



EVALUATION REPORT
IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
FOR THE REFORM OF THE RESIDENTIAL
CHILDCARE SYSTEM IN MOLDOVA 2007–2012

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OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE REFORM OF THE RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE SYSTEM IN MOLDOVA 2007–2012

by Peter Evans

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The Government of the Republic of Moldova launched its childcare reforms in 2006 aiming to establish a network of community social assistants, develop family support services and alternative family placement services, and reorganise residential childcare institutions. The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Reform of the Residential Childcare System 2007–2012 was approved by the Government of the Republic of Moldova in July 2007. This evaluation, carried out between March and June 2012, examines implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil society organisation
DI Unit	Deinstitutionalisation Unit (Implementation Unit of the Framework Plan for the Transformation of residential institutions)
EU	European Union
FG	Focus group
LPA	Local public authority
ME	Ministry of Education (18.09.2009–present)
MEY	Ministry of Education and Youth (04.07.2006–18.09.2009)
MF	Ministry of Finance
MH	Ministry of Health
MLSPF	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (18.09.2009-present)
MSPFC	Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child (24.11.2006-18.09.2009)
NGO	Non-government organisation
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank

BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

This evaluation was commissioned by UNICEF Moldova, the Government of the Republic of Moldova and NGO partners in 2012 and managed on behalf of the partners by Terre des hommes Moldova. Fieldwork for the evaluation was conducted between March and June 2012 by experts of IMAS Marketing and Polls, Chisinau, Moldova assisted by an international expert in child protection, Peter Evans.

The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Reform of the Residential Childcare System was approved by the Government of the Republic of Moldova in July 2007 with country-wide application. This evaluation has considered its implementation across the country except for Transnistria.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This evaluation could not have been achieved without the herculean efforts of Mariana Ianachevici of Terre des hommes, Moldova who arranged the logistics of the fieldwork with energy, imagination and tenacity. In addition she provided wise counsel to the evaluators.

I am indebted to my IMAS colleague and fellow evaluator, Mihaela Neagru. She brought wisdom and experience to the evaluation and infinite patience with my questions. We were assisted by Elena Donos and Oxana Valcova, both of IMAS, who conducted the interviews with children.

I appreciate the generous time and insights offered by interviewees, all of whom provided pertinent information which enriched our understanding of the reform of the childcare system in Moldova. People interviewed include members of line ministries, local government administrations, childcare services, UNICEF, members of non-government organisations, parents, foster carers and children themselves.

Unless otherwise attributed all opinions expressed in this report, and any omissions and errors, remain my responsibility and should not be attributed to other parties.

Peter Evans

2nd March 2013

“I love to live with my parents and I love the smell of soup made by my mother.” Annisa, a girl reintegrated with her parents from an institution speaking at the national conference to discuss reforms to residential childcare and inclusive education, Chisinau, 23rd March 2012.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2007 the Government of Moldova approved a National Strategy and Action Plan to reform its residential childcare system. At the time, 12,000 children were thought to be living in large orphanages and boarding schools in Moldova. Previous studies had shown that most children living in residential institutions had at least one living parent if not both living parents. Some children had disabilities ranging from mild to severe. Studies had shown that most children had been placed in residential institutions in response to family poverty.

The majority of children were living in general or auxiliary boarding schools of the Ministry of Education (ME). Other children with disabilities were accommodated in two institutions of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF); one for boys, the other for girls. Two institutions for young children under three years were subordinated to the Ministry of Health (MH) and a third institution for young children was subordinated to Chisinau Directorate for Child Rights Protection. Two institutions under the MH accommodate children infected or affected by tuberculosis.

The goal of the National Strategy and Action Plan was to “ensure and respect the child’s right to grow up in a family.” The overall objectives of the Action Plan were to reduce the number of children living outside a family by 50% and to reorganise residential institutions to support children in families. Central and local government and NGOs were to work together to implement the Action Plan.

The National Strategy and Action Plan consisted of seven components and more than 60 *Activities* that aimed to:

1. Make changes to the legal environment to protect vulnerable children,
2. Develop local community-based services to support children and families,
3. Improve the skills of staff to better protect vulnerable children,
4. Reorganise residential institutions towards supporting children and families,
5. Redirect government spending away from institutions towards supporting community-based services

6. Change public opinion about residential care, and
7. Monitor services for children and families

The evaluation aimed to assess:

- Relevance of the National Strategy and Action Plan to child protection in Moldova
- Effectiveness of implementation to meet the goals and objectives of the National Strategy
- Sustainability of the Action Plan reforms
- Efficiency with which the Action Plan *Activities* were managed
- Impact of the reforms on vulnerable children and families, and
- Extent to which implementation of *Activities* contributed to the equitable promotion of children’s rights.

This evaluation of the National Strategy and Action Plan was commissioned by UNICEF and its government partners to evaluate the results and achievements of the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan. The evaluation was carried out between March and June 2012 by an international child protection expert aided by a Moldovan company with experience of researching social policy.

ASSESSING RELEVANCE

It is understood the Government of Moldova is about to launch a national consultation prior to developing a wider National Strategy on Child and Family Protection. The evaluators were told that the findings and conclusions of this evaluation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the reform of the residential childcare system 2007-2012 would contribute to the national consultation. It is understood the new National Strategy on Child and Family Protection will take a broader view of protection needs to include health, trafficking and exploitation of children and families, not just vulnerability to institutionalisation.

The evaluators were informed that an Ordinance No.255 of 25th April 2012 of the ME stipulates that a further 23 residential institutions of the ME are to be reorganised or closed by 2015.

It is apparent that the majority of children deinstitutionalised from institutions have come from boarding and auxiliary boarding schools rather than special institutions for children with disabilities or young children. The effects of prevention measures have been more widely felt. NGOs and Directors of special institutions for children with disabilities and for young children spoke about efforts made to prevent admissions to special institutions by providing support to families who might otherwise have placed their child in the institution.

ASSESSING EFFECTIVENESS

Each of the seven components of the Action Plan is associated with one or more objectives to be achieved through one or more of 61 *Activities*. Reviewing the outcomes of the Action Plan *Activities* the evaluators judge that 34 out of the 61 *Activities* have been wholly completed or partially completed.

The critical objective of the Action Plan Component No.5: *To develop an efficient and flexible financial mechanism to redirect financial resources from the residential system to community-based and family-type services* had not been achieved at the time of the evaluation. It is understood that subsequent to the evaluation fieldwork, the Government has approved a Regulation for the use by local public administration bodies of budget savings arising from the closure of an institution to support former residents in families and inclusive education.

In general the specific objectives of the Action Plan were judged to be realistic, though the evaluators conclude it was probably too ambitious to plan that all children and families in Moldova could have access to quality family-type and community-based social services by 2012. That would have required strengthening the technical capacity of all thirty-two raions and municipalities of Moldova, to train and deploy competent community social assistants, to manage deinstitutionalisation and prevention services and develop new community-based services. But there are excellent examples of LPAs that have developed processes and services to support children and families; examples that demonstrate what can be achieved.

If the 12,000 children noted in the Government Decision No.784 – the National Strategy, said to be living in institutions, is taken as the baseline figure, the number of children living in institutions outside a family environment at the beginning of June 2012 has reduced by 54% (5,576 children resident). The reduction of numbers of children in institutions is partly the consequence of the general reduction of child population in Moldova, plus direct and indirect interventions by local public authorities (LPAs) and NGOs to prevent new admissions to institutions and to deinstitutionalise children resident in institutions.

The majority of children deinstitutionalised from institutions have returned to live with biological or extended family. Very few children, thought to be about 270 or less, are living in foster families. According to the DI Unit of the ME there are 359 children living in 80 family-type homes at the beginning of June 2012.

ASSESSING SUSTAINABILITY

It is expected that the results of this evaluation will inform the new strategy for a wider reform of child and family protection. But until practical action is taken to redirect financial saving arising from the closure of institutions and the reduction in resident numbers to finance LPA alternative services, there must be some doubt about the level of sustainability by the Government and the further development of services if and when external financial support stops.

If international donor funds currently supporting NGOs to implement reforms are redirected elsewhere, it cannot be assumed that NGO activity will continue at the same level, unless central government assumes a more active role to support less active raion administrations to contract the supply of prevention and deinstitutionalisation services from local NGOs.

ASSESSING EFFICIENCY

The process of drafting the National Strategy and Action Plan was conducted at a time when the protection of the rights of children was the exclusive competence of the ME. Subsequently competence for the protection of the rights of children was attributed to the

Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child (the predecessor ministry of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family), Directorate on Protection of Family and the Rights of the Child in March 2007.

The Action Plan, as approved and published by the Government, assigns lead responsibility for implementing *Activities* either to the ME, MLSPF, or LPAs, though the MH is given responsibility for one *Activity*. The MLSPF is assigned lead responsibility for 47 out of the 61 Action Plan *Activities*.

The ME has taken a pragmatic approach to accepting lead responsibility for *Activities* that are clearly within the authority of the Ministry and has taken action where the Ministry has management responsibility. The evaluators identify 15 *Activities* that have not been actioned or partly actioned for which the Action Plan assigns Structure in Charge responsibility to the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child (MSPFC).

The National Council for Coordinating the Reform of the Residential Childcare System and Developing Inclusive Education was established by the ME in June 2010, three years after the launch of the National Strategy. The Council, an exceedingly critical mechanism to coordinate inter-ministerial and NGO action, is chaired by a senior official of the ME. According to the National Strategy, the MLSPF is assigned coordination responsibility at the national level and therefore it might be expected that this Ministry would chair the National Council.

The evaluators were told that a significant obstacle to deinstitutionalisation is the lack of alternative services for children in families and in school. This is understandable if budget savings have not been transferred to local government administrations. The evaluators were told that some raion departments of social assistance were reluctant to incur the costs of supporting vulnerable children and families without additional funding when those costs could be passed on to central government by placing children in central government-funded residential institutions.

The evaluators were told that savings arising from the reduction of children in residential institutions of the

ME have been re-absorbed into expenditure associated with the remaining institutions. This is confirmed in the Ministry of Finance BOOST reporting system that shows consolidated annual expenditure in residential institutions has increased from 14,100 lei in 2006 to 36,300 lei per child in 2011.

A fundamental requirement for managing organisational change is access to and use of accurate and timely information. The evaluators were told that information about residential admissions and discharges, and about children and adults receiving social protection services is reported by Directors of institutions and raion administrations in six-monthly returns to the National Statistical Office. The National Statistical Office subsequently publishes the information in a statistics bulletin but the numbers are not aggregated to show the total number of children in institutions and the information is many months out of date.

ASSESSING IMPACT

The evaluators were told that placements in institutions for children under three years and children with disabilities have reduced through preventive action. It is the case however that the greater majority of children who have been deinstitutionalised from residential institutions have come from general boarding schools of the ME. It is only relatively recently that attention has been given to the deinstitutionalisation of children from auxiliary boarding schools of the ME.

The evaluators were told that several NGOs have begun to work to target children with disabilities living in institutions with assessments of their situation with the view to supporting them to return to their families. The evaluators were told that one NGO is planning to work with the MH to target children living in a residential institution for children infected or affected by tuberculosis.

Deinstitutionalisation of children from general boarding schools has been effective in part because moratoria had been placed on new admissions to the designated institutions. The evaluators were not told of moratoria being placed on new admissions to particular institutions for children with disabilities, to

institutions for children under three years or institutions for children affected by tuberculosis. It is likely therefore that children will continue to be admitted to those institutions for the foreseeable future until they are subject to a moratorium.

ASSESSING CONTRIBUTION TO CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The evaluators were told that neither boys nor girls were over-represented in institutions. The evaluators were also told that children from ethnic minorities were not over-represented in institutions. The absence of an effective social work management information system for residential institutions or case management makes these assertions hard to verify.

Implementation of the Action Plan contributes to the rights of reintegrated children and children prevented from admission to grow up in a family, but it remains the case that more than 5,500 children are still living in institutions with all that means for their health, education and development. Promoting the rights of children with disabilities seems especially difficult.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of recommendations is listed below.

1. Continue deinstitutionalisation activity, with a particular focus on children with disabilities and young children living in institutions, in addition to children in the ME institutions.
2. Plan and implement the redirection of budget savings from deinstitutionalisation to fund community-based services for vulnerable children and families.
3. Investigate why few children are living in foster families compared to the much larger number of children living in institutions.
4. Examine social work information management systems in other countries to consider solutions appropriate in Moldova.
5. Adopt an interim, low-technology process to monitor admissions and discharges from institutions.
6. Government should take over running costs of the DI Unit in the ME.
7. Responsibility to coordinate action on childcare reforms should be passed to the National Council for Child Rights Protection in the State Chancellery. The Deputy Chair of National Council for Child Rights Protection should periodically report to the Deputy Prime Minister on reform progress.
8. Implement action to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the *Ajutor Social* (Social Aid) scheme.
9. Institute a system of annual Community Social Protection Planning by LPAs to implement central government social protection policy priorities.
10. Arrangements to transfer management responsibility for residential institutions to LPAs should be agreed by LPAs, central government and NGOs on an individual basis.
11. Improve the effectiveness of community social assistants to manage deinstitutionalisation and prevention plans for individual children by consolidating their training into a nationally regulated system.

BACKGROUND

The Government of the Republic Moldova launched its childcare reforms in 2006 aiming to establish a network of community social assistants, develop family support services and alternative family placement services, and reorganise residential childcare institutions. The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Reform of the Residential Childcare System 2007-2012 was approved by the Government of Moldova in July 2007. This evaluation examines the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan.

The evaluation examines action and activity relating to the reform of the residential childcare system in Moldova. The evaluation does not examine the wider context of government support to vulnerable children and families, particularly the *Ajutor Social* scheme of cash benefits to families.

The evaluation is timely because the National Strategy and Action Plan ends in 2012 so the evaluation should identify lessons learned in the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan. Those lessons learned should then feed into a new strategy in 2012 being considered by the Government of Moldova for a wider reform of child and family protection. It is expected that the results of this evaluation will inform the new strategy.

The legal basis for the National Strategy and Action Plan consists of three parts:

1. Government Decision No.784 of 09.07.2007 to approve the National Strategy and Action Plan on the Reform of the Residential Childcare System for 2007-2012
2. Annex 1 of Government Decision No.784, the exposition of the National Strategy
3. Annex 2 of Government Decision No.784, the Action Plan itself

According to Annex 1, the aim of the National Strategy and Action Plan is: *to provide and respect the child's right to grow up in a family environment*. According to Annex 2, the overall objectives of the Action Plan are:

- *To reduce by 50% the number of children living outside a family environment.*
- *To reorganize residential care institutions according to the general transformation plan.*

The National Action Plan comprises seven components. Each component is associated with one or more objectives. Action Plan Components and objectives are shown below:

1. Changes in the legislative and policy environment.
Objective: To adjust the legal and the institutional framework for child and family protection to international policies with a view to ensuring and respecting the child's right to grow up in a family environment.
Objective: To ensure an adequate coordination of all activities under the Residential Childcare System Reform.
2. Development of community and family based services.
Objective: To provide access to the child and his/her family to quality family-type and community-based services.
3. Capacity building of child protection professionals.
Objective: To set up a national In-Service Training and Re-Qualification System for child and family protection professionals.
4. Transformation of residential care institutions.
Objective: To redirect the residential care system towards the community and family.
5. Redirection of government financial resources from residential care to community-based care services.
Objective: To develop an efficient and flexible financial mechanism to redirect financial resources from the residential system to community-based and family-type services.
6. Monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan
Objective: To strengthen the monitoring capacity at all levels of the child and family protection system.
Objective: To improve the quality of child and family protection services in accordance with quality standards.
7. Social mobilization and communication of the change.
Objective: To form the public opinion and the opinion of all actors involved in child and family protection regarding the need of residential childcare system reform.

Implicit in the Strategy is that action by central Ministries and local government bodies to implement the Activities will achieve the Overall Objectives of the Action Plan.

The present Strategy promotes the idea based on the needs and right of the child to grow in a family or in a family-type environment irrespective of age, illness, disability he/she has or the school he/she attends¹.

INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Moldova acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1993. Accession places the Government of Moldova under an obligation to observe its provisions. The Preamble to the Convention states,

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

Article 3 of the Convention makes it clear that parents have a duty to look after their children. The same Article requires governments to support parents to look after their children.

1. *In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.*

¹ Annex No.1 to the Republic of Moldova Government Decision No.784 of 09.07.2007 to approve the National Strategy and Action Plan on the Reform of the Residential Childcare System for 2007-2012, published on 20th July 2007 in the Official Monitor No.103-106, Art.823, p.2.

2. *States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.*
3. *States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.²*

The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children welcomed by the UN General Assembly in 2009 reinforce the responsibility of governments *to direct their efforts to enabling the child to remain in or return to the care of his or her parents, or when appropriate, other close family members. The State should ensure that families have access to forms of support in the care-giving role³.*

In its Concluding Observations the Committee on the Rights of the Child the Committee expressed,

... serious concern at the large number of children placed in institutions, many of whom are not orphans. It further notes with concern that children in those institutions are frequently neglected and ill-treated and, due to a lack of resources, are not provided with proper care and appropriate basic services.⁴

The negative effects on children of growing up in institutions have been recognised for some years⁵.

² UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3. Retrieved from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm> 15/08/2012.

³ UN Human Rights Council, Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, 15th June 2009, available at <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G09/142/13/PDF/G0914213.pdf?OpenElement> accessed 27/02/2013.

⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding Observations: Republic of Moldova. 20th February 2009 downloaded from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/co/CRC-C-MDA-CO3.pdf> 27/02/2013.

⁵ See for example: Gudbrandsson, B. 2004. Children in

The National Strategy and Action Plan on the Reform of the Residential Childcare System for 2007–2012 can therefore be seen within the context of the international obligations on the Government of Moldova to support children in families and an implicit recognition that care in institutions is generally not in the best interests of children.

The National Strategy and Action Plan sets out a pathway of change. Therefore, children's rights to grow up in a family will be better protected by making changes to:

- the legal environment for child and family protection
- development of family-type and community-based services
- improvements to professional social work capacities
- reorganising residential institutions
- redirecting government finance to support community-based service, and
- changing public opinion towards care in institutions.

THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change⁶ can be detected in the National Strategy and Action Plan. The target beneficiaries of the Strategy and Action Plan were to be the children living in institutions in Moldova. The aim of the Strategy and Action Plan was to enable at least 50% of children in institutions in 2007 to return to their biological family or other family, so fulfilling the CRC right of the children to grow up in a family.

The Strategy and Action Plan set a time period within which this aim was to be achieved; by 2012. Each

institutions: prevention and alternative care. European Committee for Social Cohesion downloaded from http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.40/GDD_2005_CE_Children_Institutions.pdf 27/02/2013.
Williamson J. and A Greenberg, 2010. Families, Not Orphanages. Better Care Network. Downloaded from <http://www.crin.org/docs/Families%20Not%20Orphanages.pdf> 27/02/2013.

⁶ See <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/evaluation-methodology/an-introduction-to-theory-of-change>

component of the Action Plan is associated with one or more *Activities*, more than 60 in total, each of which is associated with corresponding *Indicators*, *lead body* responsible for the Activity, *Partners* to the Activity, *implementation period* and designated government body or bodies with *financial responsibility* for the Activity. Annex 2 is a table showing the seven Action Plan components, the objectives for each component, the *Activities* associated with each component, the *Expected Outcomes* from the *Activities* and the *Indicators* associated with each *Expected Outcome*. The Results Chain of the National Strategy and Action Plan can be depicted in the figure below. (See Figure 1.)

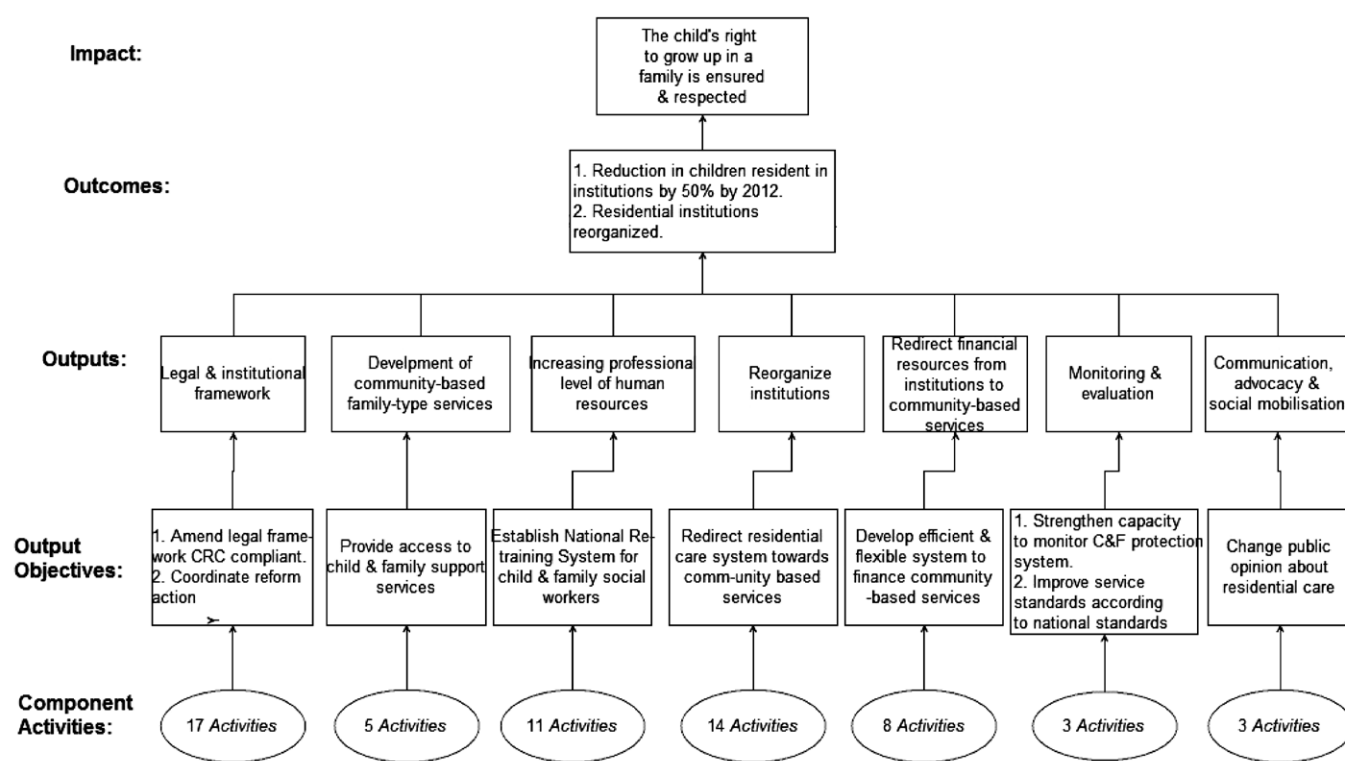
The Strategy notes the political priority of the Government given to the reform of residential care, collaboration between local and central government and the technical support of NGOs. It also notes potential constraints including insufficient family support services, limited capacity of LPAs to prevent separation of child and family and provide family support services, increasing migration of families in search of work, and resistance from staff of institutions.

UNICEF MOLDOVA COUNTRY PROGRAMME 2007–2011

The UNICEF Moldova country programme for 2007 to 2011⁷ was developed by the Government of Moldova and UNICEF based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and lessons learned. One component of the Programme was to support prevention strategies in the Government's social protection reforms that enable vulnerable children and families to access social services and benefits. This approach aimed to contribute *inter alia* to reducing the number of children deprived of parental care and reducing placement of children in residential care. Among other things, the Programme aimed for a 30% reduction in the number of children in institutions.

⁷ UNICEF Moldova. 2007. Country Programme 2007–2011 downloaded from http://www.unicef.org/spanish/about/execboard/files/Moldova_final_approved_CPD_19_Jan2007.pdf 27/02/2013.

Figure I: National Strategy and Action Plan results chain



The summary budget (thousands USD) for UNICEF Moldova 2007–2011 is shown below⁸.

	Regular resources	Other resources	Total
Child protection	1,000	7,000	8,000
HIV/AIDS	600	3,600	4,200
Equitable access to quality services	700	3,700	4,400
Social protection and child rights	695	500	1,195
Cross-sectoral	600	450	1,050
Total	3,595	15,250	18,845

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF CHILDCARE REFORMS

Moldova has been reforming its childcare system over a period of years, particularly after its accession to the CRC. Childcare has been part of many broad policy debates ranging from migration and trafficking to education, health and social assistance. There have been two significant changes in the pace and scope of childcare reform, first around 2002 and then in 2006.

In 2002 the Government developed a national concept paper on child and family protection, and the following year it approved the National Strategy on Child and Family Protection for 2003–2008. This was the first document to outline fundamental strategic directions to improve the child protection system in Moldova. It proposed legal and institutional reform including the elaboration of the Law on Social Assistance and secondary regulations on standards; the development of human resources working in childcare through training of social assistants and the

⁸ Ibid., p.6.

development of community and specialised social services for children and families in difficulty.

In 2006 the Government launched its childcare reforms. This aimed to establish a network of community social assistants, develop family support services and alternative family placement services, and reorganise residential childcare institutions. The Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child (MSPFC) was established with responsibility for child and family protection among other responsibilities. The Ministry was subsequently re-designated as the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF).

Work to prepare a National Strategy and Action Plan for childcare reforms began in 2006. At that time responsibility for child protection policy was the exclusive competence of the Ministry of Education. Functional competencies on protection of the rights of the child were attributed to the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and the Child in March 2007 based on the Government Decision No.283 of 14.03.2007 through the establishment of the Directorate on Protection of Family and the Rights of the Child in the Ministry.

The National Strategy and Action Plan on the Reform of the Residential Childcare Systems for 2007–12 was approved by the Government of Moldova in July 2007 and the National Programme on the Development of an Integrated System of Social Services, 2008–12 was approved in 2008.

According to a report⁹ prepared by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) for a subregional consultation on child protection that was hosted by the Government of Moldova and UNICEF in November 2009, some of the defining features of the overall policy environment for childcare in Moldova include the declining population and the high rate of migration; fluctuations in economic growth, including the continuing global financial crisis; and the

development and implementation of decentralisation policies and national planning and budgeting processes.

The share of children in the population is rapidly declining while the number and share of elderly people in the population is greatly increasing. Between 2009 and 2020 the number of children in Moldova is expected to diminish from 773,000 (out of a total population of 3.57 million) to about 665,000. Children under 18 population — 727,171 as at 1st January 2012 (source: www.statistica.md). It is therefore to be expected that there will be a greater focus on elderly people in the coming years. The challenge for proponents of childcare reform is to ensure that sufficient provision continues to be made for children. Many children are thought to have a parent living abroad. The migration of parents and other family members can have a mixture of both positive and negative economic and social impacts on children. The 2010 Annual Report of the MLSPF¹⁰ of the Government of Moldova reports that 17.1% of children live in families where at least one parent is working abroad. Every tenth child lives in a household where the mother is abroad. 5.2% live in families with the father abroad, while in case of 1.5% — both parents are abroad.

Trafficking of both adults and children is widely thought to be an issue that seriously affects Moldova. Policies to resolve this issue have been developed extensively since about 2002, but implementation is said to be slower. The number of children who are direct victims of trafficking is not known to be high, but many more are thought to be either at risk of trafficking or affected by trafficking of family members.

The global financial crisis is likely to have a particularly strong negative impact on households with migrant workers as it may reduce household income and increase the number of people returning to their home country. At the same time it risks lowering the revenue of the government and NGOs, making it harder for them to support families in difficulty.

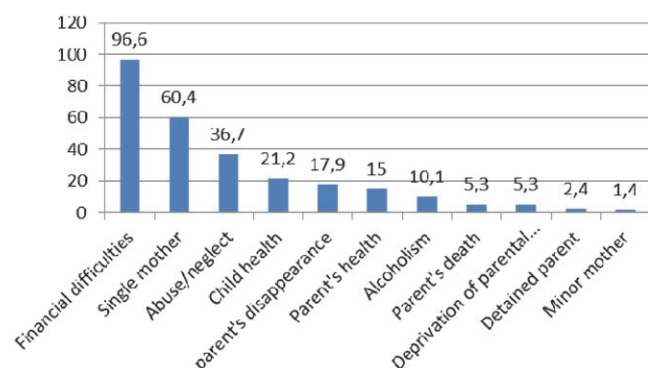
⁹ *Assessment of the Childcare System in Moldova: Final report*, (2009) Oxford: Oxford Policy Management. The assessment was carried out by Oxford Policy Management (OPM), a UK-based consultancy firm, together with EveryChild Moldova. The team was led by Clare O'Brien of OPM (project manager), and the national coordinator was Stela Grigoras of EveryChild. For further information contact clare.obrien@opml.co.uk.

¹⁰ Government of Moldova. (2011) *Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family. Annual Report 2010*. Chisinau: Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family. p110. Retrieved from <http://mpsfc.gov.md/file/rapoarte/RSA%202010%20en.pdf> on 19/08/2012.

