

DIRECTOR'S PREAMBLE

The year 2002-2003 has been one of hard work during which social services for children in difficult situations, implemented by our organisation, have gained greater recognition. We are very pleased that several of our programmes have been taken over by the state structures and continue to be implemented and financed by them.

The success achieved by EveryChild in Moldova has been made possible because of our effective collaboration with the local authorities. The fact that EveryChild Moldova is a committed partner in the development of alternative types of social services in the country, and not a so called international agent who works in the country without knowing its specifics and needs, was recognised first of all by the local public administration of Chisinau municipality who totally supported all our programmes. Following on from this Cahul County Council, Tiraspol City Administration and Ungheni County Council have all trusted us and supported the implementation of our projects.

But local public administration is not the whole state yet. The State has to be responsive to changes in society, and, in the first instance, to care for children, its future citizens. In spite of the fact that in last 10 years the social policy of the country has been changed considerably, it still doesn't fully correspond to the present economic and social needs of society. As a result, the state structures as well as non-governmental organisations lack the capacity to offer full social protection to children and families in difficult situations.

To promote a coherent social policy and a national strategy in the field of social protection of children and families, there is a great demand for effective collaboration between the state and non-governmental structures, and also of close cooperation between members of society. There is no doubt that there are hundreds of orphaned children abandoned by their parents because of their physical or mental disabilities, of children begging in the streets, young criminals – all these are the results of the deep poverty of our country. At the same time this is also the result of the social morality of our society, of which we are a part, and its attitude to these categories of the population. There is no doubt that there is a strong need for cooperation at all levels – family, community and the whole society aiming to strengthen their capacities to survive, to fight and to develop in spite of the vicissitudes of life in Moldova.

During the 8 years of its activity in the country, EveryChild has made efforts to contribute to the process of reforming the system of child protection in the Republic of Moldova, changing the attitude of the state and society as a whole towards the family and children, as well as to the positive attitude towards alternative types of social services for children in crisis.

I would like to thank EveryChild Moldova Staff, and our local partners: the National Council for the Protection of Children's Rights and its Permanent Secretariat, the City Hall of Chisinau Municipality, Chisinau Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights, Cahul County Council, Ungheni County Council, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Moldova, and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Transdnistria, for all their efforts in the support and implementation of our projects.

Many thanks also to our sponsors: UNICEF Moldova, SOROS Foundation in Moldova, DFID, SWISS Agency for Development and Cooperation, and EveryChild UK, who helped our organisation and put our ideas into practice.

Stela Grigorash

Director of EveryChild

Affiliated office in Moldova



CONTENTS

71..... **DIRECTOR'S PREAMBLE**

73..... **BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANISATION**

74..... **OUR STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPALS OF ACTIVITY**

76..... **OUR PROJECTS**

76..... Family Support and Reintegration (FSR)

81..... The Small Group Homes (SGH)

83..... Foster Care Service (FC)

86..... Temporary Placement Centre for Minors (TPCM)

89..... Day Care Centre for children with disabilities

90..... Support of structures for the Protection of Children's Rights at the local level

91..... Database development

93..... Social Pedagogues of Chisinau Municipal Directorate for the protection of children's rights Training Project

94..... **GRANTS**

94..... Health and Social Care Partnership Programme funded by DFID (Department for International Development from the U.K.)

95..... " Strengthening Formal and Informal family support" project, funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

97..... « Development of social services for children and families at risk of the Ungheni County » Project, funded by UNICEF

99..... **EVENTS HELD IN 2002**

102..... **PLANS FOR FUTURE**



BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANISATION

The affiliated office in Moldova of the international organisation EveryChild is a successor of the European Children's Trust (ECT) – international development NGO that has worked on the territory of the Republic of Moldova since 1995. It contributes to the process of reform of the childcare system in the Republic of Moldova. In 2002 ECT merged with another UK based international organisation – Christian Children's Fund GB, and EveryChild was created.

The above-mentioned merger did not presuppose changing the strategies we followed before the merger. On the contrary, as a result of the merger the implemented projects have been consolidated, extended at the national level, and other social services have been implemented in accordance with the "EveryChild" Moldova mission:

"A world where every child has the right to have a family, which allows every child to grow in safe environment and develop his/her full potential free from poverty and exploitation."

EveryChild Moldova currently has 4 offices in the Republic of Moldova: Chisinau, Cahul, Ungheni and Tiraspol (EveryChild is one of few NGOs of the Republic in Moldova that implements its programmes on the left bank of the Dniester river). In all these regions EveryChild collaborates with the local authorities promoting and implementing the complex programme of alternative types of social services for children and families in difficult situations. These programmes promote the prevention of children's abandonment and their further institutionalisation, and the social rehabilitation and reintegration of children into their birth families.

