2. Develop and test a model for community-based early years and pre-school support for CWSN along with the capacity needed to roll it out nationally if found to be successful.

The following early years support programs for CWSN are developed within the project:

- Portage – home care and education support service for families with children who have special needs;
- Mellow Parenting – a therapy course for parental skills development and strengthening of relations between parents and children, based on the attachment theory;
- Makaton – a nationwide communication program, involving the use of signs and symbols to help people communication. It is envisaged to be integrated as a work tool for all actors involved in the education of children who have speech and communication difficulties.
- Communication through Music - therapeutic programme that achieves outcomes drawn from Music Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy;

#### *Key interim achievements:*

The development of the new models comprised a range of activities aiming at building capacities of *over 200 national and local level decision makers* and practitioners in implementation of the Communication through Music (CTM), Makaton, Portage, Mellow Parenting (MP) programmes. All 4 new programmes were launched and are in the process of piloting in **5 project districts**. Makaton program is under piloting at national level in 12 districts selected by the Ministry of Education, currently Ministry of Education, Culture and Research.

- A training needs assessment of parents and specialists working with CWSN was carried out, followed by the development of the concept for training strategy for the following years of project implementation;
- A comprehensive training program was designed and delivered to the established and careful selected 65 professionals coming from each of 5 districts that included Makaton language, MP, CTM and Portage training;
- All the new programs are currently in the pilot phase, with the following results so far:
 

*MP programme:* the “Going Mellow” four-day training was delivered to 10 practitioners from 5 project districts, and 49 Moms with 49 children benefitted from the MP programme so far;

*Portage:* A four-day training was delivered to 34 practitioners from 5 districts comprising specialists from the District Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Services (DPPAS), Mobile outreach service and from the Departments of Education – responsible for early years education;

*Makaton:* 14 practitioners from DPPAS were provided with 4-day training in Makaton Language programme. The Makaton core vocabulary was finalized and published as a tool for the practitioners. 30 children with communication needs are being provided with appropriate support in the Makaton linguistic programme;

*Communication through Music:* 41 new professionals working in 21 kindergartens and 5 DPPAS from all 5 districts benefitted from the training course in the first and second modules of the CTM programme. 375 children benefitted from individual and group session in CTM;
- 86 parents were empowered to get actively involved in provision of more efficient support to CWSN through the development of necessary services, as well as to change stereotypes, perceptions around CWSN;
- 35 grassroot CSOs from 5 pilot districts and Transnistria were raised awareness regarding the importance of early intervention and 13 local CSOs submitted applications for the small grants scheme. The applications were assessed and 6 CSOs were selected to implement small grant projects aiming at the facilitating the improvement of the access to the new early years support programmes for CWSN as well as empowering parents in promoting support to CWSN;
- The Communication campaign regarding the promotion of the early – years support services for CWSN was carried out in partnership with 3 national TV channels.

#### *Innovation of the project:*

Development of innovative approaches in working with children with special needs aged 0-7: Portage, Makaton, **Mellow Parenting** and Communication through Music.

## Supporting children in special needs schools to be cared for in safe families, schools and communities – Moldova funded by Medicor Foundation

and co-financed with USAID-funded project. (Only activities supported by Medicor Foundation are shown)

*Period of implementation:* 09/1/2014 – 08/31/2016

*Cost of the Project:* 120,000 EUR

### *The Project goal:*

To support vulnerable children and their families in Telenesti and Singerei districts to stay with their families, schools and communities, accessing improved social care and educational support services at local level.

The project supported the *local authorities in Telenesti and Singerei* to put in place social services and educational assistance for *children with special educational needs* to ensure successful reintegration of children into families and mainstream schools and to prevent unnecessary separations of children from their *families, schools and communities*. At the same time, the project empowered children, families and communities to achieve positive and sustainable change by being involved in the design and implementation of innovative services and approaches.

The project interventions focused on the strategically planned configuration of the local childcare system in both districts, aiming to strengthen the prevention of child-family separation, decrease the use of the residential care for children, and increase the use of family-based alternative care for children. In doing so, the project supported the LAs from two districts to assess their local needs and social services systems, strategically plan the whole system configuration processes, build capacities of decision-makers and front-line professionals to put in place, manage, monitor and evaluate a package of basic services and systems such as family support, foster care services and gate-keeping system.

The project capacity-building program was designed and delivered in such a way that it allowed adapting the training based on the lessons learned from project implementation. The project applied a combination of formal training, practical workshops, supervision and day-to-day practical support as a model of capacity building.