Decentralisation of decision-making to local authority bodies has affected childcare and other aspects of social protection policy. The protection of child rights is foreseen as an “own” competence for both the primaria and raion level of LPA. This offers the prospect of locally appropriate solutions to childcare problems.

UNICEF and its government partners commissioned research in 2006 into the reasons why children were placed in institutions in Moldova¹¹. The research examined the reasons for placement in institutions of 207 children. The research findings are shown in the figure below.

Figure 2: Causes of child abandonment



The survey sample size was quite small but still provides a margin of error of 6% at the 90% confidence level. The research concluded,

Although the reasons for placing children in the institutional-residential system are multiple and complex, the top four reasons reported in this study should be carefully noted. They are: financial difficulties, single motherhood, abuse/neglect, and child's health.

Clearly responses by central and local government and NGOs to the needs of children in institutions will have to address a range of reasons why children are in institutions. Both cash-based income support and non-cash family support social work responses are required.

¹¹ *Child Abandonment in the Republic of Moldova, (2006)* Chisinau: UNICEF Moldova. p.41. Downloaded from http://www.unicef.org/moldova/ChildAbandonmentENG_with_coverpage.pdf on 28/02/2013.

RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS IN MOLDOVA

According to a report¹² prepared for UNICEF and the ME in 2007 there were 11,544 children living in 67 residential institutions in Moldova. 10,516 children were placed in the 62 institutions subordinated to the then Ministry of Education and Youth (MEY).

It is understood that two residential institutions for children with disabilities, (Hincesti and Orhei) are subordinated to the MLSPE, though a number of residents in both institutions are aged more than 18 years. Two institutions for children under 6 years (Chisinau and Balti) and two sanatoria for children infected or affected by tuberculosis are subordinated to the MH.

A third institution of children under 6 years is subordinated to the Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights, Chisinau Municipality.

Precise figures are not known for the number of children accommodated in institutions not subordinated to the ME in 2007, but the OPM-EveryChild 2009 report quotes a Government Annual Social Report for 2006 as indicating 200 children were resident in the three institutions for children under 6 years and 679 children were accommodated in the MSPFC institutions for children with disabilities¹³. The number of children accommodated in the sanatoria for children infected or affected by tuberculosis in 2007 is not indicated in the OPM-EveryChild report.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

The Government Decision No.784 of 9th July 2007 to approve the National Strategy and Action Plan¹⁴ is signed by the Prime Minister and countersigned by the Ministers of Education and Youth, Social Protection, Family and Child, Finance, and Health. Decision No.784 says,

¹² Report on the rapid assessment of residential institutions for children in Moldova (2007) conducted within the Project *Developing social services for vulnerable families and children at risk*, (TACIS 2) with the support of UNICEF and EU TACIS p. 6.

¹³ OPM 2009 op. cit., p.85.

¹⁴ Government Decision No.784 op.cit.

The Ministries, other central and local public authorities will ensure the implementation of the provisions stipulated in the National Strategy and Action Plan and will present, on an annual basis, information on their implementation to the Ministry of Education and Youth by 31st of January. The Ministry of Education and Youth will analyse this information and produce a generalised annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan on the reform of the residential childcare system for 2007-2012 to the Government by 1st of March.

This clearly indicates the MEY (now the ME) was to take primary responsibility to analyse and report on action taken by other Ministries and local government bodies to implement the strategy.

However, Annex 2 of the Decision No.784 says, “At national level, the main role of coordinating and monitoring all actions, programmes, initiatives and policies on child and family protection is played by the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child”¹⁵. This clearly indicates the MLSPF was to have overall coordination and monitoring responsibility for implementation of the Action Plan. This split of responsibilities between two Ministries, one for analysis and reporting and the other for coordination and monitoring will be returned to later in this report.

Apart from being a counter-signatory to the Decision No.784, the National Strategy and Action Plan is silent on the role and responsibilities of the MH for residential reforms and the Chisinau Directorate for Child Rights Protection is not referred to at all. This issue will be returned to later in this report.

Annex 2 of the Decision No.784 refers to the role of civil society to attract funds and international experience for implementation. Annex 2 describes international NGOs as “the main partners in implementation of the Strategy and contribute to the co-financing of certain activities, the provision of technical assistance and dissemination of good practices.”

Neither Annex 1 nor Annex 2 ascribes a role for children and families in the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan¹⁶.

NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN — IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The Strategy and Action Plan relates to the period 2007 to 2012. According to the Terms of Reference for this evaluation published by UNICEF, the Government of Moldova is considering a new strategy in 2012 for a wider reform of child and family protection. It is expected that the results of this evaluation will inform the new strategy.

The implementation of the National Strategy has been applied in the territory under the control of the Government of Moldova, excluding the region of Transnistria. Particular conditions apply in the autonomous region of Gagauzia.

The only significant change to the National Strategy and Action during its lifetime has been the re-designation of the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child as the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family.

¹⁶ Author’s note. For examples of child participation in policy development see:
Williams, E. (2004). *Children’s Participation and Policy Change in South Asia*. Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre (CHIP), Working Paper 6. Retrieved on 16/08/2012 from <http://www.childhoodpoverty.org/index.php/action=documentfeed/doctype=pdf/id=86/>.
Guerra, G. (2002). *Citizenship Knows No Age: Children’s participation in the governance and municipal budget of Barra Mansa, Brazil* in *Children, Youth and Environments*, 15(2). Retrieved on 13/10/2012 from http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/15_2/15_2_09_CitizenshipKnowsNoAge.pdf.
O’Malley, K. (2004). *Children and Young People Participating in PRSP Processes: Lessons from Save the Children’s experiences*. London: Save the Children UK. Retrieved on 16/08/2012 from http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/hrbap/PRSPS_children_young_people.pdf.
See also Kränzli-Nagl, R. and Zartler, U. (2009) *Children’s participation in school and community. European perspectives*. In Percy-Smith, B. and N Thomas (eds) *A handbook of children and young people’s participation. Perspectives from theory and practice*, London: Routledge
Kirby, P and Bryson, S. (2002). *Measuring the magic. Evaluating and researching young people’s participation in public decision making*. London: Carnegie Young People Initiative. Retrieved on 13/10/2012 from <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/files/main/Measure%20the%20Magic.pdf>.

¹⁵ Government Decision No.784. op.cit., p.3.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

According to the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation, the Government of Moldova is planning to develop a new strategy for a wider reform in the field of child and family protection. There is a need for an external evaluation to assess the impact of the existing childcare reforms on the life of children, to better understand strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for further adjustments and development of the new strategy. It is expected that the result of this evaluation will inform the process of elaboration of the new strategy.

It is expected that the evaluation will be considered by the Government of Moldova, UNICEF, international NGOs and NGOs and civil society organisations (CSO) within Moldova.

The overall objective of this evaluation is to evaluate qualitative and quantitative results and achievements of the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan during 2007-2012 in relation to the planned objectives.

The specific objectives as set out in the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation¹⁷ are:

- To provide insight into the current status of the childcare system reform and strategic recommendations for the next steps in the reform process relevant for all engaged stakeholders.
- To assess the position of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the reform of the residential childcare system and links with overall reforms of the childcare system.
- To evaluate the impact of the reform on children's lives, especially the most vulnerable children.

SCOPE AND FOCUS

The scope of the evaluation is nationwide with a focus on geographical areas where the National Strategy and Action Plan is being modelled at the institution level.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective is to evaluate qualitative and quantitative results and achievements of the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the reform of the residential childcare system during 2007 -2011. The evaluation is to take into consideration the following criteria and evaluation questions:

Assessing relevance

- To what extent has the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan responded to the priorities in overall social and child protection reforms?

Assessing effectiveness

- To what extent has the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system met the outcomes as defined by the National Strategy and Action Plan?

Assessing sustainability

- To what extent are the outcomes achieved sustainable?

Assessing efficiency

- To what extent did the management of the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system ensure defined timelines were met?

Assessing impact

- To what extent and in what way did the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system succeed in improving the situation of children, especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalised children?

Additional criteria to be assessed to the extent possible are as follows:

- Coverage: Which vulnerable groups of children have been reached? Have vulnerable children been reached, including girls, children from low-income families, ethnic minorities, children left behind due to migration etc.?
- Coordination: How the coordination mechanism were defined and divided between the

¹⁷ See Annex 1 for the full Terms of Reference.

Government, UNICEF and NGO partners. What was the role of the MLSPF and ME and other key actors in coordination of the activities? What was the role of UNICEF and other donor agencies?

- What do the children in residential care and children reintegrated into biological and other family solutions think themselves in terms of improvements of their situation, especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalized? What has been improved and what has not been improved? What are their recommendations for the future in this regard?

Assessing human rights-based approach and relevant cross-cutting issues:

- To what extent do the project outcomes contribute to achievement of children's rights and to what extent have they contributed to addressing key cross-cutting issues?

In essence this evaluation will attempt to answer the above questions while also evaluating the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of the Action Plan *Activities*.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The nature of a national social policy initiative such as the National Strategy and Action Plan requires the use of a range of methods and tools to evaluate its strategic and operational implementation at central and local government level and its impact on the lives of individual children and families. Consequently a broad range of methods was used between 26th March and 9th June 2012 to obtain data to inform the evaluation including:

- Desk review of key background documents
- Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders including children and families
- Study visits to institutions and families
- Focus group discussions, and
- A national telephone survey

Sources of primary data

Semi-structured interviews were held with officials of ME, MLSPF, MH, MF and the National Council on Child Rights Protection. Visits to and semi-structured interviews were held with senior managers of raion

Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection in Leova, Floresti, Orhei, Comrat, Falesti, Balti, Singerei, Hincesti and Ungheni raions and Chisinau Directorate for Child Rights Protection where reform activities have been implemented. Semi-structured interviews were held with officers of UNICEF and managers of NGOs active in residential reforms.

Individual semi-structured interviews were held with the Chairpersons or secretaries of five Gatekeeping Commissions between 29th March and 3rd May 2012.

No.	Locality	Function
1	Chisinau	Chairperson of the Child Gatekeeping Commission
2	Ungheni	Chairperson of the Child Gatekeeping Commission
3	Leova	Chairperson of the Child Gatekeeping Commission
4	Falesti	Secretary of the Child Gatekeeping Commission
5	Singerei	Secretary of the Child Gatekeeping Commission

The semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Study visits were made to the following residential institutions between 26th March and 4th April 2012 to speak to Directors or their representatives, view facilities for children and conduct semi-structured interviews with children:

1. Casa Aschiuta, AVE Copiii Moldova Association, Chisinau,
2. Boarding School under ME, Leova,
3. Infant House under Chisinau Municipality, Chisinau Directorate for Child Rights Protection,
4. Boarding School No.2, under Chisinau Municipality, Department of Education,
5. Temporary Placement and Rehabilitation for Young Children under Ministry of Health, Chisinau,
6. Vatra Centre for the Temporary Placement of Orphans and Graduates of Boarding Schools, Chisinau.
7. Boarding School for orphan children and children without parental care, Vascauti village, Floresti district under ME,
8. Boarding School for children with mental deficiencies (boys), Orhei town under Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family.

A study visit was made to a multi-functional centre with a large residential component housed in a former residential institution in Cupcui village, Leova district.

Time and logistics constraints of the evaluation prohibited a quantitative survey of children resident in institutions, children reintegrated from institutions and children living in substitute families. However, by conducting field visits and semi-structured interviews with a number of resident and reintegrated children and children living in substitute families valid experiences and opinions have been obtained on the impact of the reforms on children. Children were encouraged to tell their stories using words and/or drawings as they preferred.

Visits were made to caregivers and foster carers. Semi-structured interviews were held with children in residential institutions, family-type homes, foster care and reintegrated with biological or extended family.

(See Table 1 and Table 2, page 31)

A full list of persons met is contained in Annex 3.

The results and conclusions of the interviews reflect the opinions of the participants only and cannot be extrapolated to the entire population. The data can be interpreted in terms of tendencies but confirmation would require using quantitative data.

Two focus group discussions led by IMAS were held in Chisinau and Balti with graduates of institutions. The participants were selected according to the following criteria:

- Graduates of residential institutions
- Spoken language: Romanian/Moldovan or Russian
- Gender: female and male in equal numbers

The discussion was based on a guide developed in line with the objectives of the study. The participants enjoyed a free and open atmosphere, so that everyone had the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions. The participants in the two focus groups were selected from the lists of graduates provided by the NGOs: Amici dei Bambini, the Centre for Information

and Documentation in Child's Rights, the *Vatra* Centre, Chisinau and the *Drumul spre casă* (Road to Home) Center, Balti. The participants were graduates who are currently supported by these organizations; the results of the study must be interpreted from this perspective as well. The discussions were recorded and transcribed.

The purpose of the interviews was explained to the interviewees and they were free to participate or not, as they wished. They were assured that their responses would be anonymised and that information obtained in the interviews and focus groups would be used confidentially and stored securely.

Five focus group discussions led by IMAS were held in April and May 2012 involving between seven and nine community social workers from Falesti, Leova, Singerei, Ungheni and Chisinau. The discussions were recorded and transcribed.

A National Representative Survey was conducted by IMAS by telephone between 25th and 29th May 2012 of a sample of 805 persons aged 18 or over resident in Moldova to gauge their perceptions and understanding of residential care reforms. IMAS-INC Chisinau is an ESOMAR member implementing and complying with ICC/ESOMAR International Code for good practice in marketing or social research.

The criteria for stratified sampling included 12 administrative-territorial units, residential environment (urban-rural). Size of urban localities (four types), type of rural localities (commune centre/adjoining village). Stage of randomization: Locality (96 selected localities). The sample size is representative for the adult population of the Republic of Moldova, excluding Transnistria. The maximum sampling error is $\pm 3.5\%$.

(See Sample structure table on page 32)

Interview recordings and transcriptions and personal identifiers of telephone interviewees will be stored securely by IMAS and will not be released to any person without the authority of UNICEF or a properly constituted order of the Court.

Table 1: Interviews with children and carers in families

	Number of visits	Interviews with caregivers	Interviews with children
Foster care	5	5	6 children aged between 6 and 14 years
Family-Type Home	5	5	11 children aged between 6 and 16 years
Reintegrated in the biological / extended family	7	7	4 children aged between 5 and 17 years
Children whose separation from the family was prevented	3	3	0 ¹⁸

Table 2: Interviews with children in residential institutions

Institution	Location	Interviews with children
Boarding-school no. 2	Chisinau	4 children aged between 11 and 17 years
Centre for temporary placement and rehabilitation of children	Balti	2 children aged between 4 and 6 years
Boarding-school for orphan children and children without parental care under MoE	Balti	4 children aged between 7 and 15 years
Municipal baby home	Chisinau	2 children aged 5 and 6 years
Centre for temporary placement and rehabilitation of children	Chisinau	2 children aged 5 and 6 years
Boarding-school for children with mental deficiencies (boys)	Orhei	4 boys aged between 16 and 22 years
Boarding-school for orphan children and children without parental care	Leova	4 children aged between 11 and 16 years
Boarding-school for orphan children and children without parental care	Floresti	4 children aged between 8 and 16 years
Total number of interviews		26

Sources of secondary data¹⁸

A desk review was made of background documents provided by UNICEF and other reform partners. Documents consulted included three annual reports for 2008, 2009 and 2010 of the ME concerning the reform process and two other reports and briefing documents provided by the DI Unit coordinating reform action in the ME.

Other documents consulted included:

- Annual Social Reports for 2010 and 2011 of MLSPE,
- The OPM-EveryChild 2009 assessment of child-care in Moldova referred to above,
- A study commissioned by UNICEF in 2009 of the cost of not implementing the reforms¹⁹,

- The Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Children dated 20th February 2009 on implementation of the CRC in Moldova²⁰,
- *Longitudinal research on children's re-integration in Moldova: Phases 1 and 2*. The first two phases of a longitudinal research project being carried out by EveryChild examining the re-integration of children in residential care in Moldova. The report is not yet published but a copy has been provided to the evaluators. Fieldwork for the research involved interviews with 43 children aged between 7 and 14 years in Calarasi, Falesti and Ungheni who had been reintegrated from institutions.

implementation of the National Strategy Action Plan on Reforming the Residential Childcare System for the years of 2007-2012 (2009). Chisinau: Foundation for Social and Economic Research – CASE Moldova.

¹⁸ Interviews with children did not take place because of their age (under 5). The relations between parents/caregivers and other family members with children, as well as children's behaviour and their general psycho-emotional state were observed.

¹⁹ *Report on evaluating the cost of non-action in the*

²⁰ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention. Concluding Observations: Republic of Moldova*, Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, accessed at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/co/CRC-C-MDA-CO3.pdf> on 21/04/2012.

Sample structure:

Variable	Group	Respondents	Percent
<u>Sex</u>	Male	304	37,8
	Female	501	62,2
<u>Age</u>	18-29 years old	230	28,6
	30-44 years old	203	25,2
	45-59 years old	223	27,7
	More 60 years old	149	18,5
<u>Education</u>	Incomplete secondary education	106	13,2
	General or vocational school	292	36,3
	High school/college	179	22,2
	Higher education/Master/Ph.D	225	28
	Don't know/No answer	3	0,4
<u>Occupation</u>	Self-employed	29	3,6
	Employed	311	38,6
	Temporarily not working	111	13,8
	Not working	349	43,4
	No answer	5	0,6
<u>Ethnic group</u>	Moldavian/Romanian	655	81,4
	Other (Russian/Ukrainian)	148	18,4
	Don't know/No answer	2	0,2
<u>Income (household)</u>	None/only the necessary	473	58,8
	Decent	321	39,9
	No answer	11	1,4
<u>Children in the household</u>	Yes	396	49,2
	No	409	50,8
<u>Residence</u>	Municipality	188	23,4
	City	147	18,3
	Rural	470	58,4
TOTAL		805	100,0

Quantitative data was obtained from four NGOs: EveryChild, Lumos, Keystone International and CCF Moldova, actively implementing the Action Plan Activities in 17 residential institutions for:

- Number of children reintegrated from the institution to biological or extended families or placed in foster care between 2007 and 2012,
- Number of children graduated from the institution between 2007 and 2012
- Number of children prevented from admission to the institution between 2007 and 2012.

Accurate data for the number of children resident in institutions is fragmented across several Ministries and LPAs. Therefore the evaluation has relied on data provided by the DI Unit in ME of children said to be resident in institutions as at 1st June 2012.

Data on government expenditure on residential institutions and alternative care was obtained from the online database (BOOST)²¹ published by the MF of the Government of Moldova.

²¹ Bugetul Public National (consolidated) accessed on 23/05/2012 at www.mf.gov.md/ro/BOOST/.

FINDINGS

ASSESSING RELEVANCE: TO WHAT EXTENT DID IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN RESPOND TO THE PRIORITIES IN OVERALL SOCIAL AND CHILD PROTECTION REFORMS?

To what extent has the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan been relevant and timely in developing new policies and legislation?

After the political change that followed the parliamentary elections of July 2009, the new government has carried out a number of legal reforms. The Law on Social Services was adopted in 2010. This law is the first of a set of legal provisions, to be followed by the Law on Accreditation as well as amendments to the Law on Public Acquisitions, which will together set the framework for public procurement of social services by non-state providers, including CSOs. The new Law on Social Services explicitly allows for local and central government to contract out social services to non-state actors, including CSOs.

The Law lists the currently available legal forms of CSOs (associations, foundations, and institutions) as possible providers of social services; and it sets out the rights of providers including their participation in determining needs for services and access to government funding tenders. Given the instrumental role of national and international NGOs in the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan over the past five years, the Law may be highly significant for further childcare reform action as international donors withdraw their financial support to the country.

According to the new Law on Social Services, all social services regardless of the supplier that provides them, public or private, will have to be accredited. The Law on Accreditation, adopted by the Government of Moldova in June 2012, provides a more detailed definition of social services. This arrangement gives rise to some practical questions, such as what will happen to those services that CSOs propose to start up as

an innovation—that is, services that do not currently exist. Will they need to be accredited before the CSO can run them? This and other questions will need to be clarified by the stakeholders in implementation of the Law on Accreditation.

The evaluators were informed by a senior official in the MF at the time of the evaluation fieldwork that a regulation to enable the redirection of budget savings arising from the reduction of children in ME institutions to MLSPF and LPAs had been drafted but it was awaiting action by line ministries. This regulation is the key to a number of other Action Plan *Activities*. It is understood that the Regulation has since been approved by Government Decision No.351 of 29th May 2012. The Regulation freezes the budget of the institution at the point when a moratorium is placed in new admissions. The Regulation enables LPAs to re-direct the funds to support school reintegration of children leaving the institution. The evaluators were told that while the Regulation supports the reintegration of children from a particular institution, it is not a solution to the long-term development of community-based services to support children in families.

It is understood the Government of Moldova is about to launch a national consultation prior to developing a National Strategy on Child and Family Protection. The evaluators were told that the findings and conclusions of this evaluation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the reform of the residential childcare system 2007-2012 would contribute to the national consultation. It is understood the new National Strategy on Child and Family Protection will take a broader view of protection needs to include health, trafficking and exploitation of children and families, not just vulnerability to institutionalisation.

The evaluators were told that the Ordinance No.255 of the ME of 25th April 2012 stipulates that a further 23 residential institutions under the Ministry are to be reorganised or closed by 2015.

To what extent does the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan respond to the needs of the target groups?

Annex 1 to the Government Decision No.784, the National Strategy on the Residential Childcare System Reform acknowledged that over 12,000 children were living in 68 residential institutions prior to 2007. As such their right to live in a family, if not their need, was denied them, even if this was justified in some cases. According to the DI Unit of the ME, the number of children living in institutions at the beginning of June 2012 and denied their right to live in a family had reduced to 5,576²². Some of that reduction in numbers is due to the overall reduction in child population in Moldova²³, which is discussed below. The graduation of older children out of institutions will also be a factor in the reduction in the number of children resident in institutions. The reality is that fewer children are being denied their right to live in a family than was the case in 2007.

But children have other needs as well as rights; the need for protection from abuse and exploitation, to an adequate diet, to shelter, to education, adequate clothing, emotional warmth and tenderness²⁴. Whether those needs of children reintegrated to their families, or placed in substitute families, or prevented from admission to institutions are being met is another matter.

The focus group discussions with graduates of institutions revealed some of the inadequacies of residential care to meet their needs. Participants said that leaving the residential institution was difficult for most young people who came to Chisinau to work or study. Some of them said that they did not have any support and faced significant challenges because of differences between the life at the boarding-school and the life outside.

²² According to the 2012 Annual Report of the ME DI Unit, as at 1st June 2012, 4,664 children were resident in 50 institutions of ME, 629 children were resident in two institutions of MLSPF, 219 children were resident in the institutions of MH and 64 children were resident in the institution under Chisinau Municipal Directorate for Child Rights Protection. (5,576 children in total). At an extended meeting of the National Coordinating Council it was reported that 210 children under 18 years were resident in the two institutions under the MLSPF, the remainder being adults.

²³ Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova accessed on 16/08/2012 at <http://www.statistica.md/category.php?l=en&idc=103> and.

²⁴ Maslow, A.H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review* 50, p.370-396.

Some of us slept outside on a bench when we came here (to Chisinau) for the first time.

[Graduate of an institution, aged 25 years, Chisinau]

A challenge is that the graduates' legal status is not always established in time. Some graduates said that they faced difficulties that prevented them from enjoying certain advantages; social scholarships, accommodation in students' dormitory, exemption from the payment of the tuition fee.

People at the college where I wanted to study were asking for documents confirming our status. I did not have those documents. They were calling the boarding-school to ask and specify if such a person exists in their records. I don't want to criticize the boarding-school, because I am proud of having studied at the boarding-school, but I was not happy with the director's attitude, because the college people were calling there to ask about me and my status, and the boarding-school administration was nervous and shouted at me when I went there to take my documents "Why did you not go where we sent you to study?", i.e. in Singerei somewhere. I had the possibility, my grades were good and I wanted to study in the capital city, specialize in the We wake up in the morning. After we get up, we wash and get ready for breakfast. We have breakfast and go to classes. We have half an hour to prepare for classes and recapitulate the homework. After classes, we have lunch. After lunch we have different activities. For instance, I am fond of Chemistry, we have this activity and get ready for it. Then, we have some free time that we use to walk and discuss. Then we have our homework time – from 16:30 to 19:00. Then, we have dinner and we go to our bedroom, spend some time outside, chat and go back to our bedroom to prepare for sleeping.

[Female (F), 15 years old, boarding-school Chisinau]

We have a regime for the entire day.

[M, 12 years old, boarding-school Chisinau]

Older children showed an attitude of quiet resignation to the regime they follow at the boarding-school and certain freedom constraints.

I got used. We are all here because of a difficult life so we need to accept this and be thankful for having a shelter and a place to study.

[F, 16 years old, boarding-school Balti]

Yes, we are used already.

[F, 15 years old, boarding-school Chisinau]

No, I am used here and it is better here than at home anyway.

[M, 16 years old, boarding-school Leova]

Some children living in institutions spoke about their longing for family life.

I want to have a family. A kind and hard-working family to take care of me. And I don't want quarrels in the family.

[M, 16 years old, boarding-school Leova]

A family. My mother, father and brother.

[M, 17 years old, boarding-school Orhei]

No, I know what I wish – to go home.

[M, 21 years old, boarding-school Orhei]

I want a mother, a sister and a father so that they help me.

[M, 21 years old, boarding-school Orhei]

I haven't thought about it. I don't know... Yes, I know. I want my sister, Carolina, back.

[F, 11 years old, Floresti, family-type home]

It is apparent that the majority of children deinstitutionalised from institutions have come from boarding and auxiliary boarding schools rather than special institutions for children with disabilities or young children. The effects of prevention measures have been more widely felt. NGOs and Directors of special institutions for children with disabilities and for young children spoke about efforts made to prevent admissions to special institutions by providing support to families who might otherwise have placed their child in the institution.

The challenges of deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities from Orhei and Hincesti institutions was highlighted by the Head of Directorate of Family and Child Protection in MLSPP in a meeting with the evaluators.

“The deinstitutionalization of children from Orhei is extremely difficult. When it is difficult to reintegrate them in biological or extended families, they opt for alternative forms, but these are extremely expensive for local public authorities given the complexity of problems these beneficiaries have. Therefore, it is very difficult to convince local authorities to develop these social services and even more complicated to place a person in such a service, especially when such beneficiary is not from the raion in question, was abandoned at birth and is not under the jurisdiction of any local authority.”

The attention of the evaluators was drawn on several occasions to the difficulties of deinstitutionalising children, particularly children with disabilities, who had lost their links with the local area from where they originated. LPAs where the institution was located were reluctant to assume responsibility for all the children in that institution, many of whom did not have family links with that raion. Recommendations are made below for incentives for LPAs to devise proposals for the care of children that may not have a family link to a raion.

To what extent and how has the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan taken into account the results of previous efforts as a basis for planned intervention?

Changes in the approach to childcare have been taking place over many years, especially following Moldova's accession to the UN CRC in 1993. Early developments include the adoption of the Law on Child Rights in 1994 and the Law on Youth in 1999, the introduction of university training in social work in 1995 and the establishment of the National Council on Child Rights Protection in 1998.

The reform of the childcare system gained in intensity around 2002 when the Committee on the Rights of the Child offered its concluding observations on Moldova's first report on implementation of the UN CRC. In response the Government developed the National Concept Paper on Child and Family Protection.

In 2003 the Government of Moldova approved the National Strategy on Child and Family Protection for 2003-2008. It was the first document to outline fundamental strategic directions to improve the child protection system in Moldova. It proposed legal and institutional reform, including the elaboration of the Law on Social Assistance and secondary regulations on standards; the development of human resources working in childcare, including training of community social assistants; and the development of community and specialised social services for children and families in difficulty.

Between 2002 and 2006 child protection became a visible issue in civil society programmes, and actors such as UNICEF, EveryChild (through the EU-TACIS I project) and others collaborated with the government in developing the childcare system, including a gatekeeping service and support services for children and families such as day care facilities and temporary placement centres. They provided technical assistance, supported capacity development and piloted alternative services. The period from 2002 to 2006 can therefore be considered the preliminary phase of the reform process.

The second stage can be considered to start in May 2006 when Moldova officially launched its childcare reform. The objectives of the reform included the establishment of a network of community social assistants, the development of family support services to prevent children's separation from their families, the reintegration of children with their biological families, the development of alternative family placement services, the reorganisation of residential childcare institutions, and the creation of the MSPFC to be responsible for childcare reform.

In January 2007 the new ministry was formed to deliver results in social protection, and the MEY, as it then

was, continued to work on deinstitutionalisation. Later that year the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Reform of the Residential Childcare System 2007-2012 was approved by the Government of Moldova.

Other legislative and policy developments have continued since 2007. The Directorate for Family and Child Protection was established in the MoSPFC in March 2007 based on the Government Decision No.283 of 14.03.2007. The MSPFC rolled out the network of community social assistants nationwide, with recruitment and management undertaken by local raion administrations. The National Programme on the Development of an Integrated System of Social Services, 2008-12 was approved in December 2008 and the Law on Social Services has been approved.