Main components of the programme are:

- Support of vulnerable families to prevent of family breakdown and children's institutionalisation.
- Reintegration of children from large-scale state institutions into their birth families.
- Social rehabilitation of children from the above mentioned institutions through their temporary placement in the Small Group Homes followed by further reintegration into the birth family or placement with foster families;
- Development of social services for street children, their social rehabilitation and reintegration into the birth family
- Development of Foster Care Services for orphans and children deprived of parental care (temporary or permanently);
- Development of the new day care services for children with special needs, providing access to care, education, medical and social rehabilitation, accompanied by their integration into mainstream education.

All the services mentioned above are at different stages of development and are implemented with great success in Chisinau, Cahul, Ungheni and Tiraspol. But one of the most significant components implemented in all four-project sites is the family support and reintegration project. The strategic stage following this is the implementation of the Foster care project, funded and supported technically by EveryChild Moldova.

This service is currently being implemented in three locations of the country.

EveryChild utilises the experience gained for lobbying and identification of central and local Government in the promotion of the strategic reform of the childcare system.



OUR STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVITY

EveryChild Moldova Operational Goal:

To have strengthened the capacity of families, communities and local authorities to create conditions essential for children's harmonious development.

Objectives to be implemented at the national level:

- To ensure realisation of the right of every child to grow and develop in a family environment and to receive adequate care in the community;
- To provide access to education for children from vulnerable families;
- To provide access to basic medical services for children from vulnerable families;
- To alleviate the negative impact of poverty on children in crisis by means of strengthening the capacity of adults to ensure appropriate standards of living;

Working principles:

- To secure the observance of all children's rights;
- To prevent family breakdown;
- To secure the right of every child to develop and be brought up in a family environment;
- To reduce the number of large-scale children's institutions through the implementation of alternative types of services and demonstration of the effectiveness of family support in communities;
- To promote the principle of non - discrimination;
- To actively collaborate with state structures and NGOs, active in this field;
- To elaborate the effective working models that can be used and financed by the local public authorities;
- To promote transparent and effective ways of economic activity;
- To promote the implementation of qualified and sustainable social services.

The EveryChild Moldova team continues to work in a flexible manner, ready to support positive changes and tendencies in the reform of the social protection system and striving for the improvement of the social services we promote.

Direct beneficiaries of our programmes:

- Children exposed to the risk of being abandoned by parents and placed in large-scale state institutions, and their families. The same refers to the children of immigrants.
- Children deprived of parental care and placed in large-scale state institutions, including those leaving state institutions;
- Marginalized children with special needs;
- Street children, including young offenders;

- Children being abused, humiliated or neglected;

The above-mentioned categories of children are the direct beneficiaries of social services provided within our projects. They are developed with our support or as a result of changes in the social policy of the country.

Basic partners:

- Central Government and local authorities;
- Representatives of civil society;
- Chairs or Faculties of Social Work in the universities and institutions of the country.

In addition to this, EveryChild Moldova considers the problems connected with HIV/AIDS, sexual discrimination, violence and humiliation of children to be of great importance. All these problems will be taken into consideration within our overall activity.



OUR PROJECTS

FAMILY SUPPORT AND REINTEGRATION (FSR)

The project aims to implement family focused social care for families. It presupposes direct family support with the purpose of preventing break-up and further institutionalisation of children or reintegration of children placed within state institutions into their birth families.

Objectives:

- Keeping children within the family;
- Prevention of children's admission to institutional care;
- Children's reintegration from state institutions and sustaining them within the family;
- Addressing the specific needs of children in relation to health, behaviour /relationship etc.

By promoting the following principles:

- Principle of minimal intervention thereby reducing the risk of dependency on departmental structures;
- Protection of the child/children within the family from any form of abuse or neglect be that physical/sexual/emotional, by encouraging safe parenting to create a safe and secure environment in which the child/children can grow and develop. To offer a child the opportunity to fulfill his/her own potential as an individual, and as a member of a family/community;
- Empowerment of parents to enable a level of independent decision-making in relation to appropriate childcare;
- To offer support, advice and guidance to parents to facilitate change within the family dynamics, to the benefits of both child/children and parents;
- Provision of basic finance to alleviate family stress in relation to the purchase of adequate food/clothing etc., for the child/ family.

The given interventions have entry criteria and are limited in time.

Family support and reintegration services in the Republic of Moldova have been developed and promoted since 1998 in the locations where EveryChild works (Chişinău, Cahul, Tiraspol, and more recently Ungheni). In Chişinău the project has been developed over four years and in Tiraspol and Cahul three years. It is necessary to note that in accordance with the principle of sustainability, promoted by our organisation, this service development has been completely taken over by the local authorities of Chişinău and Cahul. Even though the support is mostly social and emotional due to the restricted financial possibilities of the local authorities, with financial support provided only in exceptional cases, the support is provided in accordance with the procedures and principles promoted by EveryChild.

