

The future begins in the family



Newsletter of the Project "Protecting children of Moldova from family separation, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation", implemented by Partnerships for every child in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and the Ministry of Education



Ungheni Social Assistance and Family Protection Department – laureate of UN Human Rights award

Page 7

Another service was evaluated by the Advisory Boards of Children

Advisory Boards of Children (ABC) performed recently the evaluation of family-type homes in Calarasi, Ungheni, and Falesti raions.

Page 11

Stela GRIGORAȘ,
Chief Executive at Partnerships for Every Child:

"We will continue developing programs for families and children in 2013"

Page 8



Evaluation of professional skills of community social assistants

The project team performed complex evaluation of professional skills of foster care-givers in Falesti, Ungheni, and Calarasi raions in December.

The evaluation was preceded by a series of trainings in the form of professional supervision, organized by heads of community social assistance raion services. Supervisions were initiated after an assessment of competence levels of foster care-givers, the number of trainings they attended, their knowledge, skills developed within previous trainings. The assessments identified informational and professional gaps that need to be filled.

“Supervision was performed in small groups of 6-7 community assistants. Initially, case management was performed, then initial evaluation, the form was filled, complex evaluation was performed, the problem was formulated and objectives set up for a family”, said Svetlana Rijicov, consultant at Partnerships for Every Child. In what followed, the community social assis-



tants, advised by their supervisors, produced the detailed individual care plan of beneficiaries, with the involvement of other competent specialists. The supervision process lasted for over one year.

“The goal of the evaluation was for us to see how efficient the trainings and the goal had been. We also identify existing gaps, so that by project end we manage to cover them”, said Svetlana Rijicov.

The evaluation included a question form to be filled, containing a set of questions that revealed directly or indirectly the extent to which they knew their work duties. Each community social assistant came with a portfolio, and all of them were examined by the evaluation commission. Besides, the data collected by the community social assistants and activities they perform were analyzed. In what follows, the project team will hold focus groups with the beneficiaries, asking them if they noticed any qualitative changes in the activity of community social assistants.

We remind that about 1100 specialists from Calarasi, Falesti, and Ungheni raions participated in capacity building activities within the project, to create an integrated social services system for children and families, focused on the prevention of child separation from family and on the protection of children left without parental care. Along with community social assistants, decision-makers in issues concerning child and family in difficulty, specialists from raion social assistance and family protection departments, staff of community schools and residential institutions, and other practitioners participated.



Ungheni Social Assistance and Family Protection Department – laureate of UN Human Rights award



Ungheni Social Assistance and Family Protection Department is one of the laureates of 2012 UN Human Rights award. The prize was awarded to the head of the Department, Mr. Tudor Radeanu, within a festive ceremony organized by the United Nations on the 10th of December, on the International Human Rights Day.

A press release of the UN Development Program informs that Ungheni Social Assistance and Family Protection Department was appreciated for “innovative practical application of human rights at the local level, focusing on the implementation of the UN Guideline on the Alternative Care of Children, adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 2009”.

“This is high appreciation of our daily work done for years. This is appreciation of the team that had been working assiduously”, said Mr. Radeanu after the award ceremony. Tudor Radeanu was especially satisfied that the appreciation comes from “experts who know the area very well, international experts”.

“This prize is very important for us, it inspires even more confidence in our forces, and more desire to do beautiful things, to work more and be always the first in the country”, Mr. Radeanu mentioned.

Ungheni raion is one of pilot sites of the project “Protection of children against separation from family, violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in Moldova”, implemented by Partnerships for Every Child, supported by USAID.

Ungheni raion was among the first to involve into the residential system re-

form. Two residential institutions that worked in the raion – the residential school and auxiliary school in Sculeni community have been closed. About 120 children have been reintegrated into their biological and extended families in recent years. When family reintegration was not possible, the children were placed into alternative family settings – foster care, family-type homes, social assistance center for children. A placement center was created in Sculeni auxiliary school, with conditions close to family, while in the

building of former residential school of Ungheni a high school will be opened. The money saved as a result of those two institutions’ reorganization was integrally invested into the development of services for children. Thus, new foster care families were instituted, family-type homes, and a placement center for children were opened. Over 20 foster care families, several family-type homes, and a day care center for children in difficulty work in the raion at present.