External support to the government has continued under EU projects TACIS II and TACIS III, and the DFID/SIDA-funded project to support the reform of social assistance services, alongside the efforts of the Social Investment Fund and social assistance programmes by the World Bank and others.

Are the objectives of the National Strategy and Action Plan realistic to achieve in the timescale outlined?

The Government Decision No.784 on the National Strategy and Action Plan set the following General and specific objectives²⁵ for the National Strategy:

General objectives:

reorganise residential institutions under a general transformation plan.

Objectives:

- adjust the legal and constitutional framework on child and family protection to international policies;
- provide children and families with access to quality family-type and community-based social services;
- strengthen the professional skills of staff employed in the system;

²⁵ Government Decision No.784. op. cit., p.2.

- develop an efficient and flexible financial mechanism to redirect financial resources from the residential system to family-type and community-based social services;
- consolidate the monitoring, evaluation and supervision skills at all levels of the child and family protection system;
- increase the public awareness and mobilise the society regarding the need to reform the residential childcare system.

Probably it was not realistic to think that all children and families in Moldova could have access to quality family-type and community-based social services by 2012. That would have required strengthening the technical capacity of all thirty-two raions and municipalities of Moldova to train and deploy competent social assistants to manage deinstitutionalisation and prevention services and develop new community-based services. But there are excellent examples of LPAs that have developed processes and services to support children and families such as:

- Mother and Baby shelter and the Small Group Home for Children with Disabilities in Chisinau municipality,
- Supported living accommodation for children with disabilities in Orhei town,
- Centre for Children with Disabilities in Cahul,
- Mother and Baby Shelter in Cornesti,
- Centre for Social Services for Youth in Cahul.

Other LPAs have worked with NGOs to recruit, train and support foster carers. Other LPAs and NGOs have developed exciting processes to involve children in the development of community-based services. The model of Inclusive Education being implemented in many LPAs is an innovative service to support children with additional learning needs in mainstream schools. These examples demonstrate what can be achieved.

Procedures and systems have been developed to train community social assistants to administer social aid but doubt is expressed below whether the reported high annual staff turnover rate of community social assistants and their relatively brief job training is adequate to enable them to provide effective prevention and reintegration services to children.

It was reported to the evaluators that a regulation to redirect financial resources from the residential childcare system to fund community-based services had been approved in May 2012, some four years late. It was put to the evaluators that the regulation linked the transfer of finance of a particular institution to a particular LPA for the direct care and education costs to children deinstitutionalised for that institution. It is argued below that this is not a *flexible financial mechanism*.

It is argued below that the absence of an efficient and accurate local and national social work management information system inhibits effective monitoring and evaluation of government policies and priorities for childcare reforms. Accurate and timely information is essential for local managers to supervise frontline staff and strategic managers to supervise implementation of policy.

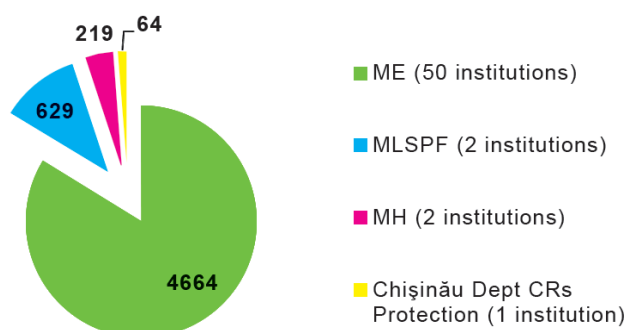
Of course it is a matter of judgement about governance whether the objectives were realistic, but given the five year lifetime of the strategy, the evaluators believe it was realistic to aim for their achievement within that time.

ASSESSING EFFECTIVENESS: TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM OF THE RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE SYSTEM MEET THE OUTCOMES AS DEFINED BY THE NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN?

Have the planned results been achieved to date (quantitative and qualitative)?

The number of children resident in institutions at the beginning of June 2012 according to data provided by the DI Unit in the ME is shown in the figure below.

Figure 3: Children resident at 1st June 2012



Source: ME DI Unit

The TransMonEE²⁶ database indicates the number of children living in institutions at the end of 2006 was 11,551. But if the 12,000 children noted in the Government Decision No.784 — the National Strategy, said to be living in institutions, is taken as the baseline figure, the number of children living in institutions outside a family environment at the beginning of June 2012 has reduced by 54% (5,576 children resident).

As is noted above, the Action Plan comprises seven components. Each component is associated with one or more objectives to be achieved through one or more of 61 *Activities*. Progress to implement the *Activities* was reviewed in a meeting of an evaluator on 6th April 2012 with the DI Unit in the ME. The comments of the DI Unit on *Activity* implementation are reported in column 6 of Annex 2. By reviewing the outcomes of the Action Plan as recorded in column 6 of Annex 2 the evaluators judge that 34 out of the 61 *Activities* have been wholly or partly completed. The opinion of the evaluators concerning the

achievement of Action Plan component objectives is summarised in the table below. By reviewing the outcomes of the Action Plan *Activities* as tabulated in Annex 2, readers can judge for themselves whether Action Plan Objectives have been achieved, partly achieved or not achieved.

Progress to implement the *Activities* of the Component No.2 — *To provide access to the child and his/her family to quality family-type and community-based services* is reported to have moved ahead in raions where NGOs have partnered LPAs. Less progress was reported in raions where NGOs have not been operational.

There are particular instances of progress to implement the *Activities* of the Component No.4 — *To redirect the residential care system towards the community and family*, that offer support to some children with disabilities or older children about to graduate from institutions but the overall number of institutions of the ME still remains significantly high. Little progress has been reported concerning the re-direction of residential care of children aged under 3 years in institutions of the MH and Chisinau Directorate for Child Rights Protection or institutions for children with disabilities under the MLSPF.

The critical objective of the Action Plan Component No.5: *To develop an efficient and flexible financial mechanism to redirect financial resources from the residential system to community-based and family-type services*, had not been achieved at the time of the evaluation. This is discussed below.

Little progress to implement the three *Activities* of the Component No.6 — *Monitoring and Evaluation* is reported. According to the DI Unit, finance was committed to build a database of children and families in difficulties and the services they receive but that none of the databases that were developed are functional. An accreditation and licensing system for service providers was to be developed but this has not happened. A Social Inspection system has been established but it is reported that at the moment the service only verifies cash benefits, not the quality of non-cash social services.

²⁶ The TransMonEE (Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity) database is maintained by the UNICEF Regional office for CEE/CIS countries. It captures a large range of data relevant to social and economic issues relevant to the situation and wellbeing of children, young people and women in countries of Central Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of independent States (CEE/CIS). The database is updated every year thanks to the collaboration of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in the countries of CEE/CIS.

According to the TransMonEE database, the number of children in residential care (per 100,00 population aged 0-17) in 2010 (the most recently available figures) in Ukraine was 1,062.1; in Moldova 950.2; in Romania 590.4.

Table 3: Action Plan objectives

Legal and institutional framework	
To adjust the legal and the institutional framework for child and family protection to international policies in view of ensuring and respecting the child's right to grow up in a family environment	Partly achieved
To ensure an adequate coordination of all activities under the Residential Childcare System Reform	Partly achieved
Family-type and Community-based Service Development	
To provide access to the child and his/her family to quality family-type and community-based services	Partly achieved
Increasing the Professional Level of Human Resources	
To set up a National In-service Training and Re-Qualification System for Child and Family protection professionals	Not achieved
Reorganization of Residential Institutions	
To redirect the residential care system towards the community and family	Partly achieved
Redirect Financial Resources from Residential Childcare System to Community-based services	
To develop an efficient and flexible financial mechanism to redirect financial resources from the residential system to community-based and family-type services	Not achieved
Monitoring and evaluation	
To strengthen the monitoring capacity at all levels of the child and family protection system	Not achieved
To improve the quality of child and family protection services in accordance with quality standards	Not achieved
Communication, Advocacy and Social Mobilization	
To form the public opinion and the opinion of all actors involved in child and family protection regarding the need of residential childcare system reform	Achieved

One NGO is implementing a plan to follow up the children that it worked with to return to family care. Children and their carers were interviewed shortly after they left the institution for their reactions and opinions. The same children have been interviewed at subsequent intervals to find out how their opinions and experiences have developed. This is excellent practice on the part of the NGO but is not an effective substitute for a wider programme of monitoring and evaluation by government.

To what extent and how did the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system respond to the changing external conditions and unplanned (both positive and negative) effects relevant to the planned results? What strategies have been used to take into account a changing environment? Were these strategies successful?

According to the 2010 Annual Social Report of the MLSPF²⁷:

²⁷ The Government of the Republic of Moldova (2011),

In 2010 the poverty level in the Republic of Moldova decreased compared to 2009 by 4.4%, representing 21.9%. As in the previous years children are more affected by poverty than the adult population. In the situation when the share of poor people went down in general, however every fourth child (24.2%) lives in absolute poverty, and 1.9% — in extreme poverty. Thus, about 188.6 thousand children under 18 years are from households with a lower consumption than the absolute poverty line (1015.9 lei) and about 14.8 thousand children have a monthly consumption below the extreme poverty line (549.4 lei).

The Annual Report continues:

The poverty rate for children from rural area exceeds three times the poverty level of children from urban areas. Thus, every third child from rural

Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family. Annual Report 2010. Chisinau: Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family. p.108. Retrieved on 19/08/2012 from <http://mpsfc.gov.md/file/rapoarte/RSA%202010%20en.pdf>.

area is in absolute poverty compared to every tenth child from urban areas.

The Government has responded to this situation by targeting poor families with the *Ajutor Social* scheme, but as is pointed out below, the scheme is not reaching some of the poorest households in Moldova.

Several persons consulted by the evaluators speculated that international donor attention and funds might soon be redirected to countries in the Middle East where recent action in 2011 and 2012 had forced changes in the political environment. Given that much Action Plan activity in individual institutions has been implemented by NGOs funded by international donors further activity to deinstitutionalise children still remaining in institutions may face a funding shortfall. Reduction in donor support for residential childcare reforms makes it all the more imperative that the Government of Moldova approved primary and secondary legislation to enable central and local government to contract services from NGOs.

To what extent did the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system contribute to decreasing the number of children in residential care?

According to data provided by the DI Unit the number of children resident in institutions at the beginning of June 2012 has reduced by 54% from 2007 levels. The CASE report²⁸ for UNICEF estimated the number of children resident in institutions would fall by 13% between 2008 and 2014 even if no reform action was taken and the rate of institutionalisation remained constant, because of the overall decline in the national target population of children aged less than 14 years. In a balanced system the number of children graduating from institutions would be balanced by new admissions coming in at the other end. But because the eligible child population is shrinking, the number of graduates would exceed the number of new admissions, by 13% according to the CASE estimations.

The fact is the number of children resident in institutions had reduced by 6,424 by the beginning of June 2012 from 2007 levels. Other direct and indirect factors besides demographic changes have impacted on the number of children in residential institutions.

Direct factors will have been interventions by NGOs in particular institutions to reintegrate children, to place other children in substitute families and to provide various supports in order to prevent admission. NGOs that have been working with institutions and LPAs to deinstitutionalise children include:

- CCF Moldova,
- EveryChild,
- Keystone International Moldova Association,
- Lumos.

Indirect factors²⁹ will include:

- National and local information campaigns conducted by the Government and donors such as UNICEF, USAID and NGOs, to raise awareness of the effects of institutionalisation on children.
- The development of the social assistance programme by the MLSPF and the provision of cash benefits to ease acute poverty.
- The leadership of the MLSPF to increase in the number of community social assistants. The effects of their training and understanding of their role in the community to support deinstitutionalisation and prevention measures.
- The work of raion Commissions on the Protection of Children in Need (“gatekeeping” Commissions) controlling admissions to institutions.
- Child protection training provided by UNICEF to mayors.
- Child and family support interventions conducted by UNICEF and NGOs such as Amici dei Bambini, Centre for Information and Documentation on Children Rights and others. Additionally there are a number of smaller local NGOs working to support children and families and in doing so, reduce the risk of children being

²⁹ Though referred to as “Indirect” these actions are Action Plan *Activities* No.:15,16,18,24, 25, 59 and 60 as listed in Annex 2.

²⁸ CASE Moldova. Op. cit. p.21-22.

placed in institutions.

- Better, more effective collaboration between health and protection agencies to prevent admissions.
- Other programs and projects implemented by different stakeholders to prevent violation of children’s rights and improvements to the welfare system etc.

Data on the number of children reintegrated to biological or extended family or placed with foster carers from residential institutions, and prevented from admission provided by four NGOs is summarised in the table below. The four NGOs have been working with LPAs and institution authorities on deinstitutionalisation and prevention in 17 institutions, some of them since 2007.

The NGOs are not named as the table is not intended for comparisons between NGOs. Some NGOs have been working on reintegration and prevention longer than others. Some NGOs have been working in more institutions than others. Therefore figures for one NGO cannot be compared with another. The purpose of the table is to indicate the quantitative contribution by NGOs on reintegration and prevention towards the overall reduction of children resident in institutions.

Table 4: Deinstitutionalisation by NGOs 2007–2011

	Children reintegrated to biological parents, extended or substitute family	Children prevented from admission by NGO
NGO 1	169	530
NGO 2	516	249
NGO 3	188	97
NGO 4	58	449
Total	931	1,325

A caveat relates to “prevention”. The evaluators were not told of a definitive criterion accepted by NGOs and the Government for counting a child as being prevented from being placed in an institution. The act of helping a family access cash benefits and so reduce family poverty will reduce the likelihood of the parent placing the child in the institution. On the other hand, that parent might never consider placing the child in the institution no matter how poor the family. It is likely that each NGO is using slightly different

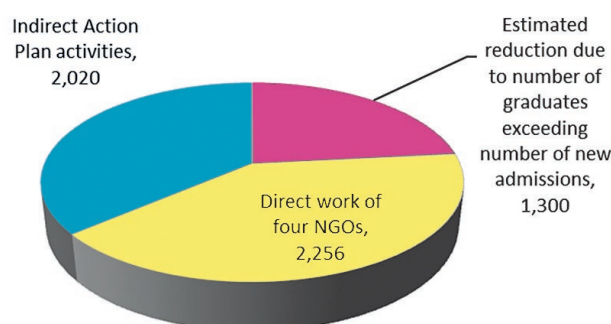
criterion for counting a case as a prevention case.

A criterion sometimes used elsewhere for counting a child as having been prevented from admission is *social work action at the point when the parent has applied to the authorities for the child’s admission that results in the parent withdrawing the application or the authority denying the placement request.*

A second caveat relates to “reintegration”. The evaluators were not told of a definitive criterion accepted by NGOs and the Government for counting a child as having been successfully reintegrated with biological or extended family. One NGO has adopted a two-stage criterion. The child is considered “reunited” (reunification) with biological or extended family at the point when the child leaves the institution to live with the family. The child is considered successfully “reintegrated” after a period of time providing the family situation has not broken down and the child has not returned to the institution. The NGO quite rightly said the period before the child can be considered successfully reintegrated varies from family to family. For the purpose of future statistics and planning it might be helpful to consider a reunified child as having been successfully reintegrated *if the family situation does not breakdown within six months of reunification resulting in the child returning to the institution.*

The figure below presents the relative contributions made by direct and indirect Action Plan Activities and the consequences of the number of graduates from institutions exceeding the number of new admissions because of the overall decline of the target national child population as estimated in the CASE report.

Figure 4: Relative contributions to the reduction of children in institutions 2007–2012



A third caveat relates to placement of children in so-called “temporary placement centres”. Some LPAs report these centres as alternative to placements in residential care. For example, figures reported to the MLSPF by the gatekeeping commission in Orhei show 75 children were placed in temporary placement centres in 2011, compared to 31 children placed in residential institutions. Causeni Commission placed 20 children in temporary placement centres and 20 children in residential institutions in 2011. Hîncești commission placed 29 children in temporary placement centres and 29 in residential institutions in 2011.

It is reasonable to classify temporary placement centres as alternatives to residential institution if children stay for a relatively short time, generally up to one month, until longer term plans are made for their care. However the evaluators were told by an NGO representative that some children remain in those centres for as long as 12 months. This is clearly not “temporary” and should be regarded as another form of residential care. A recommendation is made below concerning a social work management information system that among other things should be able to track the duration of children’s residence in temporary placement centres.

According to one NGO representative interviewed by the evaluators some commissions give positive recommendations for institutionalization even though there are no residential institutions in the raions where they operate. This means that some children are placed in residential care in other raions. A recommendation is made below concerning the tracking of the origins of children admitted to residential institutions using a social work management information system.

One important factor influencing placement of children in residential institutions is the attitude of the general public of Moldova. Information campaigns have been run by the Government and NGOs over the lifetime of the Action Plan and prior to the Action Plan with the aim of changing public opinion concerning the use of residential care. A telephone survey of a representative sample of Moldovan adults was carried out by IMAS as a component of this evaluation. Baseline data is not available against which to compare

changes in public attitudes but nonetheless the survey was revealing.

A sizeable proportion of respondents had heard of publicity campaigns about the plight of children though some campaigns were recalled by more respondents than others. The campaign - *I am alone... You can be my family* was recalled by almost 50% of respondents.

84% of respondents were concerned about the situation of children in boarding schools “to a certain extent” or “very much”. An even larger proportion of respondents (93%) were concerned “to a certain extent” or “very much” about children left without parental care.

Respondents generally had a positive view of the reasons why people might care for a child as an alternative to living in an institution. 37% thought such persons were motivated to “do a good deed for society” and only 10% thought people were motivated by payment for providing care. 26% would consider providing a home for a child from a residential institution. That proportion rose to 40% if they were to receive training and payment for caring for a child. A large majority thought they would be supported by their family and neighbours if they cared for a child from an institution.

When asked what arrangements they would make if they worked abroad most respondents said they would try to take their children with them or arrange for them to be cared for by other family members. Only 2% said they would place their child in an institution. But when asked a cross-checking question, *In case of children in difficulty, what do you think is the best for the child?* a sizeable proportion (21%) said the children should be placed in a boarding school. Respondents will have had different notions of what constituted “in difficulty” but given that the question was associated with other questions concerning parents’ ability to care, it might be reasonable to assume that “a child in difficulty” would be associated by respondents to mean a child whose parents were unable to care for him or her.

The vast majority of respondents (98%) approved of social contact between their children and children from residential institutions, though 28% would not want their child to study in the same class as a child with a mental or physical handicap.

To what extent did the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system contribute to increasing ratio of the children in family substitute services versus those in institutional care? What do children themselves think about improvements in this matter (Have there been improvements? Why/ why not? etc).

The National Strategy does not provide baseline figures for children living in substitute families in 2007. The OPM-EveryChild report extracted figures from several sources, which might not be entirely satisfactory. The OPM-EveryChild report quotes figures³⁰ from Annual Social Reports of the State Statistical Office indicating the number of children resident in institutions in 2007 per 100,000 population was 1,215. The OPM-EveryChild report quotes the TransMonEE database³¹ 2009 as indicating the number of children under guardianship in 2007 per 100,000 population was 778. However, not all children under guardianship will be living in families. Some may be under the guardianship of directors of institutions or officials of raion departments of social assistance.

The OPM-EveryChild report indicates 45 children were living in foster care in 2007. In February 2013 in a response to this report, the MLSPF reported in 2012 there were 160 professional parental assistants (foster parents) and 87 family-type homes accommodating 602 children. The Family and Child Rights Directorate of MLSPF acknowledged the relatively small number of children living in foster care and family-type homes compared to the much larger number of children still living in residential institutions and explained the reasons for the slow development of these services as:

- The low salary paid to parent-educators, especially the professional parental assistants (foster carers),
- The low level of child allowances paid to parent-educators and professional parental assistants,
- The lack of specialized foster carers to take care of children with special needs (disabilities, behavioural problems),
- The need for foster carers to have an additional income to supplement the low professional parental assistant salary meant that few foster carers could stay at home to provide full-time care to very young children.

Have the necessary standards / amendments to the relevant by-laws been developed?

According to officials in the DI Unit of the ME the following amendments have been made to relevant bylaws:

- A statutory Act has been adopted to allow the employment of social assistants in residential institutions.
- Regulations for case management have been approved by the MLSPF.
- Regulations and standards have been developed for family services.
- A register of family service providers has been established.
- An order of the MLSPF has been approved that specifies the mechanism of supervision of social workers. The order states that there should be one community social assistant supervisor to supervise the work of 3-5 community social assistants from the region (3-4 neighbourhood villages). The supervisor is a regular community social assistant but has an additional task to supervise other social assistants. The supervisor receives an additional payment for this task.

According to officials in the DI Unit of ME the following amendments to existing bylaws or new bylaws have not been made:

- A draft regulation on the composition and functions of the Guardianship Authorities has been developed but not approved.
- Regulations for in-service training, appraisal,

³⁰ OPM, op.cit., p.129.

³¹ According to the TransMonEE database the number of children in care of foster parents or guardians (per 100,000 population aged 0-17) in 2010 in Romania was 1,064,2; in Moldova 977,1; in Ukraine 856,0.

attestation and qualifications of child and family protection professionals have not been developed.

- No amendments or new regulations have been developed to allow the employment of other professionals in child and family protection institutions after they have been re-qualified and to keep their length of service and their re-qualification degree in order to be assigned a new remuneration category. However, current legislation does not prevent people from re-qualifying for new posts.
- Regulations have not been developed for incentives to entrepreneurs to hire graduates from residential institutions.
- Regulations or bylaws have not been developed to provide housing or apartments to graduates of residential institutions. According to the DI Unit there were some attempts in Chisinau to provide social apartments for orphans, but it is a very slow process.

Possibly the most important regulation or bylaw that had not been adopted at the time when the fieldwork for this evaluation was being conducted is the regulation to enable ME budget savings arising from the reduction in number of children in institutions and the closure of some institutions to be transferred to MLSPF and LPAs to fund the development of community-based services. That regulation was to be approved in 2008 according to the Action Plan. A senior MF official told the evaluators that a draft regulation had been prepared and passed to the ME in 2011. The evaluators have since been told that the regulation was adopted by Government on 29th May 2012.

According to the untitled briefing note passed to the evaluators by the DI Unit, the money saved from the closure of institutions, about 14 million lei, up to now has been redirected to cover expenditure of the remaining ME residential institutions³².

To what extent has the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system contributed to the realization of the rights of children in the social protection system?

Moldova acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1993. The CRC provides that children have 40 substantive rights only one of which is the right to grow up in a family³³. Applying the analysis proposed by the CASE report for the reduction in numbers of children in institutions because of the overall reduction of the eligible child population in Moldova, 75% of the 6,424 reduction of children living in institutions at the beginning of June 2012 would have been due to direct and indirect deinstitutionalisation and prevention interventions under the reform Action Plan. That is, more than 6,500 children appear to have had their right to grow up in a family respected who might otherwise be resident in an institution.

However, that is not to say that all the rights of those children have been respected. Only a detailed study of reintegrated children or children prevented from admission will reveal just how the other rights of children have or have not been respected. A particularly important children's right in the context of residential childcare reforms and deinstitutionalisation is the right of children to participate in decisions affecting them. Interviews with children who had been reintegrated with biological or extended family suggest that some of them felt that right was not fully respected.

Another children's right that is significant in the context of residential childcare reforms and deinstitutionalisation is the right to education. Effective plans for a child reintegrated from a residential institution to attend a local community school must include good preparation of the child and the school, with provision for additional classroom support where necessary.

It is apparent from recent interviews with Key Support staff of schools attended by reintegrated children that innovative action under the heading of Inclusive Education has been taken in some raions to better prepare schools for reintegration and provide effective support to class teachers and pupils.

The absence of data on gender and ethnicity of children affected by the reforms means it is not possible to say if the reforms have been implemented without discrimination.

³² ME DI Unit, op.cit., p.4.

³³ CRC Preamble.

ASSESSING EFFICIENCY: TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE MANAGEMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM OF THE RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE SYSTEM ENSURE DEFINED TIMELINES WERE KEPT TO?

How well has the implementation of the reform of residential childcare system been managed? To what extent are activities implemented as scheduled, how flexible was the management of the reform of the residential care in adapting to changing needs?

The Action Plan assigns lead responsibility for implementing *Activities* to ME, MLSPF or LPAs, though MH is given responsibility for one *Activity*. MLSPF is assigned lead responsibility for 47 out of the 61 Action Plan *Activities*. When the evaluators asked about this issue it was explained by officials of the DI Unit that early in the lifetime of the National Strategy and Action Plan the notion was considered of making a separation in residential institutions between education services (ME) and care services (MLSPF). Consequently it was thought that MLSPF would have much more of a lead responsibility. However, the separation was not supported by government but no alterations were made to designated Ministry lead responsibilities in the published Action Plan.

Functional competencies on protection of the rights of the child were attributed to the MSPFC in March 2007 based on the Governmental Decision No.283 of 14.03.2007 through the establishment of the Directorate on Protection of Family and the Rights of the Child in the Ministry.

Examination by the evaluators of the outcomes of Action Plan *Activities* as tabulated in Annex 2 suggests the ME has taken a pragmatic approach to accepting lead responsibility for *Activities* that are clearly within the authority of the Ministry and has taken action where the Ministry has management responsibility. The evaluators identify 15 *Activities* that have not been

actioned³⁴ that in the Action Plan are assigned to the MLSPF as “Structure in charge”.

Efficient and effective implementation of the Action Plan requires Ministries to take action within their spheres of authority but also to coordinate with other Ministries where action has implications outside their sphere of authority. The Action Plan has significant consequences for the ME, MLSPF, MH, LPAs, and the MF. It involves large scale changes for staff in residential institutions, new authority and functions for local administration of social welfare and social assistance, significant decentralisation for the planning and delivery of social protection of children and families, an increasing role of central government to monitor implementation of policy priorities by local government, and last but not least, big shifts in Ministry budgets. All the forgoing requires careful coordination and planning if it is to be effective.

Activity No.17 of the Action Plan Component No.1 – *Legal and institutional framework*, refers to establishing a Steering Committee for the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan. The National Council for Coordinating Reform of the Residential Childcare System and Developing Inclusive Education³⁵ was established by the ME Order No.338 of 14th June 2010 and is chaired by a senior official of the ME. It has to be noted that it was three years after the launch of the National Strategy and Action Plan before the National Council, an exceedingly critical mechanism to coordinate inter-ministerial and NGO action, was established. It also has to be noted that the National Council is chaired by the ME, not MLSPF. According to Annex No.1 of the Government Decision No.784, the National Strategy, MLSPF is assigned coordination responsibility at the national level and therefore it might be expected that MLSPF would chair the National Council.

Membership of the National Council includes representatives of:

- Ministry of Finance,

³⁴ See Annex 2, Activity No.: 1, 10, 12, 13, 14,16, 26, 27, 35, 36, 41, 52, 53, 57, 58.

³⁵ Consiliul de Coordonare a reformei sistemului rezidențial de îngrijire a copilului și dezvoltării educației incluzive.

- Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family,
- Ministry of Health,
- UNICEF,
- “Femeia si copilul - Protectie și sprijin”, Criuleni,
- Keystone,
- EveryChild,
- CCF Moldova,
- LUMOS,
- “Speranta” Centre.

While a structure to coordinate national action has been established, on at least one count coordinated management appears to have been less than effective, in particular, the delay referred above for government approval of regulations for the transfer of budget savings from the closure of the ME institutions to the MLSPF and local government social assistance and education departments to fund community-based services and teaching support for reintegrated children in schools.

Structures to manage child protection have been established in raions, with slightly different structures in Chisinau Municipality are shown in Annex 5. Key structures to implement the National Strategy and Action Plan at local level are the raion Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection. Each Department is overseen by a Vice President of the Raion Council with responsibility for social affairs. Each Department is headed by a Department chief who leads a team of social specialists and community social assistants. Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection are responsible for the development of primary and specialised social services and the evaluation, assistance and monitoring of deinstitutionalised children and children prevented from admission to institutions.

It has been pointed out to the evaluators that the implementation of childcare reforms by central and local government must be seen within the context of decentralisation of service planning and delivery of other government services, not just child and family protection. It has been put to the evaluators that decentralisation limits or inhibits the ability of central government, ie., MLSPF and the Directorate on Family and Child Protection, to define how local government implements central government childcare reform policy and strategy.

Officials in the DI Unit of the ME told the evaluators that a significant obstacle to deinstitutionalisation is the lack of alternative services for children in families and in school. This is understandable if budget savings have not been transferred to the MLSPF and LPAs. The evaluators were told that some raion Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection were reluctant to incur the costs of supporting vulnerable children and families without additional funding when those costs could be passed on to central government by placing children in central government-funded residential institutions. As is referred to above, the untitled 2011 briefing note of the DI Unit reported that budget savings instead had been redirected within the ME to fund the remaining residential institutions.