### *Key achievements in deinstitutionalization and inclusive education:*

- 10 children were deinstitutionalized: 5 children reintegrated in their biological families and 5 children placed in 3 Foster Care Service and 2 Family Type Homes;
- 14 children were released from the small group homes and placed in Foster Care Service (9), Family Type Homes (2) and Guardianship Care (3);
- 90 teaching support staff from 51 educational institutions, 8 members of the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Service and 11 inclusion managers received training on Inclusive education (4 Modules);
- 13 members of the Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Service were supported to deliver professional supervision meetings for the teaching support staff;



### *Key achievements in prevention of children from separation from their families:*

- 263 children from 109 families were supported to stay with their families by means of primary and secondary Family Support Service;
- 12 children were prevented from institutionalization and placed in alternative family care (7 in Foster Care and 5 in Family Type Homes);
- 95 children who had been deinstitutionalized from Telenesti and Razalai auxiliary schools were monitored and supported to stay with their families.

### *Key achievements in capacity building:*

- 62 community social workers and 5 family support staff received follow-up support through supervision meetings to learn skills to apply different elements of case management methodology in working with children and families as part of reintegration process and care for children in alternative care;
- 6 days of ToT on alternative care was provided to the staff of 5 SAFPDs from both districts. The training comprised the topics included in the national foster care curriculum: child's needs, attachment, trauma, the effects of separation and loss, etc. The training also focused on the skills the trainer/facilitator should possess to be able to efficiently deliver the training as well as the adults' learning theory.
- Follow-up support to the Gatekeeping Commissions in analyzing the cases proposed for family support and foster care placement using the child wellbeing indicators and family protective factors.
- The competencies of 86 decision-makers, child protection specialists, social service managers and community social workers from SAFPD were built at a 2-day training in the following topics: social services needs assessment methodology, performance management and in-service training for human resources working in social assistance field;
- 209 district and community-level decision makers, professionals working in social assistance, education, and health were trained during the project life in both districts;
- The Social Services Strategies for 2015-2019 were developed with project support and approved by the District Councils.

### *Key achievements in child participation:*

- 33 children, members of the Telenesti and Singerei ABCs attended a 5-day summer school organized for all ABCs from 10 districts. The ABC members had the opportunity to share experiences and consolidate their skills in monitoring and assessing local services and programs, observing children's rights. Children were trained in the coaching approach and attended public speaking skill development sessions. Annual ABC activity plans were developed for each district;
- The ABC members of Telenesti monitored 83 children attending day care centers from the district. The monitoring report was presented to the Social Assistance and Family Protection Department, while the Singerei ABC members monitored 50 children who had been deinstitutionalized from Razalai auxiliary school and 120 children with special educational needs who live with their

parents. Monitoring reports were presented to the Social Assistance and Family Protection Department;

## **Support in implementing the service delivery standards and the new business model administration by territorial social assistance structures,**

funded by the World Bank within the Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Social Safety Net Project and implemented by P4EC in Consortium with Oxford Policy Management

*Period of implementation:* 07/01/2014 – 11/30/2015

*Cost of the Project:* 108,082 EUR

### *Project goal:*

To support the implementation of the service delivery standards and the new business model of the Territorial Social Assistance Structures (TSAS).

### *The main activities:*

- Improving the performance of TSAS;
- Support the development and implementation of service standards;
- Raising public confidence and satisfaction levels with TSAS;
- Training TSAS staff and front line providers to achieve the above objectives.

### *Key achievements:*

- Customer service delivery standards (general and those for social aid / winter support) and Plans for their implementation were developed;
- TSAS framework-regulation was developed;
- A set of guidelines and methodologies aiming to facilitate the TSAS functioning (Guidelines for the grievance mechanism, for the monitoring module of customer service delivery standards, for the performance management system, for continued training, for communication activities, for planning and budgeting, Communication strategy for TSAS – template, Methodology for population needs assessment, self-assessment methodology and assessment tools on level of standards implementation) were devised;
- Training in applying the standards, guidelines and methodologies for TSAS staff: 1076 community social workers, 98 specialists and 52 directors and deputy directors were trained.

## Support in establishing the Social Assistance Agency in Moldova,

funded by the World Bank within the Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Social Safety Net Project and implemented by P4EC in Consortium with Oxford Policy Management

*Period of implementation:* 04/06/2017 – 09/30/2017

*Cost of the Project:* 18,164 USD

### *Project goal:*

To provide technical assistance for the operationalization of the National Social Assistance Agency of the Republic of Moldova.

### *The main activities:*

- Assessment of institutional development needs;
- Development of a legal and regulatory framework to support the main functions of the Agency;
- Development of the institutional capacity of the Agency.

### *Key achievements:*

- The Needs for institutional development assistance were assessed and identified;
- A draft Strategic Development Plan, including a detailed situation analysis of the policy and legislative context, the institutional location of the Agency and its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats was developed;
- A draft three-year Operational Plan for 2017-2020 and a draft 18-month work plan were developed;
- A set of draft Job Descriptions for most Agency staff positions was developed;
- A draft Staff Handbook (comprehensive operating manual setting out the Agency's structure, functions, business processes and management systems) and a draft Internal Regulation for the National Social Assistance Agency.