

EC Partners

- **Ministry of Family Youth and Sport, Ukraine**
- **State Social Services for Family Children and Youth, Ukraine**
- **Kyiv oblast State Administration, Ukraine**
- **EveryChild Consortium, UK**

Facts and Figures

- **1.8 million** - population of Kyiv oblast
- **€1.6 million** - total cost of project
- Project duration - **30 months**
- **34 region** and city state administrative districts



**EUROPEAN
COMMISSION**

Social cohesion

Development of Integrated Social Services for Exposed Families and Children

"This project has been instrumental in helping us to adopt a national strategy to ensure that every child is growing and developing in a safe family environment within their community."

Svitlana Tolstoukhova, Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Family Youth and Sport,
Government of Ukraine



Context

Ukraine has inherited a Soviet system of child-care which promoted the use of large state-run institutions to care for children. However, institutions are almost always harmful for children's development and although poverty plays a significant part in their admission to residential care most children are in care for social reasons. Such problems, mainly concerned with families in crisis, are susceptible to practical support that can be provided by social and community work teams. This kind of support, in which crisis intervention operates in preventative mode, can forestall the need for institutional care, and this is much more effective than trying to rehabilitate a child after the child has been in an institution for a number of years.

Objective: To reduce the numbers of children being placed in residential institutional care

- To develop and implement a model of Integrated Social Services based in the communities in which people live
- To improve the policy and legislative basis for new service models
- To build the capacity of senior managers and local practitioners to implement the services
- To increase public awareness of these issues

Impact: What has been achieved?

- 50% reduction in numbers of children placed in residential care institutions
- 163% increase in numbers of social workers employed by the Centres for Social Services
- 43% of potential infant abandonment's prevented
- 174 children living in residential care institutions reintegrated in their immediate or extended family
- 21 new foster families created and 31 children placed with them
- 34 Family Support Services and Early Intervention Services for Families in Crisis operational in Kyiv oblast
- 19 Services for Alternative Family Care that recruit, train and support foster carers

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Volodya and Andriy's story

Volodya (10) and Andriy (12) had stopped going to school. Their mother, Tanya, was unaware of the problem as she was struggling to maintain the household and care for their little sister Inna (3) who has a development disability. Tanya had been widowed not long after Inna was born and experienced many difficulties in managing the household all by herself. When the school reported the boys' truancy the local authority Service for Minors stepped in and visited Tanya to assess the family's living conditions. They decided that since Tanya wasn't coping with the situation, the best thing for the boys was to place them in a residential care institution where they would be looked after and educated. Fortunately Tanya and her family lived in a city where Integrated Social Services were being established. Social workers from the Centres for Social Services for Family Children and Youth were being trained to undertake comprehensive assessments and plan for interventions to keep families together. With the EU project support the Centre for Social Services was piloting a new assessment system. Agencies with different responsibilities for children were beginning to work together to develop a 'one-window' approach and a recent order of the local city council had decreed that no child could be admitted to an institution unless this comprehensive assessment had been completed. Tanya was referred on to Centre for Social Services and assigned a social worker. Using the new assessment mechanism the social worker considered not only the individual needs of the children but of the family as a whole, within the context of the extended family and wider community. The social worker then worked with Tanya to develop an intervention plan. The children's grandparents became more involved in the care of the boys, Tanya was helped to maximise her income by applying for social benefits, and a day care placement was found for Inna. The social worker also liaised with the school, family and extended family to ensure both Volodya and Andriy returned to school on a regular basis. Six months on and the case was closed. The family was back together.



Director of Kyiv Regional Centre of Social Services for Children
Family and Youth meets children getting ready to move home