The lack of alternatives to placement in residential care was noted in interviews with members of Gate-keeping Commissions who said they face difficulties in the creation of alternative childcare services and said that the existing services are overloaded.

They think these resources are sufficient. We think they are not. The situation is not that the families could wait and we are not able to immediately place children under the category of alternative care... At present we don't think there are sufficient resources. As long as we continue to place children into residential centres, that means that resources are not sufficient.

[Main specialist in the
Child Protection Directorate, Faesti]

A fundamental requirement for managing organisational change is access to and use of accurate and timely information. The evaluators were told by officials of the DI Unit that information about residential admissions and discharges, and about children and adults receiving social protection services is reported by Directors of institutions and raion administrations in six-monthly returns to the National Statistical Office. The National Statistical Office subsequently publishes the information in a statistics bulletin but the numbers are not aggregated to show the total number of children in institutions and the information is

many months out of date. The DI Unit relies on those bulletins for planning and monitoring information. The evaluators were not told about a more contemporaneous management information system to monitor changes in the reform process. A recommendation is made below for a low-technology solution to monitor the number of children in institutions pending a more complete solution to a national social work management information system.

The second overall objective of the Action Plan is to *reorganise the residential care institutions according to the general transformation plan*. The Framework-Plan for Transforming Residential Institutions was approved through the Ordinance of the ME No.744 of 6th October 2009, almost three years ago. The Transformation Plan is significant for several reasons.

The Frame-work Plan specifies precisely the ratio of foster care and family-type home placements to residential places; one foster care or family-type home placement for every three residential placements³⁶. On that basis it might be expected that 1,700 foster care or family-type home placements would need to be developed by the end point of the Action Plan in 2012.

The planning target for foster care and family-type home placements is linked to the number of residential places, not an aggregate of assessed need by local departments of social assistance for children to be placed in foster care or family-type settings. Linking the number of substitute family places to the number of residential places may not be the most efficient way of planning costly services.

In a response to this report, in 2013, the MLSPF pointed out that a large proportion of children had been reintegrated with biological or extended family, so reducing the potential proportion of children who might have been cared for in foster care or family-type homes. The representative of the Ministry pointed out the recruitment of professional parental assistants (foster carers) and the establishment of family-type

homes was a responsibility of LPAs that was constrained by available budget and human resources. The representative of the Ministry said that unmet demands for these services were fed back to the Ministry from LPAs to become part of the national budget planning process.

The ME Frame-work Plan also sets out planning targets for day care and psycho-social assistance services for children with behaviour problems or disabilities, another task that would be expected of the MLSPF based on assessed need for those services by departments of social assistance.

More appropriately for the ME, the Framework Plan does set out criteria to identify ME institutions for closure and the outcomes for staff employed in institutions marked for closure. The plans to “transform” the remaining boarding schools and auxiliary boarding schools amount to reducing the number of children accommodated in each institution³⁷, a very cautious approach to “transformation”.

In a meeting on 5th April 2012 with the evaluators the Head of Directorate of Family and Child Protection in MLSPF said there were limits to the ability of the Ministry to influence implementation of the Action Plan by LPAs. “The development of social services is a competence of local authorities”, the Head of Directorate said. The Head of the Directorate told the evaluators that the ability of central government Ministries to shape service developments by LPAs was constrained by other national policies to decentralise service planning and delivery responsibilities to local level, not just child and family protection.

Central government, represented by the Ministry, has the authority to define national policy priorities. It also has the right and duty to allocate central government finance to LPAs to implement national policy and priorities, or withhold finance for initiatives that do not accord with national policies and priorities. Central government, i.e., the Ministry, also has a duty to help and support LPAs to implement those policies where the local administration does not have the technical capacity.

³⁶ Framework Plan for Transformation of the Residential Childcare System. Annex to Ordinance No.744 of the Ministry of Education, 6th October 2009. Para.2.2.

³⁷ ME Framework Plan. Ibid., Para.9.4 and 10.4.

Annex 1 to the National Strategy and Action Plan clearly states, “The Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child is in charge for developing **and enforcing** child and family protection policies, coordinating and monitoring all programmes, **initiatives and actions in this field**.”³⁸ (*Author’s emphasis*)

In a response to this report in 2013 the representative of the MLSPF said the evaluators had failed to understand the limits to the authority of the Ministry influence or direct LPAs, suggesting that that to do so would contravene principles of local autonomy and decentralisation. The representative said LPAs have to decide on implementation depending on the overall priorities and problems at the local level.

The balance between the responsibility of central government to set national policy and budget priorities and the degree of freedom and autonomy for local government to decide its own priorities is obviously something that has to be reconciled within the country by elected politicians and government administrators. The evaluators simply take the view that balance may not have been completely achieved in respect of the development of alternative family services in Moldova.

As can be seen in Annex 2, some Action Plan *Activities* have been implemented within the time period of the Plan, others have not. That is understandable as action on some *Activities* would be dependent on action having been completed on other “predecessor” activities. A fundamental *Activity* on which many others depended is *Activity 52* of the Component No.5: Redirect Financial Resources from the Residential Childcare System to Community-based Services:

Develop and approve Regulations on mechanisms of decentralizing, securing and redirecting funds from the central level to the local level, from residential care institutions to community-based and family-type services.

This *Activity* was to be completed by 2008, but at the time of writing the draft Regulation still had not been approved though it was subsequently approved and adopted by the Government in May 2012.

How well have the financial resources been used?

Concerning financial expenditures on residential institutions and community services the OPM-EveryChild document reported,

Expenditure on alternatives to full-time residential care was five times bigger in 2008 than in 2004, while expenditure on residential institutions increased by 122%.

However, the OPM-EveryChild report goes on to say, *This means that expenditure on residential institutions in 2008 was MDL 149 million higher than in 2004, whereas spending on other forms of childcare had increased by only MDL 17 million during that period. So there is still an enormous bias in favour of spending resources on residential care facilities.*³⁹

As is noted above, the DI Unit briefing paper provided to the evaluators said that ME budget savings arising from closure of institutions had remained within the ME to fund the remaining institutions.

The OPM-EveryChild report concluded,

*The bulk of resources that are available for in-kind social services for children are devoted to residential institutions despite the acknowledged interest of the government in developing alternative services which can often have a lower unit cost and will be able to reach more people. This issue has been widely known for many years. It is necessary to find a way of transferring the resources from the residential institutions to the raion budgets. This is a twofold challenge: the budget is to be shifted both from the education sector to the social protection sector, and also from the central budget to the local budget. Without this transfer of resources the system cannot develop in line with the strategies agreed by the government. This must be one of the top priorities for further reform of the childcare system.*⁴⁰

Using figures abstracted from the MF BOOST financial information system the change in government

³⁸ Government Decision No.784, Annex 1, op.cit., para.4.1.

³⁹ OPM, op.cit., p.70.

⁴⁰ OPM, op.cit., p.71.

expenditure between 2006 and 2010 is shown below. Figures for 2011 expenditure were not available at the time of writing.

Table 5: Government expenditure residential and alternative care 2007–2010 (thousand lei)

Level of authority ⁴¹	2007	2008	2009	2010	Increase 2007-2010
Central authorities	165.5	190.6	203.7	210.1	27%
Local authorities	66.5	75.3	92.8	108.6	63%
Total	232.0	265.9	296.5	318.7	37%
Types of services					
Residential care	231.2	265.9	292.1	312.6	35%
Alternative care	n/a	n/a	4.5	6.1	—
Total	231.2	265.9	296.6	318.7	37%

Table 6: Government expenditure residential childcare 2007–2010 by Ministry (thousand lei)

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ministry of Education	123.6	138.8	145.6	151.8
MLSPP (budget lines 124; 450)	17.2	20.4	22.6	23.5
Ministry of Health	24.7	31.4	35.6	34.8
Total	165.5	190.6	203.8	210.1

Table 7: Proportion of total expenditure on residential childcare by Ministry

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ministry of Education	75%	73%	71%	72%
MLSPP (lines 124; 450)	10%	11%	11%	11%
Ministry of Health	15%	16%	17%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

⁴¹ Data for residential care from MF BOOST information system budget lines: 056, 057, 058, 068, 113, 115, and 124. The BOOST system does not provide data for alternative care, which was obtained directly from MF. Alternative care includes foster care and family type homes.

As reported above, according to officials of the DI Unit, savings arising from the reduction of children in residential institutions of the ME have been re-absorbed into expenditure associated with the remaining ME institutions. This is dramatically confirmed in the MF BOOST reporting system that shows consolidated annual expenditure in residential institutions has increased from 14,100 lei in 2006 to 36,300 lei in 2010 per child (€951 to €2,450⁴²).

Foster carers are paid a monthly salary of between 760 and 1120 lei depending on their level of education and period of service as a foster carer⁴³. The foster carer annual salary is topped up with a daily payment per child plus an annual clothing allowance⁴⁴. The calculated annual cost of one child in foster care is between 20,265 and 24,105 lei depending on the foster carer's salary scale; approximately half the cost of a child in a boarding school in 2010. The costs to government of supporting a child in a family will be even less.

The difference between the annual cost per child in one of the baby homes and foster care is even more startling. The MF BOOST system reports the 2010 annual cost per child in a baby home was 140,000 lei.

The Government Decision No.924 stipulates that foster carer payments are made from the budgets of local government administration. Unless local government receives additional finance and technical assistance to develop foster care it is understandable if local government seeks to pass the costs of care onto central government funded residential institutions.

It is highly likely that there are children among those still living in institutions who could be cared for more cheaply at home or in foster care. On the basis of the above it does not appear that Government financial resources have been used particularly efficiently to promote alternative forms of care and support to vulnerable children and families.

⁴² Currency conversion at 31/05/2012 €6.749 to 100 lei.

⁴³ Government Decision No.924 of 31/12/2009.

⁴⁴ Law No.276 of 18/12/2008 amending and supplementing Law No.355-XVI of 23/12/2005 on public sector pay system.

Did the management of the reform of residential care ensure co-ordination with other similar interventions to encourage synergy and avoid overlaps?

The evaluators were informed by the MLSPF Director of Policy for Equal Opportunities and the Prevention of Violence of a government initiative to combat domestic violence. Since domestic violence has a major direct and indirect effect on children, the initiative has an overlap with residential reforms and supporting children in families. The Director spoke about legislative changes made to enable authorised persons to apply to courts for orders to protect victims of domestic violence. The Director said that written guidance had been issued to police, social assistants and family doctors on legal protection measures but acknowledged there was a significant capacity building issue for social assistants and others. There ought to be a synergy between child protection training associated with childcare reforms and training for responses to domestic violence. This issue is discussed below in respect of sustainability.

ASSESSING IMPACT: TO WHAT EXTENT AND IN WHAT WAY DID THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM OF THE RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE SYSTEM SUCCEED IN IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED ONES?

Coverage: Which vulnerable groups of children have been reached? Have vulnerable children been reached, including girls, children from low-income families, ethnic minorities, children left behind due to migration etc.?

According to a report⁴⁵ prepared in 2008 for MEY and UNICEF, the biggest single reason for placement of

⁴⁵ Cara, A. et al., (2008). *Report on activities conducted within the "Children Separated from Family Environment" Project*. Chisinau: Ministry of Education and Youth and UNICEF, p.23.

children in institutions was family financial difficulties. Other poverty related reasons included single parenthood, lack of housing and death of a parent. It might be assumed therefore that children from low-income household have been affected by deinstitutionalisation or have been prevented from admission by the provision of social assistance and other supports. It is beyond the Terms of Reference of this evaluation to evaluate the effectiveness of social assistance cash benefits to reduce family poverty, but a recent study⁴⁶ of effectiveness of the new, targeted *Ajutor Social* programme in reaching the most disadvantaged children and families found that that "only 7,000 of the poorest persons in households with children (22%) are currently covered by *Ajutor Social*, meanwhile the remaining 30,000 persons are not covered. Hence, *Ajutor Social* fails to target the poorest of the poor."⁴⁷

The evaluators were told in field visits to institutions and in-depth interviews with NGO managers that neither boys nor girls were over-represented in institutions. The evaluators were also told that children from ethnic minorities were not over-represented in institutions. The absence of an effective social work management information system for residential institutions or case management makes these assertions hard to verify. A recommendation is made below for a low-technology solution to monitor the gender of children in institutions pending a more complete solution to a national social work management information system.

The evaluators were told that placements in institutions of children under three years and children with disabilities have reduced through preventive action. It is the case however that the greater majority of children who have been deinstitutionalised from residential

⁴⁶ Otter, T. and Vladicescu, N. (2011). *Impact of cash transfers on poverty and well-being of the most vulnerable families in the Republic of Moldova, within the context of transition from category-based to means-tested social assistance: Final Report*. Santa Cruz, Bolivia: ECI-Managing Human Development, p.34.

⁴⁷ "There are opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the process of social aid." Government of the Republic of Moldova. Court of Auditors Decision No.1 of 15.10.2010 *Report on performance audit*. Posted 23.03.2010 in the Official Gazette, p.39-40, Article No.7. Retrieved on 4/09/2012 from lex.justice.md/index.php?action=viewandview=docandlang=1andid=334063.

institutions have come from general boarding schools of the ME. It is only relatively recently that attention has been given to the deinstitutionalisation of children from auxiliary boarding schools of the ME. The evaluators were told that several NGOs have begun to work to target children with disabilities living in institutions with assessments of their situation with the view to supporting them to return to their families. The evaluators were told that one NGO is planning to work with the MH to target children living in an institution for children infected or affected by TB.

Deinstitutionalisation of children from general boarding schools has been effective in part because moratoria had been placed on new admissions to the designated institutions. The evaluators were not told of moratoria being placed on new admissions to particular institutions for children with disabilities, to institutions for children under three years or the institutions for children affected by TB. It is likely therefore that children will continue to be admitted to those institutions for the foreseeable future until they are subject to a moratorium.

Success in reducing admissions to ME institutions is also due in part to the work of raion gate keeping commissions; Commissions for the Protection of Children in Difficulty. According to the regulation governing the functions and remits of commissions, all placements in institutions, whether subordinated to the ME, MH, MLSPF should pass through a gate keeping commission. If this procedure is followed there should be an opportunity for a social work assessment to be made of the needs of the child and an alternative support plan devised. The assessment may point to a gap in appropriate services for the child with disability or the very young child, but the identified gap should feed through into a community service development plan.

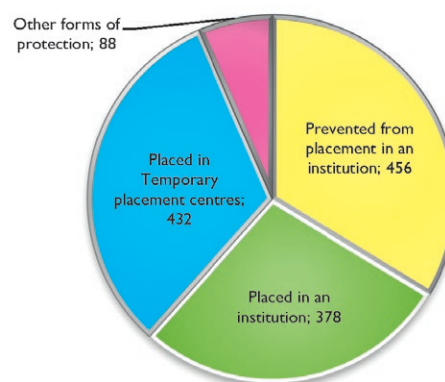
The 2011 Annual Report of the MLSPF provides information concerning the activities of the Commissions for Protection of Children in Difficulty⁴⁸. The Annual

Report refers to action taken to optimize the work of the Commissions. An Ordinance No.279 of 31st May 2011 was approved covering course materials and the national curriculum for training members of the Commission for the protection of children in need, including:

- conceptualization of the system to prevent the separation of families,
- objectives and principles of the system,
- the core components of the system to prevent child separation from family including conceptualizing forms and family protection services to children and children in difficulty, aiming at training in social work, and
- principles of the system to prevent the separation of families

The 2011 Annual Report of the MLSPF provides information concerning the decisions of the Commission, shown in charts below.

Figure 5: Forms of protection of children approved by the Commission for Protection of Children in Difficulty, 2011



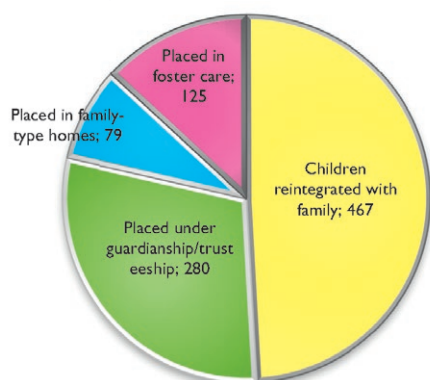
The 2011 Annual Report of the MLSPF notes that of the 378 children placed in institutions by the Commissions, 145 children were placed because of a lack of suitable alternatives.

The 2011 Annual Report of the MLSPF also provides information concerning the increasing work of the Commissions. It notes the upward trend in the cases examined, from 1,568 cases in 2009, 2,906 cases examined in 2010 to 3,402 cases in 2011. The 2011 Annual Report of the MLSPF suggests the Commission for the

⁴⁸ Government of the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (2012). Annual Report 2011, p.123-126. Retrieved on 27/09/2012 from <http://mpsfc.gov.md/file/rapoarte/RSA%202011%2007.12MMPSF.pdf>.

Protection of Children in Difficulty tried very hard to support children in families.

Figure 6: Family forms of protection approved by the Commission for the Protection of Children in Difficulty, 2011



Interviews with the Chairs and secretaries of Commissions for the Protection of Children recorded the local impact of childcare reforms. With the launch of the reforms the work of Commissions became more intense. The number of cases that needed to be examined increased, as did the number of Commission sessions and their duration.

We had periods when process of institutionalization went very active. That was 2011, 2010 even. But we had established two monthly meetings, ordinary. So we met every two weeks. So many cases.

[M, President Gatekeeping Commission, Ungheni]

It depends. In the first year, when there was put reform on the state of children in institutions, and especially that we have Leova institution that is very big — about 470 children were at first. We had a huge avalanche. Seven hours each working session. We went to a meeting each week. There were serious problems then. Then spirits calmed down. Let me tell you the year of 2008 from the beginning until 2012, until February. I did so a statistic, 71 cases, 98 children. Many of these cases are doubled, are repeated. It is monitored and reviewed the case.

[M, President Gatekeeping Commission, Leova]

The impact of work by LPAs and NGOs to prevent placement of boys in the Boarding School for children with mental disabilities (boys) in Orhei is impressive. The Director of the Boarding School told the evaluators that placements in the school had decreased sharply in recent years; two boys admitted in 2010, none in 2011 and two so far in 2012.

Coordination: How were the coordination mechanisms defined and divided between the Government, UNICEF and NGO partners? What was the role of the MLSPF and ME and other key actors in coordination of the activities? What was the role of UNICEF and other donor agencies?

As referred above, the evaluators were informed that the National Council for Coordinating Reform of Residential Childcare System and Developing Inclusive Education was established in 2010 to oversee implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan. The evaluators were informed that the Council met 10 times in 2011. Membership includes line and strategic Ministries, UNICEF, NGOs and LPAs where reforms are being implemented.

A National Council for Child Rights Protection in the State Chancellery held a meeting in 2011 to discuss progress on reform of residential childcare. Membership of the Council includes representatives of line and strategic Ministries, NGOs and CSOs. The Council does not have a function to monitor or coordinate reform action.

While coordination between Ministries responsible for residential institutions and NGOs with technical expertise and funding is important, certain issues such as the delayed regulations for the transfer of budget savings from the ME to the MLSPF and local governments are a solely a matter for government administration. Similarly, monitoring progress on a government-owned strategy and action plan is very much a matter for government administration. This issue will be returned to later.

What do the children in residential care and children reintegrated into biological and other family solutions think themselves in terms of improvements of their situation, especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalized? What has been improved and what has not been improved? What are their recommendations for the future in this regard?

In addition to the impact of the childcare reforms on systems, structures and processes, the reforms also had a personal impact on individual children and families. The EveryChild longitudinal study quotes children with some positive opinions.

Children's feelings about going home

The majority of children wanted to go home (and this was particularly true if they already had friends at home), or at least wanted to be with their parents or extended family, although it was notable that for most children no very strong emotions were expressed either way, as if their spirits had generally been dampened.

Feelings about going home

"It is ok there in the boarding school, but with the parents is better"

(boy, Calarasi)

"I was very glad [when told I would go home]. I was happy that I will always live at home with my family"

(girl, Ungheni)

"I think that all children should go home or in other families, to enjoy having a home"

(girl, Falesti)

"Nowhere is better than home"

(boy, Ungheni)

"At home is better than among strangers"

(boy, Falesti)

When asked if he wanted to go home: "Yes and no. I wanted to go home because I was missing my parents. But at home I do not have friends"

(boy, Ungheni)

"I liked it [in the auxiliary school], but if it's closing down, I don't have any other option, I'll come to live here [at home]"

(boy, Calarasi)

However, while they wanted to be with parents or extended family, the majority expressed grave concerns about fitting in to the community school; it was this that put them off the idea of leaving the residential school.⁴⁹

Most graduates from residential institutions who participated in focus groups (FG) discussion led by IMAS were studying in colleges or professional schools. Some of them already have work experience. Young men find unqualified jobs in most cases. As reported above, leaving the residential institution was difficult for most young people who came to Chisinau to work or study. The main sources of support mentioned by the graduates were:

- NGOs,
- Government bodies,
- Their families.

NGOs helped some graduates by providing advice and counselling concerning further education and training, by helping obtain critical documentation, enrolment in colleges and professional schools, finding accommodation. NGOs even paid the tuition fee in the first year of studies for some young people. Another type of support is moral and psychological support.

We learn. We report the grades and the absences. As for spending the money, we make the plan and the report.

[FG1, F, Institution graduate, 18 years old, Chisinau]

The social assistant is like a parent to us, we meet; they ask us about our successes.

[FG1, F, Institution graduate, 19 years old, Chisinau]

⁴⁹ EveryChild 2012, op.cit., p.14.

I attended different trainings, group meetings and other events and then a professional guidance program was developed and even the tuition fee was paid.

[FG1, M, Institution graduate, 21years old, Chisinau]

They helped the three of us. We were involved in a project.

[FG2, M, Institution graduate, 18 years old, Balti]

At the beginning, when we were at the boarding-school, the ladies were coming to us and making seminars with us in professional guidance. After graduation, each of us selected an institution to study at and they helped us. They helped us a lot.

[FG2, F, Institution graduate, 19 years old, Balti]

I went to the municipality and met a person there. She said I would go to the college and live at the “Drumul spre casă”.

[FG2, M, Institution graduate, 21 years old, Balti]

Not all people have confidence. Some say that if I accept their support, they will laugh at me or will believe that I am very weak or something like that. For instance, there were several opportunities for my peers to be provided with support, but only two persons showed interest.

[FG1, M, Institution graduate, 21 years old, Chisinau]

The Government provides 5000 lei (about 300 Euros) to young people when they graduate from residential institutions. The graduates welcomed this, but they said that not all of them are able to manage this amount in an appropriate and useful way, because this is the first money they manage independently. The young people who are orphans continue receiving financial support from the Government in the form of a social scholarship. However in their view the state scholarship is not sufficient for those of them who are studying.

We all agree and realize that the social scholarship is very low.

[FG1, M, Institution graduate, 21 years old, Chisinau]

The state helped us a little, but now we need to go on by ourselves. Everything depends on us. If we are able to do something, we will succeed, if not – we will not succeed in anything.

[FG1, M, Institution graduate, 25 years old, Chisinau 2]

Not all NGOs working on deinstitutionalization have the graduate support component. There are temporary placement centres for graduates of residential institutions in Chisinau and Balti but they have limited capacities and provide only temporary support.

I know different models of transformation of institutions that are supported by NGOs. NGOs work with all children, including graduates, so they work with the reintegration process, they support them and their families with reintegration, they support their future steps in the educational system for vocational training and so on. But other NGOs do not really deal with graduates; they know that children will graduate...

[NGO interviewee]

Some young people were supported by their family members. In some cases they are supported by their older siblings who are working abroad. Participants who have parents usually maintain their relations with them, even if parents' situation is not good. But some participants could not forgive their parents for having abandoned them. Others do not maintain any relations with their family, even though they made significant efforts to find them – they were not able to reach a level of understanding with their family.

In fact, my older sister is abroad and we communicate frequently and this is not a problem, she helps me solve my problems and supports me.

[FG1, F, Institution graduate, 18 years old, Chisinau]

I did never see my mother, father, brother or sister while I studied at the boarding-school. Everything was a secret. My mother did not tell my sister that I was alive. My sister still cannot find

me. I have found my cousins. But, when I found them, I realized that it had not been worth looking for them, because when I talk to strangers, they are good people, I worked with such people; it is easier to get along with strangers than with relatives.

[FG1, M, Institution graduate, 25 years old, Chisinau 2]

My sister helped me a lot, both morally and financially. She helps me. We still keep in touch. She helps me. My story is more difficult. I have been living away from my parents since the 1st form. I was raised in another family. My sister and I have the same father. She is abroad now. It was more difficult in childhood. She did not have a job yet. It is ok now.

[FG2, M, Institution graduate, 18 years old, Balti]

My uncle helped me continue my education.

[FG2, M, Institution graduate, 18 years old, Balti 5]

The pain and confusion of some graduates was palpable.

I don't want (to maintain relations with my parents). This is life. It's not my fault. If they wanted, they had to raise us at home. They had to find a place to live, to earn money and give education to their child, etc. How can one say that it is your fault that your father or mother abandons you? It is not my fault. Why is it me who must go to them, if they made my life like this? Why? To get in different places? What for? To come to them and say "Mother, father, you were wrong"? They must be the first to break the ice, if they want. Why did they create us – to make us suffer?

[FG2, M, Institution graduate, 20 years old, Balti]

Some children are just sitting at the window waiting to be taken home. This is a hope that does not vanish.

[FG2, M, Institution graduate, 18 years old, Balti]

But some already understand that they must start their own life.

[FG2, M, Institution graduate, 17 years old, Balti]

You must accept the idea that nobody will come for you.

[FG2, M, Institution graduate, 18 years old, Balti]

Every child is waiting.

[FG2, F, Institution graduate, 19 years old, Balti]

Interviews with children resident in institutions indicated some of the ways in which improvements could be made in their situation. They mainly avoided talking about their life in institution. Their standard answers are that they are happy with their life in the boarding-school, they "like everything" and it is better at the boarding-school than at home. However, when probed further in the interview, they recognized that they would change a number of things in their life in institution: they would like to have more freedom, not to live under a strict schedule and to be "happier".

Children reported that life in a family is different from the life in residential institutions. They do not have a daily program according to which they must live. Some children in families found it more complicated to describe a usual day in their life; the days are different one from another.

We are playing, doing some homework, rest...

[M, 12 years old, Falesti, Foster Care]

We go to our neighbour and we play with their son and daughter.

[M, 10 years old, Falesti, Foster Care]

I walk or ride my bike, watch TV, and play

[M, 12 years old, Falesti, Foster Care]

There are revealing differences in terms of wishes of children living in residential care and those placed in alternative services. Children in residential institutions most often want a family, a house and to leave the boarding-school.

Wishes of children in residential institutions

To have a family
 To go home
 To be better at learning
 To be happy
 A house
 A house on the seashore
 To grow up
 To have the mother alive
 A world without violence and poverty
 A better mother

Wishes of children in alternative services

A computer
 Health
 To be with the siblings
 A family
 A profession
 A toy
 Not to leave the current family
 To play more

Children in the visited alternative services adapted in different ways to their new school and the new family. Some children made friends very quickly, others attached to one of the family's biological children. Some caregivers and foster carers mentioned that children were aggressive with their school mates at the beginning. However, the behaviours changed with time.

They accepted him well. Later, he started fighting; he took a cactus and placed on a girl's throat. He said "I wanted to see if it sticks into her throat". Try it on yourself! Of course, the girl started crying.

[F, Foster Carer, Truseni]

He was afraid of everything... He slept only with Cătălina, my daughter. He would not make a step without her. We were lucky that it was summer and she was at home. He was sleeping with her, eating with her. Then gradually, he got used.

[F, Caregiver, Clisova Noua, Family-Type Home]

Some foster carers and caregivers said that the first days of children in their family were difficult. Children

were frightened, did not want to talk, cried, etc. These behaviours frightened the families; some of them were desperate and felt incapable. These behaviours vanished after a while.

He screamed "AAAA!" with no reason. In the first week, Costea said "Where did you find him?" We were afraid of what others could think – that we were torturing him.

[F, Foster Carer, Durllesti, Foster Care]

He was afraid that we would take him to doctors, somewhere. When we went to the doctor, we could not even get out of the car. But then he got used. We had ducklings – he was watching them and was screaming; he was watching butterflies and was screaming. He was afraid of everything. We had a cat with kittens, Oh my God how he reacted when he saw them. They wanted to get closer to his feet, but he turned black when he saw them. He was only screaming "AAA!"

[F, Caregiver, Clisova Noua, Family-Type Home]

All caregivers and foster carers said that life in a family is better than at the boarding-school for children. According to them the most obvious differences are:

- They have more freedom
- They can see a family model
- They grow up with a "mother" and a "father"
- They benefit from the love and care of a family
- They have a "normal" childhood.

He has more freedom, first of all. More room. He used to stay in the small bedroom there, in those apartments with small bedrooms and small kitchens. He was only allowed to go to the toilet and back.