Stela GRIGORAȘ,
Chief Executive at Partnerships for Every Child:

“We will continue developing programs for families and children in 2013”



- How was the year 2012 for Partnerships for Every Child?

- It was a difficult year, a year when we changed our name and become an independent organization, Partnerships for Every Child. It was also a year very rich in events, projects, achievements, and challenges. We hope we'll manage to develop the same program in 2013, maintain on the market as a serious organization that offers useful projects for the child and the family.

- What main achievements has the organization had in 2012?

- We have many achievements that are worth mentioning. For instance, we recently finished an ambitious project funded by the EU Delegation to Moldova, focused on the development of respite foster care placement. This service is designed for families that are raising children with disabilities, and it offers support and assistance to prevent separation of the children from their families. I am saying that this was an ambitious project, because we set very high

objectives for a relatively short period – the project lasted only 18 months. Together with our partners from Chisinau and Orhei we had to develop this model, implement it, test it, evaluate it, and propose it for the national replication. Based on the experience obtained in two pilot raions, we try to help other local authorities develop this service, because the number of children with disabilities is quite big. Also in this project we managed to organize a national conference in November, where over 110 foster care-givers and representatives of local public authorities from the country participated.

Talking about the achievements, we also mention the results of the USAID-funded project “Protection of children from family separation, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in the Republic of Moldova”. The project provides support to local and central authorities in the development of services for children and

families, having special focus on deinstitutionalization of children and their reintegration into families and communities. Within this project we worked in 2012 with several quite difficult institutions, and we are glad that we managed to register rather good results. We assessed the situation of the residents of the boarding school for deaf children that is in Hirbovat (Calarasi raion), and of the residents of Cornesti (Ungheni raion) rehabilitation center for children who had tuberculosis or were in contact with TB patients. We performed complex evaluation of each separate case, we identified drawbacks in the care and education of these children, and we are collaborating now with the competent national authorities to find transformation solutions for these two residential institutions.

Together with our Ungheni, Falesti, and Calarasi partners, and supported by the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection



and Family, we will develop early intervention programs to prevent the growth of the number of children separated from the family, of the children who don't cope with the school program, and of those who suffer from violence of health-related problems. It is important that the state makes a step forward to retarget those restricted resources that are available, towards early intervention, focusing on young children, even if the country is in difficult financial situation and we don't have necessary resources. Together with the team and our partners we propose to determine those programs (some of them proved to be efficient in other countries) that could be implemented in our country.

- What are the priority directions of the organization's the activity in the coming year?

- We enter the year with optimism. This will be a difficult year, not only for our organization, but also for other NGOs in the country. I tried to raise this issue in numerous meetings with the authorities and donors. We consider that the existing environment is not favorable for NGOs, because many institutional donors withdrew from the country, while many of private donors decided to stop financing programs, at least in social area. At the same time, NGOs don't yet have opportunity to access public money for the programs development. In these conditions it is obvious that fewer NGOs will remain in the market, which is serious danger for the development of our society.

Although the existing situation is not much favorable, we will continue developing programs. A strategic direction in this sense remains early intervention. Another direction is continuous development of foster care. We already have ensured funding for respite foster care. In parallel, we will try to develop another type of placement, that is emergency foster care for children who are in a situation of imminent danger and need to be placed into a family to prevent institutionalization.



- In 2012 residential institutions reform strategy for years 2007-2012 was over. What steps should the authorities follow to finalize the residential institutions reform?