[F, Foster Carer, Durllesti]

They have more freedom. They did not have freedom there. Here they cook and do other things. I am like a parent to them. Of course, I cannot be their biological mother, but I try. I ask them what food they want and they tell me what they want

for lunch. At the boarding-school they were not given this possibility. I allow them to play; when they do something wrong, I scold them. But, it's different; I do all this like a parent. If I caress one of them, I caress the other as well. If I scold them, I scold them both. If I give chocolates to Vasiliță, I give chocolates to Adrian as well – because he also likes them.

[E, Caregiver, Clisova Noua, Family-Type Home]

Children who are in alternative families were reported to be more open in expressing anger or sadness. The evaluators were told that there appeared to be a dependence on the duration of stay in alternative family; the longer the child is in the family the more often he appeals to parents/ carers in difficult situations. Some foster carers noted that initially the children were far more “closed” and detained.

When they are happy, I see that they are laughing already. But when something happened, they are so silent and seated. And when I say that something is there. And I say “If you do not want to talk to me, do not talk. But I’m not going to talk to you.” And then start all alone.

[E, Foster Carer, Clisova Noua, Family-type house]

We advise with mother. I go to my mother “Mom, I do not talk to him.” And then pass some time and talk.

[E, 11 years old, Floresti, Family-type house]

Foster parents and caregivers do feel responsible for the future of children that they have in care. Most are aware that some of the children will return to their biological families or will not be adopted, so some caregivers felt they must take care that the future of these children will be one of the best.

Future? How we will do it. They will grow up, they will be soldiers and we will do weddings, we will educate grandchildren.

[E, Foster Carer, Clisova Noua, Family-type house]

Focus group discussions with graduates of institutions provide more insights into the experience of children

in institutions. The young graduates of residential institutions appear to rely on their own resources. Often it appeared children’s need for communication is neglected.

Because at the boarding-school, I don’t want to say bad things about it, but often the educators or other workers do not listen to children and do not try to understand their problem. We feel like we have been condemned for something, it’s like we are guilty for something and they don’t want to talk to us.

[FG1, F3]

Focus group participants said that in many institutions children wear uniforms. The bedrooms are all arranged the same. Children receive the same presents. The graduates said that children do not have the freedom to plan their time that is loaded up with activities they are forced to carry out.

We did not have any free time. Everything was planned by hours, there was a regime there. After lunch, we were required to go outside. What I did not like was that we had the homework time, when we were required to do our homework; this took too many hours and we had less free time.

[FG1, M4]

Another criticism voiced by participants was that the institutions do not help children become independent people.

The staff do everything for children. They wake children up in the morning. Put them to bed in the evening. Call them to take the meals.

[FG1, F4]

We must start planning our time. But this is difficult. It is not difficult, but very difficult.

[FG2, M5]

Many children from the boarding-school are afraid of challenges and responsibilities, because once you are integrated in an organization, you must be responsible, punctual and meet the expectations. You have some rights, but you

also have obligations. When they see so many obligations, they are afraid of this and think “Will I do this for 1000 lei? I cannot. It is impossible for me! I cannot! This is beyond my capacities!”. They run away from this and find other..

[FG1, F3]

In the focus group discussions with graduates it was apparent that despite growing up away from their parents, many young graduates think of creating a family in the future. According to some participants some do this very quickly after graduation saying it is an easier way for them than continuing to rely on the support received from the State or from other organizations that are supposed to help them.

Others participants considered creating a family is a big responsibility. The experience of care in the institution had clearly shaped their hopes and aspirations for their future.

Half of my mates are already married, some have children.

[FG1, M3]

There are children who maybe do not have a family, but if they had the strength to succeed, they would have succeeded. However, they choose the easiest way: to get married at 16 or start consuming alcohol or other staff, to have a job that is not very profitable and appropriate for our age. They find other ways to make easy money or to find a job that will not help them in any way in the future. That is why I think that every child has an opportunity.

[FG1, F3]

The mentality is already formed and the graduates feel that it's everyone's duty to do something for them, while they are not required to do anything.

[FG1, F3]

I think that nobody among us wants their children to go through the same difficulties as we did. This is why it is a huge responsibility.

[FG1, M3]

When I have a family, I think my children will not be as I was.

[FG2, M3]

We want our children not to be in a similar situation.

[FG2, M5]

In our situation, we look at and appreciate people who take care of their children. We want this too. Everything is based on the family.

[FG2, M2]

The participants in the focus groups said that forming a family is a responsibility they cannot assume at the moment. The main obstacle they see is that they do not have permanent housing. Many participants appeared confident, ready to work and were not afraid of difficulties. Their biggest wish is to have a house.

To have a family and children, you need a place to live, a home. If you don't have one, there is no need to make your child suffer.

[FG1, M2]

(If only I had a magic wand) to make a house appear.

[FG1, M3]

Some participants did not appear to have a wide support network when they left the institution. They rely only on their own forces when they face difficulties. Some of them appeared to find it hard to develop self-confidence and confidence in other people.

Even now, there are things that are difficult for me, but I don't go to anyone and try to handle them alone, even though it takes longer. But, it is better to do it alone.

[FG1, F4]

I have friends. I consider our teachers friends. The social assistant is a friend. My roommates are also my friends.

[FG1, F2]

There are cases when I keep everything inside me and cannot tell anyone. It does not happen very often, but it happens.

[FG2, M1]

We don't like to tell something to friends, because not all of them understand us.

[FG2, F1]

I have never trusted anyone. I have not even trusted my brother. I only trusted one of my brothers and my sister. But I did not trust my second brother. Even now, my relatives disappoint me. They will look at you with honest eyes...

[FG2, M3]

You are alone with your life. Sometimes I wonder "What is the point in all this?". In such a situation, you don't want anything, you just have such a wish... Then, you calm down and start reasoning and you understand everything. It is not difficult to find a point. It is difficult to think you will be able to do it. Everybody keeps impeding you or trying to make your life harder.

[FG2, M1]

The most painful things expressed by some young people are neither punishments, nor the living conditions, but the expectations. The young graduates remembered their classmates who were always expecting for someone to come and take them home. While some children were going home in weekends, on holidays or vacations, others were staying at the boarding-school throughout the year.

On Saturdays and Sundays it was the most difficult, because everyone was going home and I had to stay in the dormitory (of the college). This was difficult. But then, they all know the reason and stopped asking.

[FG2, F1]

I had to stay in the dormitory (of the college). In the first half of the year, everyone keeps asking "Do you stay in the dormitory? Why do you stay in the dormitory? Do you not have a place to go?"

[FG2, M5]

The separation from the residential institution appeared difficult for some graduate participants of the focus group discussions. They declared that they wished to return to the institution where they grew up with their classmates and teachers at least for a short period.

What can I say? I don't know. Every time I go there, I have a thought, to be honest, that I would like to go there at least for one more year to study. I have this tendency, because I lived there my whole life and I like it there. It is hard living without classmates, teachers, especially, since I know them for such a long time. But, they all went in different directions.

[FG2, M3]

I would like to return to the boarding-school in the first form. Not just for one year. I would like to start everything over again from the first form.

[FG2, M5]

It is like a large family, and, as in every family, there are interests and most classes divide in groups. There are several groups in every class. Children spend their time only within their group and do not mix with other groups. They do different things and we miss all this.

[FG2, M1]

Yes, it is a family and we have been removed from this family.

[FG2, M6]

What the graduates remembered the most were the routine, the fun they had with friends, certain educators, better living conditions as compared to those in students' dormitories, presents on holidays, sports events and competitions.

I often remember the conditions we had there and compare them with the conditions we have in the students' dormitory. Now, while living in the dormitory, I keep dreaming to return to my bedroom at the boarding-school. We were washing the floor in the morning and in the evening and permanently cleaning the dust.

[FG1, F2]

There were very many children at the beginning. A lot. Then, the number of children reduced and our conditions improved.

[FG1, M4]

The gifts we received. We were waiting for them, Oh God! On the last New Year Day and Christmas, I was thinking “God, at this time of the year I was receiving gifts”.

[FG1, F2]

On the New Year Day or Easter. We were impatient on holidays. We were waiting for the day when we received presents.

[FG1, F1]

We remember everything... There were sports grounds there, we practiced sports and had competitions... We did not have any free time. Everything was planned by hours, there was a regime there. After lunch, we were required to go outside. What I did not like was that we had the homework time, when we were required to do our homework; this took too many hours and we had less free time.

[FG1, M4]

All days look alike at the boarding-school. Everything is identical. Nothing new happens. This becomes a routine that is boring. We do everything just to... I don't know... Every day it is the same. We knew the hours when we were supposed to wake up, go to classes, come back from classes, do this and this. Every hour was planned.

[FG1, F3]

*I had an educator who was always bearing the guilt for our class, no matter what we did. Her name was L***. She did not tell the director if we played pranks. She was not a traitor. Sometimes, she was scolded by the director.*

[FG2, M3]

We were going to the shop in the night time. I mean, we did not go, but we were telling small children to go and we were getting them through

the window. One night we saw one of them and started lifting him. And the guardian pointed the lantern at us. We lifted him a little, saw his hand and let him go immediately. He fell and started cursing.

[FG2, M1]

I hit our night educator with the pillow on her head. Everything was alright. I was expecting a boy to come, but she came first.

[FG2, M6]

It was apparent from the comments of graduate participants in the focus group that life in the institution was not all bad and that life outside is not all good.

ASSESSING SUSTAINABILITY: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE OUTCOMES ACHIEVED SUSTAINABLE?

What is the level of ownership within the Government and what are the prospects for further development of related interventions after the end of external support? To what extent have relevant target groups (the ministries, experts, NGOs, beneficiary groups) been involved in the implementation and monitoring of the reform of the residential childcare system?

The evaluators were told by UNICEF that the Government is considering a new strategy in 2012 for a wider reform of child and family protection. It is expected that the results of this evaluation will inform the new strategy. But until practical action is taken to redirect financial saving arising from the closure of institutions and the reduction in resident numbers to finance LPA alternative services there must be some doubt about the level of sustainability by Government and further development of services after the end of external financial support.

The 2012 annual report of the DI Unit reported that six institutions have already been closed in 2012 and four more are scheduled for closure in 2012 and four

institutions are to be reorganized in 2012. The ME has approved an Order⁵⁰ for the closure of nine general boarding schools, 10 auxiliary boarding schools, three special boarding schools and one sanatorium boarding school by 2015. What is less obvious is whether the technical capacity to effect residential childcare reforms is sustainable if international donor support is withdrawn.

On their field visits to raions to observe the front-line process of prevention of admission and reintegration of children from institutions and in focus groups discussions with community social assistants, the evaluators saw what appeared to be two types or categories of community social assistant; key persons to prevent admissions and arrange and monitor reintegration. The evaluators observed one category of community social assistant employed by raion departments of social assistance and family protection, each charged with a heavy caseload of pension and cash benefit administration together with an assumption that they would manage prevention and reintegration cases. The evaluators also observed a second category of community social assistant associated with NGOs partnering particular residential institutions to reintegrate children to biological or extended family, prevent new admissions and to a lesser extent arrange placement in foster care. Three of four NGOs implementing deinstitutionalisation have negotiated agreements for community social assistants implementing deinstitutionalisation to be absorbed into local government employment structures.

The evaluators were told that community social assistants employed by raion administrations received a relatively brief two weeks initial training delivered by raion departments of social assistance followed by periodic in-service training sessions. The effectiveness of such limited training input to equip workers with sufficient skills to manage prevention, reintegration and substitute family placement must be questioned. Experience of deinstitutionalisation in other countries is that community social assistants cannot combine it effectively with administration of cash benefits and pensions.

⁵⁰ Government of the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Education, Order No.255 of 25th April 2012.

Social assistants who participated in focus group discussions were critical of their training. Some even called it chaotic.

We have been in the position since the beginning, 5 years. But, you know, we worked with the FACT project. They were using their tools, while our employees were using other tools. Every social worker worked and implemented as he/she considered appropriate. That's why there is chaos.

[F, 43 years old, Social Worker 5 years, Ungheni raion]

It's only now that standards are being developed.

[F, 37 years old, Social Worker 5 years, Ungheni raion]

Others were more appreciative.

We have been trained in HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, supervision. Many areas. It was useful for me. [...] I found out all protection methods, how to work with these people, because we must not discriminate.

[F, 25 years old, Social Worker 3 years, Singerei raion]

Because of the challenges faced in their day-to-day work particularly the very large numbers of cases community social assistants are expected to manage, the usefulness of these trainings is sometimes undermined. Some community social assistants declared that what they lack is not the knowledge, but the possibility to use in practice everything they learn.

We have knowledge, but we don't have time to apply it in practice. We don't manage. There are too many tasks. If we worked in one direction, with one category of people, it would probably be easier. But now...

[F, 43 years old, Social Worker 5 years, Falesti raion]

The evaluators were told that annual staff turnover of community social assistants in raion administrations was high. Officials of the DI Unit referred to a report for the MLSPF conducted by external consultants into the operation of the Social Aid programme. Officials

of the DI Unit told the evaluators that the report⁵¹ referred to the very high turnover of community social assistants, said to be 58% in Calarasi, 71% in Floresti and 33% in Chisinau Municipality. High staff turnover means loss of training investment, such as it is, and loss of knowledge and experience acquired on the job.

The turnover of social workers is very high. The first reason is low or insufficient wages. The situation is quite interesting. While one rural social worker covers 3000 people, an urban social worker covers 5000 people and it may seem that the number is not that large. But, given the social-economic situation of Moldova, it is quite complicated and difficult for them to work and handle all the requirements. Their job description specifies clearly their duties and responsibilities, but sometimes they do more than specified and, since the launch of reform in this field, I cannot say that the amount of work has doubled, in some cases it has tripled. Given that we realize that a new benefit has been introduced – what we mentioned above – the heating allowance and social aid that require a high amount of work and they do not have sufficient time to deal with case management, social services and work with the community. That is how social workers are dealing now with cash benefits only. I cannot say that they don't do a little of case management. They do, but this is very insignificant and not in line with our expectations.

[Senior manager, MLSPF]

As for human resources, I want to speak about obstacles. In 2007, the national network of social workers was created and the expectations were very high, especially, in terms of preventing the institutionalization of children. Unfortunately, the staff turnover is quite high.

[Official, DI Unit]

In contrast, the evaluators were told that community social assistants associated with NGO action to close or reform an institution received more in-depth training from the managing NGO that also provided

on-going technical support and supervision. They operated in mutually supportive mobile teams and were provided with a vehicle and driver to make home visits. Most significantly they are not distracted by the demands of administering pensions and cash benefits. Community social assistants working in those conditions should be more effective to manage prevention, reintegration and placement in substitute families.

The ability of NGOs to provide that level of social assistant effectiveness would almost certainly be curtailed if international donor support is diverted elsewhere in the world. Therefore the sustainability of residential childcare reforms must be doubted if international donor support ends and childcare reform social assistant teams currently supported by NGOs are not absorbed into LPAs. Alternatively, LPAs could contract with NGOs for the supply of prevention and deinstitutionalisation services if it was allowed by primary legislation and bylaws and government committed the budget.

Three of four NGOs implementing deinstitutionalisation have negotiated agreements for community social assistants implementing deinstitutionalisation to be absorbed into local government structures. One NGO is operating nine mobile multi-disciplinary teams whose salary and operating costs are paid by the NGO for two years. Thereafter costs are to be absorbed by the local government administration. Community social assistants in the teams are on the same salary scales as raion community social assistants. Costs of two of the teams have already been taken over by the local government administration.

A second NGO has an agreement whereby the community social assistants implementing deinstitutionalisation under its supervision are employed by the raion department of social assistance. The community social assistants implementing deinstitutionalisation are on the same salary scales as those administering social assistance.

Sustainability of mobile teams implementing deinstitutionalisation employed by a third NGO is planned in two ways. Option one is for the raion administration to assume responsibility for salary and operating

⁵¹ The evaluators have been unable obtain a copy of this report and are unable to confirm these figures.

costs of the team(s). Option 2 is for one or more teams to register themselves locally as an NGO. Salaries of community social assistants employed by the NGO are €50-60 more than community social assistants directly employed by the raion administration. A raion administration may be reluctant to take on those additional salary costs in the future.

A concern raised by some interviewees with the evaluators relates to the redundant buildings left behind after the closure of residential institutions. They said the empty buildings were transferred to the ownership of LPA without finance to maintain them. Some buildings are reported to be damaged and decaying. Some interviewees expressed concern that LPA bodies might be tempted to allow an NGO or business open a new residential facility in the buildings. A senior government official suggested they could be used for residential care of older people.

It would be a retrograde step to allow redundant buildings to be used for residential care of any kind. If they cannot be used to accommodate services to support the community, or commercial use for manufacturing or agriculture, then the fact may be that they should be demolished, though this has financial costs.

Graduates of residential institutions who participated in focus group discussions arranged by IMAS were sceptical about the reforms. They saw the alternative services as a good solution for children without parental care, but they did not trust the reform being implemented, because in their view, there is not sufficient time planned to prepare the caregivers and foster carers.

They must prepare parents for this. But it will take a lot of time, about 20 years, to have the situation changed.

[FG1, M, Institution graduate, 21 years old, Chisinau]

Participants said when the number of children decreased and the living conditions improved, there were not so many children sharing bedrooms and in classes. In their opinion, developing residential centres for a small number of children who will attend the community school is an appropriate solution.

...to transform boarding-schools in temporary placement centers for 7-8 persons, not more, so that they feel at home, and the social assistants would help them create families and live their life... This idea seems much more efficient to me than that of keeping them on a territory without seeing anything, and then let them go at the age of 16.

[FG1, F, Institution graduate, 18 years old, Chisinau]

The director of one NGO outlined the implementation mechanisms in the raions where the NGO operates. She explained that action is guided by a joint steering group that includes the raion vice president responsible for social issues, heads of relevant raion departments, relevant NGOs and members of the gatekeeping commission. The joint steering group is serviced by a technical sub-group comprising the raion specialists for family protection, children without parental care and inclusive education, director of the residential institution, local police, Commission for Minors Affairs and Inspector for Minors Affairs. A social workers sub-group has been established in the raion comprised of community social assistants and their supervisors, a mainstream school teacher, police and Inspector of Minors Affairs.

As noted above, the National Council coordinating reform action includes Ministry and NGO representation but not a direct voice for children and families affected by reforms. One NGO has recently established Advisory Boards of Children in raions where the NGO is active. Membership of each Board is drawn from children aged 13 to 17 years. Board members monitor application of CRC rights in schools and local government services, and raise awareness of CRC rights among their fellow pupils and teachers. Children's monitoring groups working in Leova and Orhei have been collecting data and presenting reports. They have produced a report on Right to Education, which was presented at raion level and at the National Council for Protection of Children's Rights.

The reported high turnover of social assistants, their wide responsibility to administer cash assistance plus implement deinstitutionalisation and monitor children in families, and the particular system adopted by the MF to redistribute savings from

deinstitutionalisation all pose a threat to future action to deinstitutionalise children and provide family support services.

How well are activities related to the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system contributing to institutional capacities of involved actors / stakeholders? To what extent have the national human (professional / expert) resources at both national and local level been empowered to continue transferring knowledge?

If the raion level planning and monitoring structures outlined by the NGO director are replicated in other raions there can be some optimism that knowledge and experience will become embedded, at least in raions where there has been NGO input. But NGOs are not implementing childcare reforms in every raion of Moldova. If international donor funds are redirected elsewhere it cannot be assumed that NGO activity will continue at the same level, unless MLSPF assumes a more active role to support less active raion administrations to contract the supply of prevention and deinstitutionalisation services from local NGOs.

The Head of Directorate of Family and Child Protection in the MLSPF told the evaluators that responsibility for training community social assistants, key persons for prevention and deinstitutionalisation services, was delivered by raion directorates of child protection. According to the representative of the MLSPF, the Ministry organised two initial training cycles and one continuous cycle for all community social assistants between 2007 and 2010. During the same period child protection specialists were provided with a range of thematic trainings in the area of competence and training of trainers. The training of regional social assistance specialist was carried out based on the Curricula and Course Support Materials approved by the Order of the MLSPF. Another Ministerial Order approved the Strategy for the Development of Continuous Professional Training of staff employed in the social assistance system.

It is a matter of judgement if this is the most effective way of investing in the technical and professional

skills of important frontline staff with responsibility to protect children.

What is the financial / economic viability for the sustainability of the National Strategy and Action Plan outcomes?

The lifetime of the National Strategy and Action Plan comes to an end in 2012. In that sense its financial viability is not especially relevant. But the ME has approved an Order for the closure or reorganisation of more institutions by 2015. The evaluators were also told the Government of Moldova is about to begin a consultation process with a view to developing a new, wider national strategy for child and family protection.

The financial viability of those actions will be in doubt if:

- Budget savings arising from closure of institutions are not redirected to alternative services and inclusive education,
- International donor finance for childcare reforms diminishes and government does not make up the shortfall.

ASSESSING HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH: TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE PROJECT OUTCOMES CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE THEY CONTRIBUTED TO ADDRESSING KEY CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES?

Does the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan actively contribute to the promotion of child rights?

The implementation of the Action Plan contributes to the rights of reintegrated children and children prevented from admission to grow up in a family, but it remains the case that more than 5,500 children are still living in institutions with all that means for their health, education and development. As is noted above, it is less certain that all other rights of children are respected.

Promoting the rights of children with disabilities seems particularly difficult. The evaluators were informed by the Director of the Temporary Placement and Rehabilitation Centre for young children in Chisinau subordinated to the MH that children remained in the Centre for an average of 12 months before moving on to family or other provision. However, the Director of one NGO pointed out infants without disabilities stay a shorter time in the institutions for children under three years than do children with disabilities. She told the evaluators that 8 out of 13 children who stayed in the institution more than two years were children with disabilities.

One NGO is working on residential reforms with the special residential institution in Orhei for boys and men with intellectual disabilities but the evaluators were not told of a similar initiative taking place at the special residential institution for girls with intellectual disabilities in Hincesti. The situation of children with disabilities living in institutions in Orhei and Hincesti seems especially intractable.

The challenge of reintegrating children with disabilities or arranging alternative family care for them is challenging enough, but as one NGO representative pointed out, it has to be accompanied by efforts to change public attitudes towards disability if children with disabilities are to be included in society. Findings from the IMAS telephone survey reported above suggest there are grounds to believe public attitudes towards children with disabilities may be more accepting. Eighty-five percent of respondents said they would allow their child to play with a child with disabilities. Eighty percent of respondents said they would agree to their child living in the same house as a child with disabilities. Seventy-three percent said they would allow their child to study in the same class as a child with disabilities. Interestingly the proportion of people expressing such positivity was more or less even across all age groups. Positive responses were not solely associated with younger generations.

Officials of the DI Unit told the evaluators that Activities No.7 and 8 of the Action Plan Component No.3 – *Develop and implement training programs for the care, recovery and protection of disabled children*

and *Inclusion of the “Disabled Child Recovery and Protection” module into in-service training curriculum for professionals who are not working in this area, but interact with disabled children and their families in their activity* had not been implemented. They said the Operational Handbooks were developed to support Keystones’ specialized social services for the Community House, mobile team, protected housing and personal assistant. The Handbooks are awaiting approval by the MLSPF. The DI Unit has also elaborated a guide, Standardized Procedures for the Liquidation of Residential Institutions which has not yet been approved.

To what extent and how has the National Strategy and Action Plan ensured a non-discrimination and equity focus? Is the National Strategy and Action Plan gender sensitive?

As is discussed above, children with disabilities and children aged under three years do not appear to have benefitted from reform action to the same extent as other children.

Government and non-government stakeholders interviewed by the evaluators said that children from ethnic minorities were not over-represented in institutions. Social assistants who participated in focus group discussions said there is no over-representation of Roma children in residential institutions.

The problem is that (the Roma) abandon school. “Please come to school”. We must beg them. Today they say that they don’t have shoes. I bought shoes for them. Tomorrow they will not have clothes. And so on. There is no discrimination.

[F, 41 years old, Social Worker 3 years, Falesti raion]

The Roma people in my community are organized and disciplined families. They are not dirty, like other people. They go to school, abroad.

[F, 45 years old, Social Worker 5 years, Singerei raion]

We have them in our database. Sometimes, we are asked to provide statistics on the total number of

Roma people living in our village and we must have this data. The girl goes to summer camps with Moldovan children every year and there are no problems. We have never had problems. She is accepted in the group.

[F, 25 years old, Social Worker 3 years, Singerei raion]

They may create problems from another perspective: they don't attend school and nursery regularly and have poor performance.

[F, 37 years old, Social Worker 5 years, Ungheni raion]

To be honest, they have 10 children, but they keep them all. They don't place their children in boarding-school.

[M, 24 years old, Social Worker 7 months, Ungheni raion]

They don't have identity documents. They come to us asking for help, don't have identity documents.

[F, 32 years old, Social Worker 5 months, Ungheni raion]

They are not willing to place their children in residential care. The support they need is to be accompanied to different state structures, make photocopies for them and help them obtain all identity documents.

[F, 32 years old, Social Worker 4 months, Leova raion]

One NGO representative thought boys might be slightly more likely to be placed in institutions because, she said, boys can present more challenging behaviour in schools; placement in a residential institution could be a response to challenging behaviour. Another NGO representative thought girls were easier to place in foster care than boys. But without an effective and accurate management information system that tracks gender and other characteristics of children

in institutions or prevented from admission it is not possible to verify these assertions.

A national database that recorded and tracked the responses of LPAs to vulnerable children and families would have enabled strategic and operational managers and the evaluators to observe if and where discrimination happened, either in placement in institutions or return to biological or substitute family. The evaluators assume that such a database would have recorded gender and ethnicity fields. *Activity No.1* of the Component No.5 - *Monitoring and Evaluation* foresaw the development of a national online database on children and families in difficulty. It might be expected that such a database would enable the tracking of gender and ethnicity in placement and deinstitutionalisation decision making. As reported above, this information system has not been developed so it is not possible to say if implementation of the Action Plan was gender sensitive and non-discriminatory.

None of the 61 *Activities* of the Action Plan expressly addresses the possibility of a gender or equity dimension either to placement in institutions or action to deinstitutionalise children to families.

The study on the causes of child abandonment referenced⁵² above does not indicate if there is or was a gender or equity dimension to the placement of children in institutions.

In conducting the fieldwork for this evaluation IMAS ensured a balance of boys and girls in focus group discussions and individual interviews. The gender balance of interviewees for the telephone survey was representative of the adult population of Moldova excluding Transnistria.

⁵² UNICEF (2006). Child Abandonment in the Republic of Moldova. Op.cit.

CONCLUSIONS

Assessing relevance

1. The implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2012 flowed from the earlier National Strategy on Child and Family Protection 2003-2008. This was the first document to outline fundamental strategic directions to improve the child protection system in Moldova. There are clear linkages in the 2007-2012 Strategy and Action Plan to primary legislation, particularly the Law on Social Services adopted in 2010. It is understood that the Government is planning to develop a new strategy for wider reform of child and family protection. Experience gained through the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2012 will be invaluable to the development and implementation of the new, wider strategy for child and family protection.
2. With the exception of the objective, *provide children and families with access to quality family-type and community-based social services*, the objectives of the National Strategy and Action Plan 2007-2012 were realistic and achievable. It was probably unrealistic to think that family-type, community-based services could be deployed across all raions of Moldova by 2012. However, children and families living in raions where NGOs and LPAs have actively partnered to implement the Action Plan do have access to community-based social services and inclusive education that serve as a model for implementation in other raions where such services do not yet exist.

Assessing effectiveness

3. There appears to be a disconnect or a lack of clarity between the policy priorities of central government towards the protection of vulnerable children and families and implementation of those priorities by some LPAs. Reform of residential childcare appears to have moved forward in raions where there is a personal commitment and leadership by senior political figures supported by the technical expertise of NGOs. Devices and processes are required to incentivise slower moving raions to implement government priorities and exert direction on LPAs that act contrary to central government policy.

4. The Action Plan consisted of 61 Activities, implementation of which aimed to achieve the overall Objectives of the National Strategy. The evaluators judge that 33 Activities have been completed. Of those 33 completed Activities, some have only been completed in raions where NGOs have been partnering LPAs to implement the reforms. In raions where there has not been the same degree of NGO technical assistance, those Activities have not been implemented. On that basis, the evaluators conclude the seven Components and their specific objectives have either been partly achieved or not achieved.
5. The number of children living in institutions has reduced as per Overall Objective No.1 of the Action Plan. Several factors have contributed to the reduction. The CASE report referred to above calculated that the number of children living in institutions would have reduced anyway, even if the Government and NGOs had not worked together to implement reforms, because the number of older children graduating from institutions would have exceeded the number of new admissions as the result of the overall reduction in the national child population.
6. The reality is that the reduction in numbers exceeds the reduction estimated to be caused by demographic changes. The evaluators conclude that approximately 75% of the reduction of numbers of children in institutions between 2007 and the beginning of 2012 was due to implementation of the Action Plan by Government and NGOs to prevent admissions and to deinstitutionalise children from institutions.
7. But there are still more than 5,500 children living in institutions. Their need to live in institutions has not been systematically assessed by trained staff and it is highly likely that many of them could be reintegrated to biological or extended family, or substitute families, if necessary with social assistance benefits and/or extra support in mainstream school.

Assessing sustainability

8. There are several issues concerning the employment of community social assistants; the

exceedingly high staff turnover that was reported by the external consultants to the MLSPF and by several interviewees, their brief two weeks' initial training, and their ability to manage prevention and deinstitutionalisation of children. High staff turnover rates should be a matter of concern to managers. They represent a loss of training investment which also has a financial cost. Two weeks' initial training plus in-service training may be sufficient to manage administration of pensions and cash benefits and the loss of training investments through high staff turnover may not seriously degrade the efficiency of cash benefit administration. The evaluators do not take a view on that. But international experience is that social work skills and knowledge sufficient to provide effective child protection, prevention and deinstitutionalisation cannot be acquired in two weeks' training plus periodic in-service training events. NGOs involved in the reforms appear to have evolved a different type of community social assistant specifically trained and better able to focus on reform action. If the Government is considering wider issues for the protection of children and families, perhaps now is the time to consider institutionalising the evolved type of community social assistant into formal government employment structures and a consistent nation-wide training and education system for child and family protection professionals.

9. The energy and commitment the ME has invested in the reform of its system of residential childcare makes it unlikely that its reforms might go into reverse and the Ministry open new institutions or allow resident numbers to increase again. In that respect the reforms of the ME are sustainable.
10. The ability of the ME and LPAs to continue the reform process in respect of the 23 institutions identified for closure between 2012 and 2015 will depend either on NGOs being able to secure donor funding to implement action, or the Government contracting reform services from NGOs. Donor funding is not assured and bylaws to enable contracting have not been approved by the Government. In that respect sustainability is in doubt.

Assessing efficiency

11. The four year delay in adopting a regulation to redirect government finance from residential institutions to LPAs has been a brake on the development of alternative care services and inclusive education.
12. Stakeholders interviewed by the evaluators consistently said the lack of community-based alternatives to institutions was an obstacle to further deinstitutionalisation. It is unlikely that all 5,500 children still in institutions can be reintegrated to biological or extended family so substitute families will be required for some of them. Some children in need of substitute families may be adopted, but there will be other children who are not adoptable in the legal sense. Probably many of them could live in foster care if foster carers were recruited. The relatively small number of foster carers and family-type homes is not proportional to the much larger number of children still living in residential institutions.
13. Managing the reform of the residential childcare system is about managing change; changing the way vulnerable children are cared for, changing the way families are supported to care for their children, changing the way people work who care for children, changing laws and bylaws, structures, policies, procedures and capacities. Changing the way people work is always difficult and the resistance to deinstitutionalisation encountered in residential institutions is understandable and predictable. It means overcoming resistance. But the ME and NGOs have made change happen in ME institutions targeted for closure. However, analysis of Action Plan Activities indicates there is still scope to change the way children with disabilities, children aged under three years and other children in specialised institutions are cared for.
14. The delay in establishment of the National Council for Coordinating the Reform of Residential Childcare System and Developing Inclusive Education is unfortunate. There is obviously a need for high level dialogue between Ministries and NGOs to exchange information and ideas and it is good that that the Council has been established. But delays in implementing some Action Plan Activities, especially but not

only the regulation on redirection of finance, indicates a more active and determined approach by the Government to managing change could have ensured more efficient and effective implementation of the Action Plan. The implementation of some Activities is the exclusive responsibility of the Government, not NGOs. Timely and effective implementation of those Activities is a matter for government administration, not coordination with NGOs.

15. In order to monitor implementation of government policies and priorities LPA managers and strategic managers of central government must have access to timely and accurate data on occupancy rates and flow of children into and out of institutions, and the use of prevention and alternative family services. Current collection of data for the efficient management of childcare services is fragmented and often out of date by the time it reaches strategic managers. This has made monitoring of policies for childcare reforms more difficult and inefficient.

It was suggested to the evaluators that a study should be undertaken of children currently living in institutions; numbers, ages, gender, reasons for placement, home address, etc. The evaluators considered this suggestion but rejected it. Such a study would be expensive to undertake and would only reveal a “snap-shot” at a particular moment in time. Therefore it would have limited value. Managers need to be able to observe and monitor changes and trends over time. If managers had access to timely and accurate data to monitor the use of childcare services they would have been better placed to take remedial action to implement the National Strategy and Action Plan Activities.

16. The DI Unit in the ME is an invaluable resource for the management and monitoring of the reform process. Staff of the Unit have acquired substantial knowledge and experience of what works and represent an important repository of organisational memory. But the effectiveness of the Unit is hampered by the lack of timeous information concerning admissions and discharges from institutions, children in substitute families and children prevented from admission. Its remit is limited to overview of

ME institutions, not MLSPF, MH or institutions under Chisinau municipality. This is not an efficient use of such a valuable resource.

It is understood that the costs of the DI Unit are supported by UNICEF. This is not a long-term solution for a management resource that is absolutely critical to Government’s responsibility to monitor the implementation of childcare reforms. Future funding of the unit by UNICEF may not be assured. If UNICEF is obliged to withdraw its financial support for the unit, managing and monitoring the reforms will become even more difficult and sustainability may be brought into question. The DI Unit is not an optional extra or an inconsequential luxury. It is fundamental to the responsibility of the Government to monitor its own policies and strategy.

This view is not shared by the MLSPF. In a response to this report the representative of the Ministry said responsibility for the management and sustainability of reforms was with the Coordination Council, central and local government and development partners. The Ministry representative said each stakeholder in the reform process could be represented on a working group that had responsibility for monitoring and analysis. The view of the Ministry representative was that the importance of the DI Unit to the reform of residential care was exaggerated.

Assessing impact

17. Children without disabilities living in the ME boarding and auxiliary boarding schools have been the principal beneficiaries of residential childcare reforms and deinstitutionalisation and the Ministry has identified a further 23 institutions for reorganisation or closure by 2015. But the same level of energetic reform of residential care is not obviously directed towards the two institutions for children with disabilities subordinated to the MLSPF, the institution for young children under the Directorate of Children’s Rights Protection of Chisinau Municipality or the institutions for young children and sanatoria under the MH. Children with disabilities, children affected by tuberculosis

and young children have a right to be cared for in families or family-type settings just as much as children without disabilities. International experience shows it can be done if energy and imagination are applied to the challenge.

18. The Framework Plan for Transformation of the Residential Childcare System published in 2009 cautiously limits “transformation” of the remaining institutions to restricting maximum numbers of residents per institution. The ME and NGOs have gained knowledge and experience of managing deinstitutionalisation since 2009 and are probably now much less cautious. They indicated to the evaluators they are motivated to continue to further reduce the numbers of children in institutions and reduce the overall number of institutions. Consequently the Framework Plan is now out of date and needs to be revised.
19. The National Council for Coordinating the Reform of Residential Childcare System and Developing Inclusive Education has demonstrated how central Government, NGOs and LPAs have worked together to implement reforms in institutions subordinated to the ME. The National Council has had less impact on reforms to institutions subordinated to other Ministries, and the development of alternative central-local government processes and policies to protect child and families.

Assessing human-rights-based approach

20. The National Strategy on the Residential Childcare System Reform 2007-2012 explicitly acknowledges the State’s responsibility to observe the provisions of the UN CRC and “respect the right of the child to grow up in a family.” But the right to grow up in a family is only one of the rights of the child. Implementation of reforms so far has had less impact on children with disabilities and young children living in institutions. There is much work still to be done to ensure the promotion of children’s rights. The intention of the Government to consult on and prepare a wider strategy for the protection of children and families is an opportunity to widen the protection of the rights of children.

21. The Strategy itself is silent on the possibility that there is or should be a gender or equity dimension to the design or implementation of the Strategy or the Action Plan. The absence of efficient and effective social work management information systems makes it impossible for the evaluators to determine if the reforms have been implemented with a non-discrimination and equity focus.

COUNTERFACTUAL HYPOTHESIS

A counterfactual hypothesis to explain the reduction in the number of children in institutions can be found in the CASE report previously cited⁵³. What would be the situation if the National Strategy and Action Plan had not been implemented? The CASE report estimated the number of children resident in institutions would fall by 13% between 2008 and 2014 even if no reform action was taken and the rate of institutionalisation remained constant, because of the overall decline in the national target population of children aged less than 14 years. In a balanced system the number of children graduating from institutions would be balanced by new admissions coming in at the other end. But because the eligible child population is shrinking, the number of graduates would exceed the number of new admissions, by 13% according to the CASE estimations.

The fact is the number of children resident in institutions had reduced by 54% by the beginning of June 2012 from 2007 levels. This supports the conclusion that implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan has contributed to the reduction in number of children in institutions in Moldova.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

The evaluators did expect to see a larger reduction in the number of institutions that related more closely to the significant reduction in the number of children resident in institutions. According to a report⁵⁴ prepared for UNICEF and the ME in 2007 there were 11,544 children living in 67 residential institutions in Moldova. 10,516 children were placed in the 62 institutions subordinated to the then MEY.

⁵³ CASE Moldova. Op.cit. p.21-22.

⁵⁴ Report on the rapid assessment of residential institutions for children in Moldova (2007). Op.cit., p.6.

According to the 2012 Annual Report of the ME DI Unit, as at 1st June 2012, 4,664 children were resident in 50 institutions of the ME, 629 children were resident in two institutions of the MLSPF, 219 children were resident in four institutions of the MH and 64 children were resident in the institution under Chisinau Municipal Directorate of Child Rights Protection (5,576 children in total). At an extended meeting of the National Coordinating Council it was reported that 210 children under 18 years were resident in the two institutions under the MLSPF, the remainder being adults.

According to the DI Unit figures, the number of children in institutions in June 2012 had reduced by 54% but the combined number of institutions of the ME, MH and MLSPF had only reduced from 67 to 57. There would still appear to be a large capacity for institutionalisation in Moldova.

The evaluators did not expect to find so few children in foster care in 2012. In a response to this report, the representative of the MLSPF pointed out that the development of foster is a LPA responsibility, not central government, and that recruitment and retention of foster carers was likely to be constrained by the low salary paid to foster carers. The 2006 research into the reasons for child abandonment⁵⁵ indicated some potentially hazardous family situations that resulted in the placement of children in institutions. The evaluators wonder if all those potentially hazardous situations had been resolved for children who are no longer living in institutions and are now living with parents or extended family.

LESSONS LEARNED

The National Strategy and Action Plan addresses one particular aspect of child and family policy, albeit an important policy: deinstitutionalisation and the reform of the residential care system. In 2012 the Government intends to consult on the development of a wider strategy to protect and promote the welfare of children and families. In the opinion of the evaluators there are lessons to be learned from the implementation of the National Strategy and Action

Plan for the Reform of the Residential Childcare System that could usefully be applied in a wider strategy for children and families.

Individual lessons may have more resonance than others but in the opinion of the evaluators the failure to implement *Activity No.56 - Create a national database on children and families in difficulty*, has limited the ability of strategic and operational managers to monitor the impact of the Action Plan, not least to track if and where discrimination based gender or ethnicity has occurred.

The interviews with graduates of institutions and children resident in institutions have shown children and young people are well able to speak about their lives in institutions. Some NGOs have established mechanisms at LPA level through which young people are able to discuss major policies that impact on them and their peers such as the integration of children with disabilities into the community and normal school. This suggests children could and should be participants in policy making at national level.

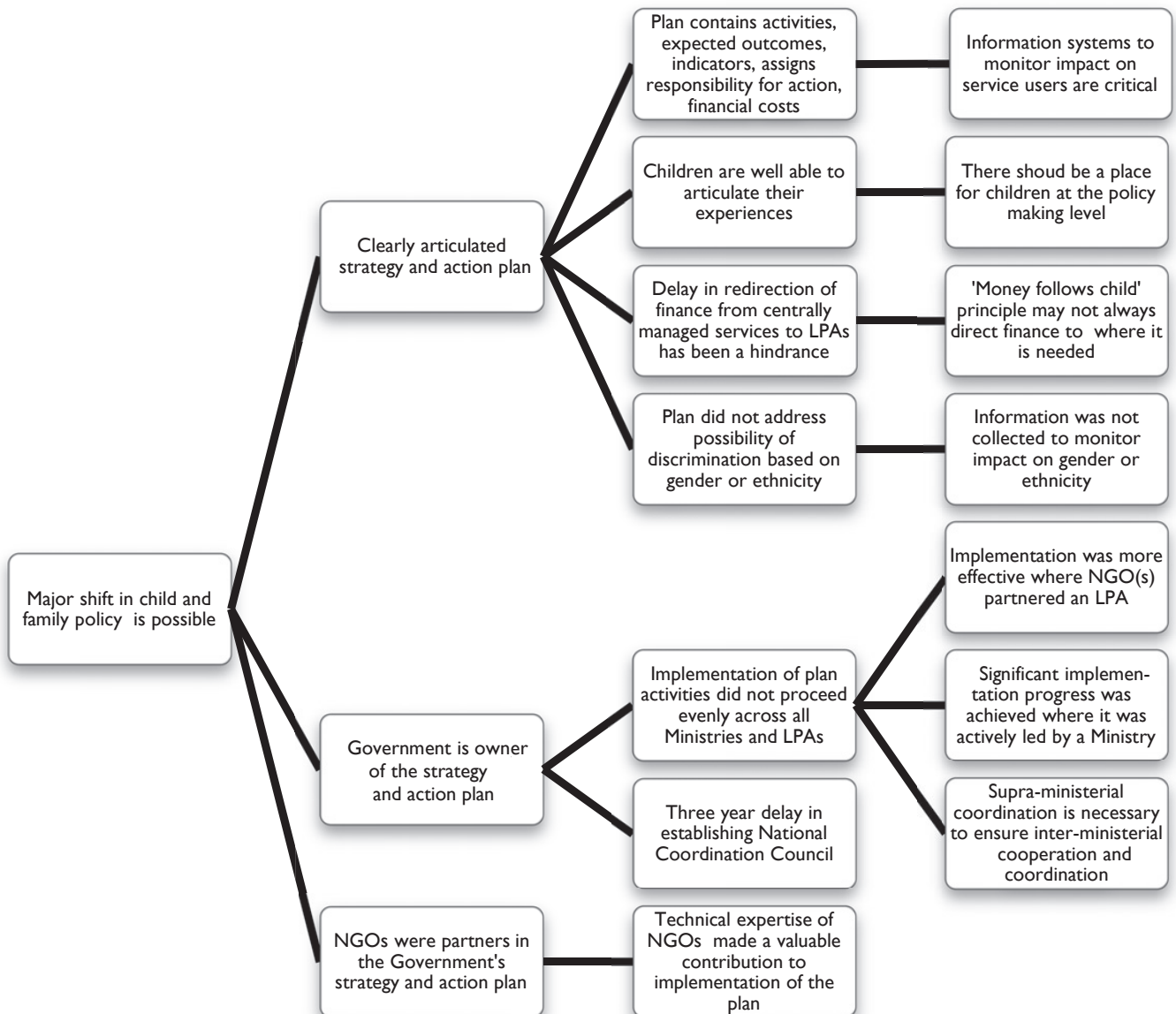
The experience of central and local government and NGOs working together within the framework of a national action plan must surely be a lesson applicable in other areas.

Lessons learned⁵⁶ that could be generalised to other major policy shifts of government are shown in the figure below.

⁵⁵ UNICEF (2006), op.cit.

⁵⁶ OECD-DAC (2002). Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness No.6. Downloaded from <http://www.oecd.org/development/peer-reviews/2754804.pdf> on 02/03/2013.

Figure 7: Lessons learned



RECOMMENDATIONS

An early draft of the evaluation report and suggested recommendations arising from the evaluation were discussed with UNICEF and Terre des hommes at the beginning of June 2012. Written comments of the two partners were subsequently incorporated in a first draft of the report and recommendations. The first draft was then circulated to government and NGO partners. The report and recommendations went through four subsequent revisions between July and October 2012 to incorporate the comments of government and NGO stakeholders including comments of MLSPF. The author of the report returned to Moldova in October 2012 to present the report and recommendations in person to a large meeting of government and NGO partners. Comments of meeting participants were incorporated into a fifth version of the report and recommendations.

In February 2013 the MLSPF made further comments on the report, conclusions and recommendations and these are either referenced or incorporated into this version of the report.

1. Continue deinstitutionalisation of children in ME residential institutions⁵⁷

More than 4,500 children remain in residential institutions of the ME, an exceedingly expensive way of caring for children that represents a drain on government resources when many of them could live in families with appropriate support. Furthermore, their CRC right to grow up in a family is not being respected. The Government and NGOs have developed experience of deinstitutionalisation since 2007. That experience should be applied in respect of children remaining in ME institutions, including sanatoria under the authority of the ME.

The ME has adopted a plan to reorganise or close a further 23 residential institutions by 2015. That would still leave more than 20 functioning residential institutions of the Ministry. A more challenging target would be to reduce the number of children living in institutions under the authority of the Ministry by 90% of 1st June 2012 levels by 31st December 2017. The process of working towards that objective will require every

child in institutions under the authority of the ME to be assessed by a trained social assistant and individual plans made for their future care. Only then will a more accurate estimate be possible for the need for residential childcare linked to education.

It is important that LPA Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection monitor the welfare of children who have been deinstitutionalised and returned to their families or prevented from admission to ensure they are not at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

It was suggested to the evaluators that future action by NGOs and government to implement deinstitutionalisation, of children with and without disabilities and children under three years, should focus on those raions that place the highest number of children in institutions. If it is possible to identify those raions in the absence of an effective and efficient management information system, the evaluators would support this suggestion. Otherwise, two recommendations are made below for a short term and a longer term solution to information management.

2. Children with disabilities⁵⁸

The MLSPF, MH, LPAs and NGOs have demonstrated effective initiatives to prevent some children with disabilities being admitted to residential institutions. The two Ministries should now present a joint Action Plan for the deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities who remain in institutions under their authority.

It is known that a number of children with disabilities living in residential institutions have lost links with the raions from where they were admitted. It is not reasonable that Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection in raions where those institutions are located should accept financial and planning responsibilities for all resident children. It would be advisable therefore that the Plan be developed in partnership with relevant NGOs and LPAs so that planning and care costs of deinstitutionalised children with disabilities are shared more widely.

⁵⁷ This recommendation is derived from Conclusions No.1 and 7.

⁵⁸ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.17.

It is particularly important that LPAs develop family support services and education for children with disabilities. Deinstitutionalisation of children from auxiliary boarding schools and children with disabilities prevented from admission is beginning to demonstrate how many children with disabilities can be supported in families and can benefit from education in mainstream schools. The ME and LPAs have developed innovative and exciting approaches to Inclusive Education that should be supported and replicated in other raions. There are several examples in Moldova of rehabilitation centres that are highly effective in developing the potential of individual children with disabilities. It is probable that several different types of short term and longer term foster care will need to be developed including respite care for children with disabilities.

It is probable that some children with profound disabilities in institutions under the authority of the MH and MLSPF will require special forms of care such as foster care or family-type homes. Therefore the Action Plan for the deinstitutionalisation of children in institutions under the authority of the MH and MLSPF should indicate how the two Ministries will work together and with raion Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection to provide alternative care services⁵⁹.

It is understood that the functions and operation of raion Medical-Psycho-Pedagogical Commissions were reviewed in 2010 and a recommendation was made at the time that the authority of Commissions to place children with disabilities in institutions be subordinated to the authority of Commissions for the Protection of Children in Difficulty (“gatekeeping” commissions). The Joint Plan for the deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities should examine if and how that recommendation has been implemented.

LPAs and NGO partners should be required to present plans by 1st April 2013 of how they intend to develop services to support parents and carers of children with

disabilities. (See the recommendation below relating to Community Social Protection Planning.)

3. Deinstitutionalisation of young children⁶⁰

The UN Guidelines for Alternative Care make the particular point that children under three years should not be accommodated in residential institutions except in very exceptional circumstances. It is recommended therefore that the MH, Chisinau Directorate for Child Rights Protection and the MLSPF present a Joint Action Plan for the development of family-based alternatives to the accommodation of young children in residential institutions under their authority. There will be overlaps between the Joint Action for the development of family-based care of children under three years and the Joint Action Plan for the care of children with disabilities.

The overall objectives of the Plan for the development of family-based care of children under three years should be:

- a. A moratorium placed on the admission of children aged under three years without disabilities to a residential institution after 31st December 2013, and
- b. Children with disabilities aged under three years may be temporarily accommodated in a residential institution for no longer than six weeks after 31st December 2013 until their care is arranged in a family or family-type setting.

These objectives will require the two Ministries and the Chisinau Directorate of Child Rights Protection to agree an inter-sectoral protocol to regulate the referral and placement of young children without parental care in family-type services. The protocol should include arrangements to speedily resolve the civil status of children where that is unknown.

These objectives will require local government Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection to develop or commission from NGOs imaginative services to support young children in their families. They will also need to recruit emergency and short term foster carers, and specialist foster carers for children with disabilities. The location of the three baby

⁵⁹ See WHO and UNICEF (2012). Early Childhood Development and Disability: A discussion paper. Retrieved on 22/09/2012 from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/75355/1/9789241504065_eng.pdf.

⁶⁰ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.17.

homes may make them ideal centres for the recruitment, training and support of foster carers.

If foster carers cannot be recruited for children with profound disabilities alternative care in small group homes may need to be developed. It is unlikely that all these specialised services will be required in every raion. It is suggested therefore that the MLSPP consider encouraging their development in two or three raions or municipalities initially until experience of deinstitutionalisation of these children begins to indicate where and what kind of services are required.

The Joint Action Plan should consider the feasibility of rationalising short term residential accommodation for young children into two or less residential facilities by 1st June 2013.

The Joint Action Plan of the two Ministries and Chisinau Directorate for Child Rights Protection could be considered as components of the wider national strategy for the protection of families and children that is to be developed by the Government of Moldova.

4. Institutions for children infected or affected by TB⁶¹

WHO guidance⁶² for the management of children affected by TB does not recommend management by routine placement in a residential institution. The WHO recommends children infected with TB should receive treatment in the community unless hospitalisation for severe infections is indicated. The MH should negotiate with partner NGOs for children resident in the two institutions for children infected or affected by TB to be assessed for their care and medical needs and individual plans made for their deinstitutionalisation as a component of the Joint Plan for the deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities. Progress to deinstitutionalise children from the two institutions should be reported periodically within wider reporting on the Joint Action Plan for the deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities.

⁶¹ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.17.

⁶² WHO. 2006. *Guidance for national tuberculosis programmes on the management of tuberculosis in children* retrieved on 22/09/2012 from http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2006/WHO_HTM_TB_2006.371_eng.pdf.

5. Closure plans for residential institutions⁶³

The experience to date of closing institutions will have demonstrated to Ministries, LPAs and NGOs the importance of working with staff of institutions to help them plan for their futures. Some staff will want to retire from active employment, others may be motivated to be retrained to work in the LPA or become a foster carer. Others may look for employment abroad. A plan might include eligibility for protected salary, redundancy payment(s), or other components. Any plan⁶⁴ developed by central and local government and NGO partners for the closure of an institution must include a component to work with staff of the institution to plan their future.

6. Situation analysis of foster care⁶⁵

Foster care in Moldova appears to be severely underdeveloped. Various explanations for the situation were offered to the evaluators; payments to foster carers are too low, foster care is only possible in rural areas, potential foster carers are worried about responsibilities of caring for a child, urban houses and apartments are too small to accommodate additional children, there is something in the Moldovan psyche that does not support caring for someone else's child.

There may be some children who are at immediate risk in their biological family. Their safety may be better assured by care in a foster home if it was available.

It is recommended that UNICEF commission a detailed situation analysis to identify more precisely the reasons for the low level of fostering in Moldova and make recommendations to government and NGOs.

7. Social work information management⁶⁶

Social protection managers in raions need accurate and timely information about non-cash social services that support children in families and communities. Senior strategic managers of central government need

⁶³ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.18.

⁶⁴ See *De-institutionalising and Transforming Children's Services. A guide to good practice* produced by Hope and Homes retrieved on 22/09/2012 from <http://www.crin.org/docs/De-institutionalising.pdf>.

⁶⁵ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.12.

⁶⁶ This recommendation is derived from Conclusions No.15 and 21.

to be able to monitor implementation of government policies. As stated above, experience of information management is that information is more likely to be accurate and timely if it helps front-line staff do their jobs. Local and central government managers extract sub-sets of that information to enable them to manage front-line staff and monitor government policies and objectives.

It is recommended that arrangements be made for managers of ME, MH, MLSPF and LPAs to view a demonstration of the LIRIKUS social work management information system used by the Government of Macedonia Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the local Centres of Social Welfare of Macedonia. LIRIKUS shows how the information requirements of front-line staff, first-line and strategic managers can be met by one web-based information system.

Any information system used by government and partners to monitor reforms to residential service or to the provision of community-based services should be designed to enable managers to track gender dimensions of the impact of policy and service delivery.

8. Monitoring admissions and discharges from residential institutions⁶⁷

Effective monitoring of residential childcare reforms requires timely access to accurate information concerning current residents, admissions and discharges from institutions. Experience of effective information management is that information requirements of managers should be simple and a by-product of information requirements of front-line staff. It is assumed that administrators of residential institutions of all types maintain a register of admissions and discharges to the institution for the use of the institution itself. It is recommended that Directors of all residential institutions be required to provide a monthly return of admissions, discharges and current residents in the form set out in Annex 4. The form is a simple replication of the institution's register. The use of the form does not require big IT investment as transmission can be by hand, post or fax. The DI Unit can transfer each monthly return to a spreadsheet to show the picture in individual institutions, by raion and the

national picture, to be made available to local and strategic managers.

9. Redirection of budget savings to alternative services⁶⁸

Government has approved a Regulation to enable budget savings arising from the reduction in the number of institutions and the number of children living in institutions to be transferred to LPAs. The Regulation freezes the budget of the institution at the point when a moratorium is placed in new admissions and enables LPAs to re-direct the funds to support school reintegration of children leaving the institution.

It is understood that the Regulation adopts the principle of “money follows child”. There is a risk that strict application of this principle will link financial transfers to historically high rates of institutionalisation rather than contemporaneous assessed need for family support services. Government and NGO stakeholders in the reform process will want to watch for unintended consequences of the application of the Regulation.

While the Regulation does support the reintegration of children from an institution, it is not a solution to the long-term development of community-based services to support children in families. LPA and NGO stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation consistently pointed to the difficulty of LPAs to develop community-based family support services without increased financial transfers from central government.

What is required is a service and financial planning mechanism that links LPA development of social services with central government policy priorities and objectives. It is recommended that the budget line for residential institutions be designated to be available out of family care. “Out of family care” would include foster care, small family-type homes, as well as care in institutions. See the recommendation below for Community Social Protection Planning.

10. DI Unit⁶⁹

The DI Unit in the ME has proved to be an invaluable resource to monitor implementation of reforms in

⁶⁷ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.15.

⁶⁸ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.11.

⁶⁹ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.16.

ME institutions. With more than 5,500 children still in institutions much work remains to be done and reform action to be monitored and reported on. It is understood that the costs of the DI Unit are funded by UNICEF, but that funding may not always be assured. Monitoring and reporting on reform progress is as much a government responsibility as funding front-line deinstitutionalisation and prevention activities. It is entirely reasonable that the costs of the DI Unit, principally employment and office costs are met from budget savings to the ME from the closure of institutions and reduction of numbers of children in institutions. It is recommended that UNICEF and the ME agree a phased reduction of financial support of the unit by UNICEF and a phased increase in funding by the ME.

The expertise and experience of the Unit should be extended to monitor implementation of Action Plans of MLSPF, MH, Chisinau Directorate of Child Rights Protection as well as ME by placing it under the authority of the Deputy Chief of the National Council for Child Rights Protection.

11. National Council for Child Rights Protection to coordinate reform action⁷⁰

Principal beneficiaries of the 2007-2012 Action Plan have been children without disabilities. It is probable that some children with disabilities and children aged under three years remaining in institutions will require specialised care and education. Planning their care will require greater coordination between Ministries of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Education, Health, Internal Affairs, Justice and Finance and LPAs. It is recommended therefore that the Deputy Chief of the National Council for Child Rights Protection assume the Chair of a National Council for Coordination of Residential Care System Reforms. The role of the Chair of the National Council for Coordination of Residential Care System Reform is to ensure Action Plan *Activity* timescales are adhered to and report periodically to the Deputy Prime Minister on implementation by line Ministries and local government.

It is understood that the National Council for Child

⁷⁰ This recommendation is derived from Conclusions No.13, 14, 17, 19 and 20.