- Logically, another document should be developed and approved, to ensure sustainability of the reform. Stagnation of this process will inevitably cause undesired outcomes – the organizations that help the Government in the deinstitutionalization of children, reorganization of residential care, and development of alternative services, will withdraw. So will the donors. As long as the Government lacks a strategic vision, nobody will dare to make investments in this area. This is why we

are expecting a strategic document in this sense. The fact that the number of children in residential care reduced by 50%, while the number of closed institutions is relatively small, demonstrates that we have many residential schools with small number of children. Then the question about the efficiency of public money administration arises. In order to bring the reform to an efficient ending, the Government needs to have a more serious involvement. It will have to make own contributions for the implementation of this reform at the national level. The reform needs financial support and well-trained human resources. And the Government's intervention can be decisive here.

- Thank you for the interview.

The Advisory Boards of Children renewed their membership

Over 20 pupils enrolled at the beginning of this school year into Advisory Boards of Children in Falesti, Ungheni, and Calarasi raions.

“Many of the former ABC members left school and went to other places to pursue their studies, so we had to fill the vacancies, said Natalia Semeniuc, consultant in the development of social services and child participation at Partnerships for Every Child.

The new ABC members participated in a two-days training in November. They also had individual meetings with local child participation coordinators, where they made an overview of all issues discussed within previous meetings.

“The seminars organized for the new ABC members gave them an opportunity to learn new aspects of the involvement of the councils in child’s rights promotion and in the monitoring and evaluation of social services

for families and children”, added Natalia Semeniuc.

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decisions, and in the monitoring of social policies in their communities.

Locally, the advisory boards act as partners of the Social Assistance and Family Protection Department, participating in the development, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring of local policies and programs regarding children and young people.

Over the year, the ABC members regularly participated in local meetings where decisions on the future of the children were taken. They came up with recommendations and proposals regarding the improvement of child protection policies. Young advisors are also involved in the evaluation of the needs of children in care or at risk of being separated from their families, and in the development and monitoring of local policies and programs, focusing on child’s rights fulfillment.





Another service was evaluated by the Advisory Boards of Children

Advisory Boards of Children (ABC) performed recently the evaluation of family-type homes in Calarasi, Ungheni, and Falesti raions.

The monitoring and evaluation process was organized in several stages. First, several workshops were held, where principles of organization and functioning of the service were discussed. The interview toolkit for children in placement was also discussed. Young evaluators had a number of meetings with the specialists of the social assistance and family protection department in-charge with this service, discussing details of the service functioning.

In what followed, the ABC members visited tens of children placed into family-type homes. "In the coming time, the conclusions made during the research will be systematized and presented to decision-makers at raion level", said Natalia Semeniuc.

This is not the first experience in child-oriented social services assessment for ABC members. They already performed an evaluation of over 80 children placed into foster care families in the three mentioned raions.



Trainings for teachers and parents

Teachers, care-givers, and parents who have children placed in the residential school for deaf children in Hirbovat village (Calarasi raion) participated in December in a training within the project “Protecting children from separation from family, violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in Moldova”.

Svetlana Rijicov, training consultant at Partnerships for Every Child said that the trainings for the teaching staff was focused on correction activities that include the stimulation and development of the children’s remaining hearing capacities and the development of oral speech both while the children are at school and at home. The teachers and educators that work in the institution were informed about inclusive education, about the need to develop individual educational plans, adapted to the needs and possibilities of every child. The trainings with the parents were focused on useful advice in relations with the children, their education and development, the importance of family education, care methods of hearing devices, etc.

By these trainings, the project team intended to improve the quality of education and training provided to children from Hirbovat institution. A previously performed evaluation within the project showed that only 5% of children from Hirbovat institution are completely deaf. The other children have certain remaining hearing capacity, and if they had qualitative hearing devices, they could develop speech and integrate into the society. At the same time, the evaluation showed that the children from Hirbovat institution not only lack the possibility to learn to speak, but also adopt their own body language that is hardly understood by graduates of other institutions for deaf children. Consequently, these children even cannot normally communicate with other persons with hearing deficiencies.

Currently, 113 children are raised in Hirbovat residential school for children with hearing deficiencies – an institution subordinated to the Ministry of Education.