Rights Protection is currently a forum for the discussion of child rights protection. However the National Council for Child Rights Protection could function as a high level policy monitoring body if three technical coordination and implementation bodies reported to it;

- The existing National Council for Coordinating of the Reform of Residential Childcare System and Developing of Inclusive Education that is focussed mainly on children in institutions of the ME.
- A similar coordination council focussed on the deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities.
- A similar coordination council focussed on the deinstitutionalisation of children under three years.

12. Participation of children in policy development⁷¹

The right of children to participate in decisions that affect them is a fundamental principle of the CRC. NGOs and LPAs have demonstrated how children can play a part at the local level in ensuring children's rights are promoted and respected. It is recommended that members of the National Council for Child Rights Protection consider how children can be brought into the policy development and implementation process at the national level.

13. Implement the recommendations of the ECI study into the effectiveness of the *Ajutor Social* scheme⁷²

The link between family poverty and pressure for the placement of children in institutions is acknowledged in Moldova. The report commissioned in November 2011 from the ECI consultants found that despite significant progress in reducing overall levels of income poverty in Moldova, the *Ajutor Social* scheme was still failing to reach significant numbers of the poorest of the poor families with children, particularly in rural areas.

The ECI report makes very practical recommendations for improving the targeting of *Ajutor Social* including improving the training of community social assistants to identify families who should be receiving help from the scheme. It is understood the Government of Moldova is considering a new strategy in 2012 for a wider reform of child and family protection.

⁷¹ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.20.

⁷² This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.7.

Government and NGO partners to residential child-care reforms will want to ensure that the ECI recommendations for improving the reach of *Ajutor Social* are considered within the context of a new child and family protection strategy.

The role of LPAs and community social assistants to ensure poor families with children receive their entitlements to *Ajutor Social* should be an integral component of training of community social assistants.

14. Community Social Protection Planning⁷³

The Law on Social Services Nr. 123 of 18.06.2010 requires LPAs to plan the provision of social services in their area and periodically report to the Ministry⁷⁴. This is the legal basis for a recommendation for the MLSPF to institute a process of annual Community Social Protection Planning by raion Departments of Social Assistance and Family Protection. A more detailed description of Community Social Protection Planning is contained in Annex 6, but in summary it involves the Minister publishing an annual Directive setting out the Government's priorities and expectations for social protection. The Directive would require each raion LPA to devise and present an annual Plan of how it intends to implement the Minister's Directive. Each raion Community Social Protection Plan will set out proposals for services and initiatives to implement central government policy priorities using local tax revenue, NGO partnership arrangements and, probably more often, makes bids for central government finance to implement those initiatives. Community Social Protection Plans are submitted to the Ministry for review.

Development proposals approved by the Minister as likely to meet policy objectives will receive central government finance for implementation. Development proposals that do not receive Ministerial approval will be unfunded. If a raion proposes an initiative diametrically opposed to government policy, such as opening a new residential institution, the Minister can withhold finance, impose a financial penalty, or even

issue a Directive prohibiting the proposed action. It is a process of providing incentives and disincentives to LPAs to implement central government policies. In the first instance Community Social Protection Plans may only refer to children without parental care but the Directive process can easily be widened to cover social services for adults with disabilities, unsupported older people and other priorities for social protection.

Community Social Protection Planning can also be a device whereby central government offers incentives to LPAs to respond to priorities that LPAs might otherwise not have responded to. For example, some children with disabilities living in institutions have lost links with the LPA from where they originated. No LPA feels a particular responsibility for their deinstitutionalisation. Central government can provide incentives to one or more LPAs to devise plans and services for their deinstitutionalisation perhaps by offering 100% funding for those services for *x* years. In practice, incentives would need to be discussed and negotiated between LPAs and government prior to the planning process.

The process of Community Social Protection planning is also a device by which Government can estimate the costs of implementing social policies and the Cabinet of Ministers make judgements about the allocation of government finance to social protection alongside other government priorities.

15. Interim management of residential institutions⁷⁵

International good practice in the management of services such as residential and day care services is for them to be managed by local government bodies that are responsible for assessing need. Some residential institutions for children currently remain under the direct management of central government ministries while others have already been transferred to LPAs.

It is recommended that future transfer of management responsibility be agreed between Ministries, LPAs and NGOs as part of the deinstitutionalisation plan for the institution. This may be more problematic for institutions that accommodate children from all over Moldova.

⁷³ This recommendation is derived from Conclusions No.1, 2, 3, 7, 13, 17, and 18.

⁷⁴ Law on Social Services of the Republic of Moldova No.123 of 18.06.2010, Article 9(4)c and Article 9(4)i.

⁷⁵ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.18.

16. Rationalise social work training⁷⁶

Social work skills and techniques for the assessment of vulnerable children and families, planning deinstitutionalisation of children from institutions, managing and monitoring their reintegration or placement in substitute families cannot be taught in two weeks off-the-job training plus periodic training events. Fragmented delivery of training within multiple LPAs is neither effective nor efficient. Consistency of quality

will be better assured if training to national standards is delivered by one or more accredited bodies. It is recommended that the MLSPF, relevant NGOs and representatives of LPAs together devise a national plan how social work training can be better delivered. This might be achieved by the Government inviting tenders from accredited NGO or university training providers to supply training services.

⁷⁶ This recommendation is derived from Conclusion No.8.

Summary of Recommendations

<i>Principal stakeholders:</i>	<i>ME</i>	<i>MH</i>	<i>MLSPF</i>	<i>MF</i>	<i>LPAs</i>	<i>Children and families</i>	<i>NGOs</i>
1. Continue deinstitutionalisation in ME residential institutions	X		X	X	X	X	X
2. Plan deinstitutionalisation of children with disabilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Plan deinstitutionalisation of children aged under 3 years		X	X	X	X	X	X
4. Plan deinstitutionalisation of children affected by TB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. Devise closure plans for individual residential institutions	X	X	X	X	X		X
6. Make a situation analysis of foster care			X	X	X		X
7. Investigate social work management information systems	X	X	X	X	X		
8. Adopt simple procedure to monitor admissions and discharges from institutions	X	X	X				
9. Redirection of budget savings to alternative services	X	X	X	X	X		
10. Government to assume financial responsibility for DI Unit	X			X			
11. National Council for Child Rights Protection to coordinate reform action	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12. Participation of children in policy development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
13. Implement ECI study recommendations for Ajutor Social scheme				X	X		
14. Devise system framework for Community Social Protection Planning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
15. Plan interim management of residential institutions	X	X	X	X	X		X
16. Rationalise social work training			X	X	X		X

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of references

Evaluation of the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the reform of the residential childcare system, 2007-2012

Background

In 2006 Moldova officially launched its childcare reform. This aimed to establish a network of community social assistants, develop family support services and alternative family placement services, and reorganise residential childcare institutions. The Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child was created and further transformed into the Ministry of Labour, Social protection and Family (MLSPF), with responsibility for childcare reform.

The National Strategy and Action Plan for the reform of the residential childcare system, 2007–2012 (hereinafter “National Strategy and Action Plan”) was approved by the Government of Moldova. The National Action Plan comprises the following components

1. Changes in the legislative and policy environment
2. Development of a community and family based services
3. Capacity building of professionals
4. Transformation of the residential care
5. Redirection of financial sources from the residential care to a community-based care services
6. Monitoring and evaluation
7. Social mobilization and communication of the change

As the Government of Moldova is presently planning to develop a new strategy for a wider reform in the field of child and family protection, there is a need to have external evaluation to assess the impact of the existing childcare reform on the life of children, to better understand strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the NAP for further adjustments and development of new strategy. It is expected that the result of this evaluation will substantially inform the process of elaboration of the above mentioned strategy.

The overall objective is to evaluate qualitative and quantitative results and achievements of the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the reform of the residential childcare system during 2007–2011 in relation to the planned objectives.

The specific objectives are:

- To provide insight into the current status of the childcare system reform and strategic recommendations for the next steps in the reform process relevant for all engaged stakeholders.
- To assess the position of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the reform of the residential childcare system and links with overall reforms of the childcare system.
- To evaluate the impact of the reform on children’s life, especially the most vulnerable ones

Scope and focus

The scope and focus of the evaluation takes into consideration the following criteria and evaluation questions:

- **assessing relevance / To what extent does the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan respond to the priorities in overall social and child protection reforms?**
 - To what extent the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan timely and relevant for development of new policies and legislation?
 - To what extent does the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan respond to the needs of the target groups?
 - To what extent and how the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan took into account the results of the previous efforts as a basis for planned interventions?
 - Were the objectives of the National Strategy and Action Plan set realistically to be achieved in a given period of time?
- **assessing effectiveness / To what extent does the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system meet the outcomes as defined by the National Strategy and Action Plan?**
 - Have the planned results been achieved to date (quantitative and qualitative)?

- To what extent and how did the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system respond to the changing external conditions and unplanned (both positive and negative) effects relevant to the planned results? What strategies have been used to take into account a changing environment? Were these strategies successful?
 - To what extent did the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system contribute to decreasing the number of children in residential care?
 - To what extent did the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system contribute to increasing ratio of the children in family substitute services versus those in institutional care? What do children themselves think about improvements in this matter (have there been improvements? What/what not? Etc.)
 - Have the necessary standards / amendments to the relevant by-laws been developed?
 - To what extent has the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system contributed to the realization of the rights of children in the social protection system?
- ***assessing sustainability / To what extent are the outcomes achieved, sustainable?***
- What is the level of ownership within the Government and what are the prospects for further development of related interventions after the end of external support?
 - To what extent have relevant target groups (the ministries, experts, NGOs, beneficiary groups) been involved in the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system, including monitoring?
 - How well are activities related to implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system contributing to institutional capacities of involved actors / stakeholders?
 - To what extent have the national human (professional / expert) resources at both national and local level been empowered to continue transferring knowledge?
- What is the financial / economic viability for sustainability of the National Strategy and Action Plan outcomes?
- ***assessing efficiency / To what extent did the management of the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system ensure timelines and defined were met?***
- How well have the implementation of reform of residential childcare system been managed? To what extent are activities implemented as scheduled, how flexible was the management of the reform of the residential care in adapting to changing needs?
 - How well have the financial resources been used?
 - Did the management of the reform of the residential care ensure co-ordination with other similar interventions to encourage synergy and avoid overlaps?
- ***assessing impact / To what extent and in what way did the implementation of the reform of the residential childcare system succeed in improving the situation of children, especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalised ones?***
- Additional criteria to be used assessed to the extent possible are as follows:
- Coverage: Which vulnerable groups of children have been reached? Have vulnerable children been reached, including girls, children from low-income families, ethnic minorities, children left behind due to migration etc.?
 - Coordination: How the coordination mechanism were defined and divided between the Government, UNICEF and NGO partners. What was the role of the MLSPF and Ministry of Education and other key actors in coordination of the activities? What was the role of UNICEF and other donor agencies?
 - *What do the children in residential care and children reintegrated into biological and other family solutions think themselves in terms of*

improvements of their situation, especially the poor, vulnerable and marginalized? What has been improved and what has not been improved? What are their recommendations for the future in this regard?

In addition to this, the following approaches and issues should be considered:

Assessing human rights-based approach and relevant cross-cutting issues / To what extent do the project outcomes contribute to achievement of children's rights and to what extent have they contributed to addressing key cross-cutting issues?

- Does the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan actively contribute to the promotion of child rights?
- To what extent and how the National Strategy and Action Plan ensures a non-discrimination and equity focus?
- Is the National Strategy and Action Plan gender sensitive?

Use of the evaluation results

The evaluation results will be used widely: by the Government of Moldova and its partners in measuring the impact of the childcare reform and planning its next phase; by UNICEF in preparation for the new country Program (2013–2017).

Existing information sources – see Annex 1.

Evaluation process and methods

The evaluation methodology will be guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)⁷⁷. The evaluation methodology will be further defined by the Evaluation Team and will cover desk review, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with national and local stakeholders, NGOs, families and children, combined with the field visits to residential services and visit to families. More emphasis will be placed on the learning dimension of the assessment.

⁷⁷ UNEG Norms: <http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Libraryandaction=GetFileandDocumentAttachmentID=1491>.

UNEG Standards: <http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Libraryandaction=GetFileandDocumentAttachmentID=1496>.

Scope and focus

Nation wide scope — with focus on geographical areas where the National Strategy and Action Plan at the institution level is modelled.

Stakeholders' participation

This is a joint Evaluation of the Government of Moldova, UNICEF and NGO partners involved in the implementation of the National Strategy and the Action Plan. During the Evaluation the respective Ministry will lead the process with logistical support by Terres de Hommes NGO and technical guidance of UNICEF.

Confidentiality: evaluators should be sensitive to beliefs and act with integrity and respect to all stakeholders. In the report evaluators should ensure confidentiality of information regarding individual children. Evaluators may not share findings with media in Moldova or abroad concerning individual children or individual institutions.

Evaluation team composition and qualifications

Evaluation team will be composed from an international expert and a nationally based NGO — Terres de Hommes Lausanne).

The requirements for international consultant are listed below. The local based NGO has a proven expertise in evaluation of projects, policies, formulation of sector plans, planning of programmes and coordination of research work and will assist the international expert in conducting evaluation.

The Evaluation Team will in the inception phase develop a detailed methodology and a plan of evaluation. The consultant will use the desk review to get familiar with the policy basis, relevant project documents and deliverables of the Project. Existing information sources will be made available to the consultant.

The international consultancy involves 33 working days, including 13 working days in country (2 missions) involving field visits to project regions and 2 validation meetings with counterparts (an interim and the final).

Accountabilities

Key tasks that Evaluation team is responsible for

carrying out are:

- Develop more detailed evaluation methodology and work plan – draft to be submitted to UNICEF for approval, including key instruments.
- De-briefing meeting with UNICEF and other partners
- Prepare the draft report with key findings, recommendations and lessons learned based on all sources of information used
- Based on feed-back provided by UNICEF and partners prepare the final report with all key findings, recommendations (including prioritisation of key strategic recommendations followed by development of management response developed in close cooperation with UNICEF and stakeholders) and lessons learned following the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards.
- Prepare presentation and two pages of key findings
- Organize a round table on the final report with relevant stakeholders

The International Consultant will be responsible for guiding the evaluation process:

- The development of methodology and evaluation plan and ensuring that inputs provided by the national consultant and feed-back provided by UNICEF are integrated into final evaluation work plan to be submitted to UNICEF;
- conducting desk review of selected documents / reports in close cooperation with the national consultant;
- conducting field-visit and interviewing key stakeholders / beneficiaries in close cooperation with the national consultant, including taking the key role in preparing for and realizing debriefing with UNICEF and key partners; This would be at initial stage only to develop a model of field work for the national consultant.
- analyzing all the inputs and writing the draft report with inputs provided by the national consultant;
- integration of comments / feed-back given

by UNICEF and partners into the final evaluation report.

Responsibilities of the local team / Terres de Hommes NGO:

- Assist in the preparatory work of the appraisal in advance of the arrival of the international expert in Moldova;
- Assist the international expert in the design of the questionnaires for the interviews (if any);
- Collect and select project documents for evaluation;
- Coordinate and support evaluation activities: focus groups, meetings, etc;

Prioritization of strategic recommendations

The following should be clearly stated in the Evaluation report (i) the intended use (how the evaluation process and results will be used and by whom), and (ii) prioritization of key strategic recommendations.

Requirements for effective evaluation recommendations

1. To ensure programmatic and technical relevance, key stakeholders should be consulted during the development of recommendations.
2. The evaluation team should highlight key strategic recommendations, suggesting an appropriate sequencing in the implementation of recommendations whenever possible.
3. Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis.
4. Recommendations should clearly identify the specific operational units/offices/divisions responsible for its implementation (If this hasn't been done it should be done in the response).

Brief the international expert about key relevant issues of the national childcare system;

- Gather relevant information and organize this information in English and Romanian;
- Propose specific recommendations for the respective Ministries, stakeholders;

- Comment on the intermediate and final evaluation reports and provide inputs as appropriate;
- Organize the logistics and accomplish other tasks to assist the international expert as required.
- Translate the report into Romanian, have it designed and printed in 2 languages, organise launch.

UNICEF programme staff will be accountable for reviewing/approving the evaluation methodology and intermediate and final evaluation results.

Qualifications

The competencies required from the members of the Evaluation team are the following:

- Technical expertise in child protection;
- Experience of conducting project and programme evaluations;
- Good communication and presentation skills / ability to express concisely and clearly ideas and concepts in written and oral form;
- Experience in working with UN / UNICEF (desired);
- Knowledgeable of UN evaluation policy;
- Ability to keep with strict deadlines.

The qualifications and skill areas required from the international consultant include:

- Advanced University degree in related field;
- Expertise in the area of child protection;
- Extensive evaluation expertise and experience;
- Proven knowledge of the region;
- Team leadership competencies;
- Excellent report writing skills;
- Excellent written and spoken English;
- Knowledge of Romanian and/or Russian would be an asset.

The qualifications and skill areas required from the consultant provided by the Terres de Hommes NGO:

- University degree in related field;
- Proven knowledge of the childcare; system in the country;
- Experience in project evaluations would be

an asset;

- Excellent written and spoken Romanian, fluency in English.

Supervision arrangements

The evaluation (supervision of an international expert and guidance to the Terres de Hommes NGO will be managed by the UNICEF Country Office,- Child Protection Team, supervised by the Chief, Child Protection Section with technical and methodological support of MandE Officer. The management of the evaluation will include development of the terms of reference, assignment of the evaluation team, liaison between the evaluation team and partners / stakeholders involved, as well as quality assurance of the report.

Procedures and logistics

Time frame for this work assignment is from December 2011 until April 2012.

For international consultant UNICEF premises will be available during the time spent in Moldova if needed. UNICEF will provide printer, photocopying services, and other similar services. It is expected that consultant will bring her/his own laptop.

It is expected that the Terres de Hommes NGO will provide all logistics related to the evaluation, including meetings and field visits.

Any specific information — regarding work schedule considerations, special procedures, for example on security and travel conditions will be provided by UNICEF.

Products and payments for International consultant

Draft evaluation report in English (including findings, conclusions and recommendations) – end of March 2012.

Final evaluation report fully complies with UNICEF standards and is approved by UNICEF, including executive summary and PPP (in English) – by end of April 2012.

An international expert will be paid 30 % in advance

Tentative Timeframe and Tasks distribution for International consultant

<i>Time</i>	<i>Tasks</i>	<i>International Consultant</i>
December 2011	TOR finalized and reviewed by Regional Office Final TOR forwarded to potential institutions/consultants for bidding, bids/applications received UNICEF Internal process for International consultant/contract preparation and signature	
January 2012	Detailed methodology and work plan elaborated	2 working days
January 2012	Desk Review	7 working days
February 2012	First in-country mission: Field visits, additional collection interview with professionals, beneficiaries and interim validation of the findings (meeting with the stakeholders)	10 working days in-country mission
March 2012	Draft Evaluation Report prepared in English	7 working days
March 2012	Draft Report reviewed by Country Office and shared with Regional Office for review and comments	
April 2012	Final Report prepared, comments from Country Office and Regional Office incorporated (including PPP and key findings summary)	4 working days
April 2012	Second in-country mission Presentation of the final findings/ validation round table / Final Report disseminated / Launch	3 working days in-country mission
Total		33 working days

for the work and 70% after the completion of the final products mentioned above. UNICEF will pay for all related in country mission travel expenses and provided DSA during her/his time in Moldova.

Terres de Hommes NGO will be responsible for translation of the report in Romanian and printing.

The report (in both its format and content) - will have to comply with the UNICEF-adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards and criteria of UNICEF Global Evaluation Report Oversight System (GEROS) Review, which will be made available to the Evaluation Team at the beginning of the consultancy. The report will have to contain an assessment of the evaluation methodology, including its limitations and will not exceed 120 pages including Annexes.

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/ outputs are incomplete, not delivered for failure to meet deadlines.

Description of official travel involved:

The consultancy will involve travel to Moldova. Prior to starting the assignment, the selected candidate must undertake Basic Security in the Field e-training.

Supported information

Legislation and Government documents

- National Strategy and Action Plan for reforming residential care system (2007-2012),
- National Development Strategy,
- Law on Child Rights, No.338-XIII of 15 December 1994,
- Family Code No.1316-XIV from 26 October 2000 (extracts),
- Available official statistics on the situation of children and reports from the Government.

UNICEF documents

- Assessment of the childcare system in Moldova, UNICEF 2009,
- Child Abandonment in the Republic of Moldova, UNICEF 2006,
- At home or in a home, UNICEF RO 2010,
- UNICEF Country Program Document (2007-2012) and Mid-Term evaluation (2009),
- Committee on the Rights of the Child, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention, Concluding Observations, second and third periodic report of the Republic of Moldova, CRC/C/MDA/CO/3, 2009.

ANNEX 2: SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2007-2012

1. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK					
Objective: To adjust the legal and the institutional framework for child and family protection to international policies in view of ensuring and respecting the child's right to grow up in a family environment					
Objective: To ensure an adequate coordination of all activities under the Residential Childcare System Reform					
	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
1	Assess, modify and amend the Child and Family Protection Legislation; regulate the operation of community-based services (Law on Social Assistance, Family Code, Law on the Rights of the Child, etc.)	Family-type and community-based child protection services (awareness raising services, counseling services, support groups, community-based centers, day care centers, maternal centers, recovery/ rehabilitation services, recreational services, services for reintegration into biological/extended family, foster care, adoption services etc.)	Number of modified and amended legislative acts	MSPFC	Law on Social Assistance, and Family Code were revised. Five bylaws relating to the reforms have been approved. Another five bylaws have not been either drafted or approved.
2	Develop and endorse a statutory act on the organogram, job description and the establishment of norms for child and family protection institutions, including on compulsory employment of community social assistants	Institutions for child and family protection provided with staff according to the organogram. Social assistants employed in child and family protection institutions.	Approved Statutory act	MSPFC	Job descriptions for community social assistants in institutions have been elaborated by ME. 90% of institutions had at least one social worker in 2009. Currently ~ 60% of institutions have social assistants employed.

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
3	Develop and approve the framework-regulations to implement the standard for case management in protection services for children and families in difficulty.	A mechanism on the use of case management in services for children and families in difficulty in place.	Approved Regulations	MSPFC	MLSPF approved (by Government order) the Guidelines of Case Management for social workers.
4	Develop the legal framework for the methodology to support children and families in difficulty.	A methodology on the approach to the need-based mechanism for children and families in need in place.	Approved Regulations	MH	This methodology was not developed. MLSPF has developed a draft of the Law on Family Support. This law is on agenda of MLSPF Activity Plan for 2012.
5	Modify and amend the legal framework to increase parents' responsibility for raising their own children.	A set of measures for increasing the responsibility of parents who neglect their own children in place. Attract parents into case settlement procedures.	Number of modified and amended legislative acts, Number of contracts with parents.	MSPFC	There is a draft Law on modification and improvement of legislation initiated by UNICEF in 2009. This law contains a section regarding the parents' responsibility. It has not been supported.
6	Develop and endorse the regulations and quality standards for every type of child and family protection services	Regulations and quality standards for all types of child and family protection services in place	Number of regulations and standards approved by categories of services	MSPFC	There is a range of regulations and quality standards approved for ~ 10 services for families and children.
7	Develop and endorse the regulations, organogram and job description for guardianship and trusteeship authorities.	Statutory basis for the activities of guardianship and trusteeship authorities in place. Guardianship and trusteeship authorities provided with qualified staff.	Approved Regulations, organogram, job description for guardianship and trusteeship authorities.	MSPFC	Draft regulation was developed in 2009 with support of UNICEF. It was not finalized. MLSPF with the support of UNICEF again hired a consultant in order to finalize this work – no result was achieved. At this moment, MLSPF has initiated a draft Law on modification and improvement of legislation. It will be introduced in modifications to the Family Code, with respect to guardianship authority.
8	Create a register of child and family social service providers	The register in place	Number of enlisted service providers	MSPFC	Completed
9	Develop and endorse the legal framework on the accreditation, licensing and monitoring of social care services for children and families.	An accreditation, licensing and monitoring mechanism for child and family social protection services in place.	Approved legal framework	MSPFC	A draft law is under consideration by Parliament.

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
10	Develop and approve the Regulations on in-service training, and appraisal for the attestation and qualification degree assigning to the child and family protection professionals.	A mechanism for in-service training, appraisal, attestation and qualifications degree assigning to child and family protection professional in place.	Approved Regulations.	MSPFC	Regulations have not been drafted. There is a Strategy and Action Plan on the continuous training of the personnel from social field (2009–2012). No financial coverage is available for this Action Plan.
11	Revise the current legislation on wages by setting up attestation and qualification degrees to professionals in child and family protection.	An attestation mechanism based on qualification degrees of child and family protection professionals in place.	Current legislation on the remuneration of professionals in child and family protection based on their qualification degrees.	MSPFC	There is no accepted qualification for these professionals. However, there is a document approved by an order of MLSPF that specifies the Mechanism of supervision of Social workers. This document states that there should be one community social worker supervisor that will supervise the work of other 3-5 community social workers from the region (3-4 neighborhood villages). This supervisor is a regular community social worker, but in the job description it has additional task to supervise other social workers. For this task the supervisor receives an additional payment.
12	Revise and amend the legislation in force in order to allow the employment of other professionals in child and family protection institutions after they have been re-qualified and keep their length of service and the re-qualification degree in order to assign the remuneration category.	Staff from other social services re-qualified and employed within new child and family protection services.	Revised and amended legislation	MSPFC	No amendments or new specific regulations were developed. Current legislation does not prevent people to re-qualify. Re-qualification functions based on current legislations.
13	Revise and amend the current legislation on employment by setting up facilities for employers who hire and create jobs for graduates of residential institutions.	Legislation on facilitating the employment of graduates of residential institutions revised and modified.	Number of employed graduates of residential institutions	MSPFC	It was not done. There is a Government decision that states that after graduation the young should return to native place (raion, village). The guardianship authority must ensure accommodation and workplace for this young graduate. There are no privileges for entrepreneurs if they hire a graduate (no taxes reductions).

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
14	Revise and amend the legislation in force on provision of social apartments to orphan children and to children with the status of orphans who graduated from boarding schools.	Legislation on provision of social apartments to orphan children and to children with the status of orphans - graduates of boarding schools revised and modified.	Number of orphan children or children with the status of orphans - graduates of boarding schools provided with dwellings	MSPFC	Specific legislation does not exist. There were some attempts in Chisinau to provide social apartments for orphans, but it is a very slow process.
15	Develop and approve strategies and action plans on the residential child-care system reform at local level.	Strategies and action plans developed and approved at local level.	Acts approved	LPA	It was done only in the raions were NGOs and other partners (TACIS I, II, UNICEF) undertook some actions and offered support.
16	Set up Steering Committee at local level to implement the National Strategy and NPA on the Reform of the Residential Childcare System.	Steering Committee set up at local level. Programs and actions synchronized at local level.	Number of local Steering Committee members, Number of sittings and minutes, Number of reports	LPA	It was done only in the raions were NGOs and other partners (TACIS I, II, UNICEF) undertook some actions and offered support.
17	Set up a Steering Committee for implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan on the Reform of the Residential Childcare System.	Steering Committee set up. The National Strategy and Action Plan implementation monitored. Sector strategies, programs and actions in the concerned area synchronized.	Number of Steering Committee members Number of sittings and minutes, Number of reports.	MSPFC	It was done. National Council for Coordination of Residential Care System Reform and Development of Inclusive Education.
2. FAMILY-TYPE AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE DEVELOPMENT					
Objective: To provide access to the child and his/her family to quality family-type and community-based services					
18	Employ community social assistants within LPA structures	Social assistants who work within LPA structures in place. Quality social assistance provided to children and families at the level of LPA. Institutionalization of children prevented.	Number of hired social assistants, Number of assisted beneficiaries.	MSPFC	Social assistants are employed in LPAs.

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
19	Employ social assistants in residential care institutions.	Social assistants employed in residential care institutions. The quality of social services delivered by residential institutions to children and families improved. The length of children's stay in residential institutions reduced.	Number of employed social assistants, Number of assisted beneficiaries, Number of children reintegrated into families, Number of children placed into family-type services.	MSPFC	90% of institutions had at least one social assistant in 2009. Since then vacancy rates have risen and currently ~60% of institutions have social assistants employed.
20	Implement the framework-regulations on the use of case management in protection services for children and families in difficulty.	Individual and multidisciplinary approach to every case separately. Work in Multi-Disciplinary team Number of children placed in residential institutions reduced. Number of children reintegrated into families and community increased.	Number of districts where the case management method is being applied. Number of assisted cases.	LPA	It is done.
21	Assess community needs and potential to develop social care services for children and families in difficulty.	Needs identified. Community potential capitalized.	Number of assessment forms, Number of services that need to be developed at community level.	LPA	It was done only in the raions where NGOs and other partners (TACS I, II, III, UNICEF) undertook some actions and offered support.
22	Create and develop need-based child and family protection services within local public authorities structures.	Child and family community-based protection services (awareness raising services, counseling services, support groups, community-based centers, day care centers, maternal centers, recovery/ rehabilitation services, recreational services, services for reintegration into biological/ extended family, foster care, family-type homes, adoption services etc.) developed.	Total number of services, Number of beneficiaries per service, Types of prevention and intervention services, Balanced geographical service dispersion.	LPA	Information about services is published in the annual report of MLSPF.

3. INCREASING THE PROFESSIONAL LEVEL OF HUMAN RESOURCES					
Objective: TO SETUP A NATIONAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND RE-QUALIFICATION SYSTEM FOR CHILD AND FAMILY PROTECTION PROFESSIONALS					
	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
23	Assess training-needs of child and family protection professionals.	Needs identified. Specialists' potential capitalized.	Number of professionals in need of training, Number of professionals in need of attestation.	MSPFC	Training needs assessment completed by the ME.
24	Develop and implement in-service training programs for social assistants.	In-service training programs developed.	Number of developed programs, Training Curriculum, Number of trained social assistants.	MEY	It was done in several stages: Stage I – 2007 initial training for ~ 540 social workers. Stage II – 2009 continuous training. Stage III – 2011 – World Bank is implementing training on development of skill for use of computers for all social assistant. WB will provide computers for all social assistants.
25	Develop and implement training programs for professionals in child and family rights protection.	Training programs developed for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LPA representatives; Child and family protection specialists; social assistants; professionals employed in community-based services; professionals employed in family-type services (Foster Care, Family-type Homes, etc.); managers of residential settings; professionals from residential institutions. 	Number of developed programs for various categories of professionals, Training Curriculum for various categories of professionals, Number of trained professionals.	MEY	There were developed Operational Handbooks for all community-based services, but they are not approved yet. All mayors have received training supported by UNICEF.

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
26	Implement the regulations on in-service training, attestation and award of qualification degrees to child and family protection professionals.	In-service training, attestation and award of qualification degrees in place.	Number of trained professionals, Number of assisted professionals, Periodical training programs.	MSPFC	Regulations have not been implemented.
27	Identify and assess the providers of in-service training services in child and family protection.	Database developed. Register of in-service training providers in child and family protection.	Number of identified and assessed public and private service providers, Types of training programs.	MSPFC	A Register of in-service child protection training providers has not been developed.
28	Inclusion of "Child and Family Protection" module into the in-service training curriculum for professionals who are not working in this area, but interact with children and families in their activity.	Professionals (who work in fields other than child protection) trained.	Number of trained professionals, Profession of trained professionals.	MEY	Some scattered trainings were done by some NGOs and modules for curricula were developed, but the training is not officially approved and uniform for all country.
29	Develop and implement training programs on the care, recovery and protection of disabled children	The skills of professionals who interact with disabled children and their families consolidated. Quality services for disabled children in place.	Number and variety of training programs, Training Curriculum, Number of trained professionals.	MEY	Operational Handbooks were developed for all community-based services including work with disabled children, but they are not approved yet.
30	Inclusion of the "Disabled Child Recovery and Protection" module into in-service training curriculum for professionals who are not working in this area, but interact with disabled children and their families in their activity.	Professionals trained.	Number of trained professionals, Profession of trained professionals.	MEY	This training module has not been approved.

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
31	Develop and implement reconversion/re-qualification programs intended for the staff of residential institutions undergoing the reform.	Staff of residential institutions capitalized. Re-qualified staff.	Number of training programs, Training Curriculum, Number of re-qualified professionals.	MEY	The Institute for Educational Sciences has some educational programs for reconversion/ requalification for personnel from education, but they are not oriented specifically toward the staff of institutions that are under reform. Figures are not available for the number of staff retrained.
32	Develop training programs for the staff that is going to work in reformed residential institutions.	Quality child and family protection services in reformed residential institutions. Staff enabled to work in reformed residential institutions.	Number of training programs, Training Curriculum, Number of re-qualified professionals.	MEY	No official approved curricula exist. Only some NGOs that work on reform of a specific institution offer this kind of training.
33	Develop and deliver training programs for adoptive families-to-be.	Parental skills of adoptive parents-to-be developed.	Number of trained adoptive families, Training Curriculum.	MSPFC	This curricula exists and it was approved by the MLSPF. NGO Amicii dei Bambini offers training for adoptive families.
4. REORGANIZATION OF RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS					
<u>Objective:</u> To redirect the residential care system towards the community and family					
34	Conduct the complex assessment of every child in residential care and his/her family.	Social form on the actual situation of children and their families in place.	Number of assessed children and families	LPA	Assessment is done only in the institutions where NGOs work on the reform. Other institutions do not respect the periodicity of assessments. There are incomplete or missing assessments.
35	Develop individual care and reintegration plans.	Individual plans developed.	Number of developed individual care plans	MSPFC	As above
36	Prepare children and their families for reintegration.	Children prepared for reintegration. Families prepared to receive children.	Number of prepared children and families	MSPFC	As above
37	Reintegrate children in their families.	Children reintegrated	Number of reintegrated children	MSPFC	More than 900 children have been reintegrated to biological or extended family.
38	Monitor children and their families in the post-reintegration period.	Actual situation of children reintegrated in their families.	Number of filled in monitoring forms, Number of monitored children and families.	MSPFC	This should be done by community social assistants together with guardianship authorities (Mayors). It is done better in localities where there is support from NGOs and donors. Random monitoring visits by the MLSPF and ME are undertaken periodically.

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
39	Prepare the child to be transferred in centers with family-type or community based- services.	Children prepared to be reintegrated.	Number of children prepared to be transferred	MSPFC	This done mainly with support of NGOs and donors.
40	Integrate children in centers with family-type and community-based services.	Children integrated in centers with family-type and community-based services.	Number of children transferred from residential care institutions to centers with family-type and community-based services	MSPFC	As above
41	Monitor the children who have been transferred to family-type and community-based services.	Actual situation of children who have been transferred to family-type and community-based services.	Number of filled in monitoring forms, Number of monitored children and families.	MSPFC	An officially approved monitoring form does not exist. As this work is done mainly by NGOs, every NGO is using their own forms. This issue is problematic because no standard/uniform mechanism exists. Even if the quality standards for these services indicate the monitoring frequency, any tools for monitoring should be approved.
42	Conduct the complex assessment of residential care institutions.	Database with in-depth information about the 68 residential institutions. Assessment report on the overall picture and the actual situation.	Developed assessment questionnaire, 68 assessed institutions.	MSPFC	This data base has not been developed. Information is collected from residential institutions three times per year by Statistical Office.
43	Develop the General Plan for the transformation of residential care institutions.	Unitary concept of the reorganization of residential care institutions.	A developed General Plan	MSPFC	A General Transformation Plan was developed in 2009.
44	Develop individual reorganization plans for every residential institution.	Individual Plans developed.	Number of institutions with their own reorganization plans, which are proposed for the reorganization, Number of institutions with developed plans, which are proposed for closure.	MSPFC	These plans were developed by the DI Unit with the support of UNICEF in 2009. Every institution had a reorganization plan.

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
45	Implement reorganization plans for every residential care institution.	Number of residential care institutions decreased. Number of children living in residential care institutions decreased. Number of newly created community-based services increased. Children's living standards increased.	Number of reorganized institutions, Number of closed down institutions.	MSPFC	It is done partially. It was not possible to implement these plans in every institution because of lack of finance.
46	Prepare the staff of residential institutions for the reorganization process.	Awareness raising on the need of reorganization.	Number of prepared staff	MSPFC	It was done by the DI Unit in all institutions that are under reorganization. There were information meetings, discussions, etc. Some NGOs (Lumos, UNICEF) even paid compensations for laid off staff, a kind of moral damages compensations (in Cahul, Floresti).
47	Employ the staff, after re-qualification, from residential care institutions in the reorganized institutions or in other social care services.	Staff employed after reorganization of institutions.	Number of employed staff	MSPFC	It was done if there were relevant vacant posts.
5. REDIRECT FINANCIAL RESOURCES FROM THE RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE SYSTEM TO COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES					
Objective: To develop an efficient and flexible financial mechanism to redirect financial resources from the residential system to community-based and family-type services					
48	Assess the financial situation (recurrent costs) for every residential care institution: a) recurrent costs: wages; nutrition; clothes, shoes, hygiene items, soft furnishings, etc.; assessment of the institution's utilities (heating, water supply, electricity, etc.); b) capital costs.	Assess the average maintenance and training costs per child in different types of residential care institutions.	Number of children totally provided with the necessary items, Number of children partially provided with the necessary items.	MSPFC	It was done as part of the assessment of each institution and was included in the reorganization plan of every institution.
49	Analyze the sources of funding (central budget, local budget, donations, special funds) per residential care institution separately.	Specific contribution of each source into the budgets of institutions.	Share of each type of budget into the funding of institutions	MSPFC	As above

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
50	Develop, approve and implement the regulations on funding the residential care institutions during the reform process.	Regulations approved providing for mechanisms for the funding of the reformed residential care institutions. Residential care institutions provided with funding during the reform process.	Amounts allocated for the funding of every institution in the reform process	MSPFC	A draft regulation for redirecting funds has been prepared and sent for approval, but has not been approved.
51	Assess the costs of maintenance of a child in the family and the costs of basic (educational, health care, etc.) services children receive.	Average costs of maintenance of a child in the family, including the costs of basic health care and educational services known. Opportunity to conduct comparative studies on the cost of maintenance in the family and in residential settings. Cost-benefit analysis.	Average costs of maintenance of a child in the family, including the costs of basic health care and educational services.	MSPFC	It was done with the support of UNICEF. See also CASE report.
52	Develop and approve Regulations on mechanisms of decentralizing, securing and redirecting funds from the central level to the local level, from residential care institutions to community-based and family-type services.	Child protection activities decentralized. Community-based service development encouraged.	A mechanism of decentralizing, securing and redirecting funds from the central level to the local level in place	MSPFC	A draft regulation for redirecting funds to LPAs has been prepared and sent for approval, but has not been approved.
53	Implement mechanisms of decentralizing, securing and redirecting funds from residential care institutions to community-based and family-type services.	Community-based and family-type services created. Quality child and family protection services in place in communities. Support provided to families increased.	Number of community-based and family-type services funded on the account of funds that have been redirected from residential care institutions, Number of beneficiaries of these services.	MSPFC	No mechanism in place. There were limited trials done by some NGOs.

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
54	Develop, endorse and apply budget projections pertaining to the National Action Plan implementation.	Budgetary projections in place. Annual action plans for National Action Plan implementation financially covered.	Number of annual plans for National Action Plan implementation. Funds allocated for the National Action Plan implementation.	MSPFC	This has not been done.
55	Develop and endorse programs with non-reimbursable financing required for the National Action Plan implementation	Programs promoted.	Number of programs funded from external sources, Amount of funds raised.	MSPFC	There were projects funded by donors, for example by UNICEF. They were exempt from taxes. Information is not available about the amount of funds raised.
6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION					
<p>Objective: To strengthen the monitoring capacity at all levels of the child and family protection system</p> <p>Objective: To improve the quality of child and family protection services in accordance with quality standards</p>					
56	Create a national on-line database on children and families in difficulty and they services they receive.	<p>Any reports generated on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of children within the system; entries/egresses in/out of the system for a defined period; social, legal, medical, educational, etc. situation of children and families; services delivered to children and families in difficulty; costs of services delivered to children and families in difficulty; up-to-date information on number and type of child and family protection services. <p>Secure access to the beneficiary tracking system database granted and maintained at all levels</p>	Database in place.	MSPFC	<p>Large amounts of money were invested in database development without any results. None of the databases that were developed are functional.</p> <p>World Bank together with the MLSPF is creating a new database for cash benefits and social assistance.</p>

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
57	Develop and implement the accreditation and monitoring system for child and family protection service providers.	Accreditation and monitoring system in place. Quality child and family protection services.	Composition of the accreditation and monitoring structure, Accreditation methodology in place, Number of accredited service providers, Number of unaccredited service providers.	MSPFC	An accreditation and monitoring system has not been developed. A Social Inspection system has been established but at the moment they verify only cash benefits, not the quality of services.
58	Set up and implement a mechanism for inspection and assessment of child and family protection services.	Inspection and assessment mechanism set up. Child and family protection services operate in accordance with quality standards.	Inspection and assessment team created, Number of assessed services, Number of assessment reports.	MSPFC	As above
7. COMMUNICATION, ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION					
Objective: To form the public opinion and the opinion of all actors involved in child and family protection regarding the need of residential childcare system reform					
59	Develop a concept of communication, advocacy and social mobilization for the residential child and family care system reform.	A concept of communication, advocacy and social mobilization for the residential child and family care system reform in place.	Developed Program	MSPFC	ME approved the Strategy of Communication on reform. There was an approved communication concept. Advertisements were elaborated and an information campaign, etc. ME has two people employed as experts in communication.
60	Implement the concept of communication, advocacy and social mobilization for the residential child and family care system reform.	Partnerships set up. Public awareness on the institutionalized children's issues and on their right to grow up in a family environment increased. Number of foster carers, family-type homes and adoptive families increased.	Number of organized and conducted events, Number of TV and radio shows, articles in the print press, Number of meetings, debates and consultations, Number of foster carers, family-type homes and adoptive families.	MSPFC	As above

	Activities	Expected outcomes	Indicators	Structure in charge	Actual outcomes reported by DI Unit
61	Monitor, assess and revise the concept of communication, advocacy and social mobilization for the residential childcare system reform.	People's mentality on the negative impact of child separation from his/her family and the negative effects of institutionalization shifted. All actors are aware and understand the objectives of the reform.	Revised and improved Concept	MSPFC	As above

ANNEX 3: PERSONS MET AND FIELD VISITS

Name	Position	Organisation	Duration of interview or meeting
26 th March 2012			
		Members of the Ministry of Education Deinstitutionalisation Steering Committee	
Fiodor Sitnic	Director	Salvati Copii Moldova	53 min
27 th March 2012			
Angela Cara	Coordinator	DI Unit, Ministry of Education	2 h 27 min
Marcela Dilion	Coordinator	DI Unit, Ministry of Education	
Natalia Neagu	Deputy Chief	National Council for Child Rights Protection, Social Development Unit, State Chancellery	32 min
Stella Grigoras	Country Director	EveryChild Moldova	1 h 34 min
Valentin Crudu	Chairperson	DI Unit, Ministry of Education	1 h
28 th March 2012			
Eufrosinia Greту	President	Raion Council, Leova	
Mr Borza	Deputy President	Raion Council, Leova	
Mr Postica	Head of Department	Department of Social Assistance, Leova raion	47 min
Aurelia Nuca	Deputy Director	Gimnaziul Internat, Leova	43 min
	Foster carer ⁸⁰	Village Filipeni	
	Mother of reintegrated child	Village Cupcui	
29 th March 2012			
Liliana Rotaru	Director	CCF Moldova	1 h 24 min
Maria Jechiu	Director	Infant House, Chisinau Municipality	
Svetlana Chifa	Head of Department	Department for Child Rights Protection, Chisinau Municipality	1 h 40 min
30 th March 2012			
Irina Malanciuc	Director	Lumos Moldova	1 h 43 min
Rodica Scutelnic	Head of Mother and Child Health-care	Ministry of Health	
Lilia Oleinic		Ministry of Health	
Jurie Dontu	Director	Boarding-school No.2, Chisinau	50 min
2 nd April 2012			
Maria Tarus	Director	Centre for the Temporary Placement of Children in Difficulty, Chisinau	
Ludmila Malcoci	Executive Director	Keystone Human Services International, Chisinau	41 min

⁷⁹ Foster carers and parents are not named in order to maintain anonymity of their biological and fostered children

Tamara Pisarenco	Director	Vatra Centre of the Temporary Placement of Graduates of Boarding Schools, Chisinau	
3 rd April 2012			
Petru Rusu	Head of Department of Social Assistance	Floresti	1 h
	Foster carer of a boy 10 years old	Village Vărvăreuca, Floresti	
	Grandparents of reintegrated boy 13 years old	Village Nicolaeva, Floresti	
	Foster carer of three sisters	Village Domolgeni, Floresti	
4 th April 2012			
Svetlana Chifa	Head of Department	Department for Child Rights Protection, Chisinau Municipality	
Silvia Lupan	Child Protection Officer	UNICEF Moldova	1 h 6 min
5 th April 2012			
Marina Semeniuc	Head of Unit for Health Protection	Ministry of Finance	
Viorica Dumbraveanu	Head of Department of Family and Child Protection	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family	1 h 10 min
Lilia Pascal	Director of Policy for Equal Opportunities and Prevention of Violence	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family	44 min
11 th April			
	Foster carer of a boy	Chisinau, Durlesti	
	Foster carer of a girl	Chisinau, Truseni	
19 th April			
Nicolae Stoianov		ATU Gagauz- Yeri Administration, Comrat	1 h 36 min
Uzun Sidor	Head of Department of Social Assistance	ATU Gagauz- Yeri Administration, Comrat	32 min
Vera Balova		ATU Gagauz- Yeri Administration, Comrat	
20 th April			
Racu Ion	Head of Department	Department of Social Assistance, Orhei	1 h 35 min
	Foster carer of one girl	Orhei	
	Educator of two girls and one boy	Orhei	
25 th April			
	Head of Department	Department of Social Assistance, Falesti	34 min
	Gatekeeping Commission	Gatekeeping Commission, Falesti	51 min
	Foster carer of two boys	Musteata, Falesti	
	Grandmother of reintegrated boy 14 years old	Socii Noi, Falesti	15 min
26 th April			
Tatiana Sincovschi	Head of Department	Department of Social Assistance, Singerei	1 h 34 min
	Gatekeeping Commission	Gatekeeping Commission, Singerei	55 min
	Foster carer	Copaceni, Singerei	

27 th April			
	Gatekeeping Commission	Leova	38 min
Tamara Calugaru	Head of Department	Department of Social Assistance, Hincesti	
2 nd May			
Vladimir Sementul	Head of Department	Department of Social Assistance, Balti	58 min
3 rd May			
Tudor Radeanu	Head of Department	Department of Social Assistance, Ungheni	1 h 19 min
Petru Langa	Gatekeeping Commission	Gatekeeping Commission. Ungheni	1 h 14 min
	Educator of seven children	Petresti, Ungheni	
	Aunt of a reintegrated boy	Ungheni	38 min
	Sister of a reintegrated girl	Ungheni	27 min
7 th May			
Mr Virilan	Communication Expert	Ministry of Education	
Aliona Stepan	Program	Information and Documentation Centre on Children Rights	
8 th May			
Rodica Moraru-Chilimar	Head of Department	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family	
11 th May			
	Grandmother or a reintegrated girl	Chisinau	48 min
	Grandparents of a reintegrated girl	Chisinau	30 min
17 th May			
Djulieta Popescu	Head of Department	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family	50 min
Elena Laur		UNICEF	
Sergiu Buruiana		UNICEF	1 h 2 min

Field visits		
28 th March	Raion administration, Gimnaziul Internat, Leova Fostered children, Village Filipeni Reintegrated child, Village Cupcui Multi-functional centre, Cupcui	Leova
29 th March 2012	Infant House, Chisinau Municipality Commission for the Protection of Children Living in Difficulty	Chisinau Chisinau
30 th March 2012	Boarding School No.2, Chisinau Municipality	Chisinau
31 st March 2012	Focus Group Discussion, Social Assistants	Chisinau
2 nd April 2012	Centre for the Temporary Placement of Children in Difficulty, 0 to 6 years	Chisinau
3 rd April	Raion Head of Department of Social Assistance Foster carer of 10 year old boy, Village Varvareuca Grandparents of 13 year old reintegrated boy, Village Nicolaeva Boarding school, Vascauti Foster carer of three sisters, Village Domolgeni	Floresti

<i>Field visits</i>		
4 th April	Residential institution for males with mental disabilities	Orhei
7 th April	Focus Group Discussion, Children Graduate Boarding Schools,	Chisinau
11 th April	Foster care (Durlesti) Foster care (Truseni)	Chisinau
19 th April	Raion administration	Comrat
20 th April	Raion administration Foster care (Clisova) Family type house (Clisova Noua)	Orhei
25 th April	Focus Group Discussion, Social Assistants Gatekeeping Commission Reintegrated family (Socii Noi) Foster care (Musteata)	Falesti
26 th April	Focus Group Discussion, Social Assistants Raion administration Gatekeeping Commission Foster Care (Copaceni) Reintegrated family (Chiscareni)	Singerei
27 th April	Focus Group Discussion, Social Assistants Gatekeeping Commission	Leova
27 th April	Raion Head of Department of Social Assistance	Hincesti
2 nd May	Focus Group Discussion, Children Graduate Boarding Schools Boarding School Residential institution	Balti
3 rd May	Focus Group Discussion, Social Assistants Family type house (Petresti) Reintegrated family (Ugheni) Reintegrated family (Ungheni)	Ungheni
10 th May	Social Assistance Centre of Children in risk Center	Sculeni
11 th May	Temporary placement centre "Impreuna"	Cahul
14 th May	Reintegrated family Reintegrated family	Chisinau

ANNEX 4: RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS MONTHLY RETURN

Residential institution monthly return

This return to be completed by the Director of the institution or nominated deputy on the first day of each month.

Name of institution:

Number of children admitted to institution as residents during the preceding month:

List the raions from where the children were admitted:

Number of children who left the institution during the preceding month and were permanently removed from the register of the institution:

Number of boys registered as resident in the institution as at midnight on the last day of the preceding month:

Number of girls registered as resident in the institution as at midnight on the last day of the preceding month:

This return to be completed on first day of the following month and faxed, posted or hand delivered to:

Head of raion Department of Education (for ME institutions)

Head of raion Department of Social Assistance (for MLSPF institutions)

Head of raion Department of Health (for MH institutions)

Head of Chisinau Directorate of Child Rights Protection (for Chisinau institutions)

[Heads of Departments to ensure receipt of monthly returns from their institutions and fax the returns to DI Unit on 1st on the following month. DI Unit to enter the returns onto a simple spreadsheet.]

ANNEX 5: LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES TO MONITOR CHILD PROTECTION

Local government structures to monitor child protection generally and gatekeep access to institutions have been established at raion level, with slightly different arrangements in Chisinau Municipality.

Raion child protection structures

<i>Name</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Meetings</i>
Council for Children Rights (raion level)	Council contains representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directorate for Children Rights Protection/ Social assistance (specialists in Children rights) - Raion Directorate for Education, Youth and Sport - Raion Health Directorate - Raion Commissariat of Police - 2-3 raion councilors - 2-3 NGOs 	Develop and promote policies. Monitor the implementation of Gov. decisions; develop partnerships with stakeholders, etc.	Monthly
Raion Gatekeeping Commission (Children in difficulty)	Membership as required by the Government regulation of 2007.	Examine cases of children in difficulty: prevent institutionalization and increase deinstitutionalization.	Monthly (if needed even more often)
Local Council for Children Rights – in each locality of the raion. Many localities do not have such Councils or reportedly they do not meet very often.	Local Councils replicate the structure of raion Council for Children Rights (members are: school directors, doctors, policeman, civil society, etc.). Mayors or Deputy-mayors are Presidents of the Local Councils for children rights.	Organize activities in the sectors (celebrations). Elaborate plans of actions. Examine cases, for example, school dropout, children in conflict with the law, etc. Receive reports from different actors on specific topics or cases.	Monthly

Child protection structures-Chisinau municipality

<i>Name</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Meetings</i>
Council for Children Rights (municipal) This Council was established in 2004. There is regulation on the functioning of this Council, approved by Mayoral disposition.	Council contains representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal Directorate for Children Rights Protection - General Directorate for Education, Youth and Sport - Health Directorate - General Commissariat of Police - 2-3 municipal councilors - 2-3 NGOs 	Develop and promote policies. Monitor the implementation of Gov. decisions; develop partnerships with stakeholders, etc.	3 times per year
Council for Children Rights – in each of the five sectors of Chisinau	Deputy-praetors for social affairs are Presidents of the Commissions in the sectors. The structure replicates the municipal Council, but at local level.	Organize activities in the sectors (celebrations). Elaborate plans of actions. Examine cases. For example: school dropout, children in conflict with the low, etc.	Monthly

Name	Membership	Responsibilities	Meetings
		<p>Receive reports from different actors on specific topics or cases.</p> <p>Specific responsibility for institutionalization:</p> <p>The Council will examine the cases of institutionalized or proposed to be institutionalized children and submit the list of children for approval/confirmation to the Deputy-praetors (annually in August). The Council does not work on prevention; this is just a procedure for reconfirmation/ placement of children in institutions.</p> <p>It is possible however to place children in institutions during the year. If there are proposals by from Local Councils for Children Rights (see suburbs) or Gatekeeping Commission (Children in Difficulty), the Praetors from sector or Mayors from suburbs will sign the dispositions for placement.</p>	
<p>Local Council for Children Rights (in each of 18 suburbs of Chisinau)</p>	<p>Local Councils replicate the structure of municipal Council for Children Rights.</p> <p>Deputy Mayor from locality is the President of the Council.</p>	<p>Develop and promote policies at local level. Organize activities at local level. Elaborate plans of actions. Examines the cases of children in difficulty.</p>	<p>Monthly</p>
<p>Gatekeeping Commission (Children in Difficulty)</p> <p>This commission is in place from 2004. There is a specific regulation on the functioning of this commission approved by the Municipal Council (2004).</p>	<p>Membership is not as at raion level because of this special regulation.</p>	<p>Multiple responsibilities for children in difficulties.</p> <p>There are five commissions in each sector of Chisinau, and one municipal commission.</p> <p>Cases that are not solved at sector level (for example, if there are complaints) are referred to the municipal commission.</p> <p>Gatekeeping Commissions do not exist in suburbs. Cases are referred to the municipal commission from sectors of Chisinau.</p>	<p>Monthly; if needed even more often.</p>

ANNEX 6: COMMUNITY SOCIAL PROTECTION PLANS

1. Introduction

The Law on Social Services No.123 of 18.06.2010, Article 9(4)c and Article 9(4)i require local public authorities (raion councils) to produce a plan for community social services. Other names for these plans include “Community Social Protection Plan”, or “Local Service Plan”. This will be an annual rolling plan usually with a three year time horizon that is updated and revised each year. The plan is a collaborative effort⁸⁰, led by the Department of Social Assistance and Family Protection, of raion departments of Health, Education, Interior, Prosecutor’s Office, NGOs, Not-for-Profit Organizations (NFPOs), CSOs and others to map the social care needs of the raion and the government and non-government services that meet those needs.

The plan sets out how the raion has (or has not) met the Minister’s priorities for social care. The planning partners will indicate how they intend to address the needs of the Minister’s priority groups with proposals for new or alternative services. The plan will indicate how those proposals could be funded, for example, costs shared by central government, the LPA and donors.

When the plan has been presented to and approved by the raion Council it is sent to the Minister for review. The Minister can either accept the plan or send it back to the LPA for further consideration.

2. Council of Ministers to provide guidance to Directors of Social Assistance and Family Protection on the required form and content of Community Social Protection Plans

There will be a need to provide statutory guidance to LPAs on the form and content of Community Social Protection Plans. The guidance will indicate that the Department of Social Assistance and Family Protection is the lead agency for social protection planning, that other LPA Departments must cooperate with the planning process, that the process must include NGOs, NFPOs and CSOs.

The Minister will require LPAs to indicate in their annual Community Social Protection Plans how the needs of specified “persons in need” are provided for, and how they intend to meet the unmet needs of those service groups. The Minister may initially restrict “persons in need” to be children without parental care. But later, as LPAs acquire experience in the planning process, the Minister may want to widen the definition of “persons in need”. Unmet needs could be provided by NGOs or NFPOs contracted or partnered with the LPA, or by the LPA redeploying its own services.

The Minister can also provide very specific requirements for LPAs’ Community Social Protection Plans, for example, that no child aged under three years is accommodated in an institution after a certain date. LPAs then have to indicate in their Community Social Protection Plans how they intend to care for children who otherwise would be placed in institutions. The Minister’s Directive may also indicate that financial savings from the closure of an institution will be returned to the LPA to fund alternative services.

It is probable that LPAs will initially need the support and mentoring of central government, particularly the ML-SPF and possibly NGOs with experience of annual planning, in the planning process until staff of LPAs have built up sufficient technical skills of planning and reporting.

3. Minister to report annually to Parliament on LPAs’ Community Social Protection Plans

Besides their mentoring and supporting role, officials of the Ministry will also have the role of advising the Minister on the quality of submitted Community Social Protection Plans. They will advise the Minister on proposals submitted by LPAs that are realistic, achievable and conform to the Minister’s social care priorities. Proposals approved by the Minister that require central government finance may be financed by financial transfers from central government on the advice of the Minister.

The Minister will make an annual report to the Parliament about the Community Social Protection Planning process, indicating those LPAs that are working towards achieving government social care priorities and objectives, and those LPAs whose planning process has not achieved desired results. It is expected that LPAs would want to be mentioned positively by the Minister.

⁸⁰ Law on Social Services No.123 of 18.06.2010, Art.9(3).