Child protection specialists and social workers are absolutely sure that first of all emotional support and counseling, rather than financial support, are necessary for the family to surmount crisis situations. It should be noted that the charity action "From Heart to Heart" originated within the framework of the family support project.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2002-2003:

The Family Support and Reintegration service was completely taken over by the local authorities of Chişinău and Cahul.

Chişinău. More than 1,777 families and 4,500 children have been supported within EveryChild programmes since 1998. More than 90 children have been reintegrated from large-scale state institutions since 1999. And 45 newborn children abandoned at the maternity hospital have been redirected from further institutionalisation.

A total of 497 families having 1,464 children have been supported since the inception of the family support project in Chişinău. A total of 229 families having 787 children have been assisted in the year 2002-2003, and 9 children have been reintegrated into birth families.

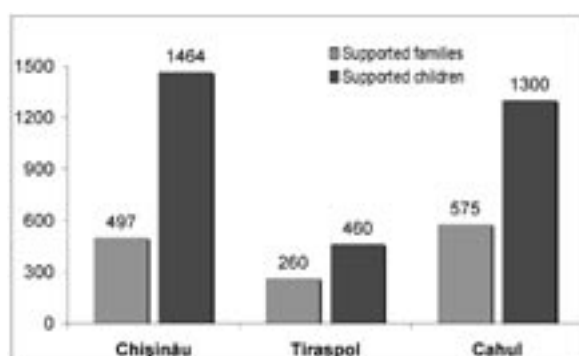
Tiraspol. A total of 260 families and 460 children have been supported in Tiraspol. Of these, 54 children have been reintegrated into birth families, and 81 families having 141 children received financial support in 2002. There were 12 children reintegrated into birth families from the Baby Home and the Republican Children's Hospital.

Cahul. A total of 575 families having 1,300 children have been assisted since 1998, 19 children have been reintegrated into their birth families, 87 families having 232 children were assisted in 2002, and 8 children were reintegrated into their birth families.

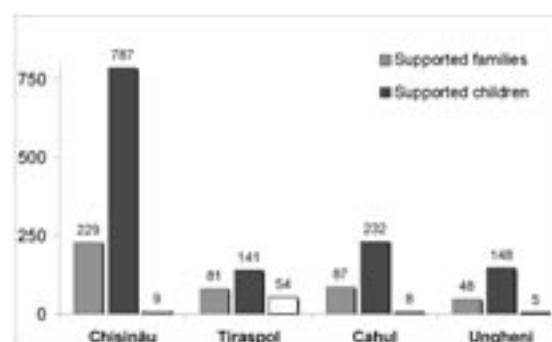
Ungheni. A total of 48 families having 148 children were assisted, and 5 children were reintegrated into their birth families.

Chart 1

FSR (1998-2003)



FSR (2002)



Case study

Family assisted within the Family Support Project

Case description. Mrs. C. is a single mother. She brings up 8 children. The mother applied to the Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights with the request to place one of her children, Ion, born in 1994, in a state institution - a boarding school. The reason for placement was the fact that Ion did not attend school. The financial situation in the family hampered the preparation of the child for school. The case was presented at the weekly meeting of family support social workers and after due consideration was referred to the specialist on family issues. The members of the team suggested that the family situation should be assessed. The family was registered as a vulnerable family in crisis. The social worker under the guidance of the chief specialist on family problems of the Municipal Directorate completed a detailed family assessment.

Family assessment

Income and general financial situation in the family

It was confirmed that Mrs. C. was the mother of 8 children aged from 18 months to 14 years. As

the mother did not work before childbirth, the family was completely without income. The general family income includes social benefits (5 child benefits). Thus, every member of the family has 22.5 lei monthly. Mrs.C. does private hourly paid work receiving food, clothes etc. by way of wages. Four of the children attend school, where they receive free meals twice a day. The family does not possess a plot of land on which to grow food; the family's expenditures are considerable. The family does not have any other means of sustenance.

Housing conditions

The family C. live in a hostel and have two separate rooms. There is no kitchen available. The bathroom and toilet are shared. There is no heating and gas in the building. Sanitary conditions are satisfactory. In winter 9 people live in one room 18.5. m². Meals for all the family are also cooked there.

State of health

The children suffer from malnutrition due to the difficult financial situation of the family. Dairy products and meat are not available in the children's daily ration. All children suffer from chronic bronchitis. They are ill frequently due to passive immunity.

Education.

Four of the eight children attend mainstream school and make average progress. There are three children of preschool age. Ion, whom the mother wanted to place in a boarding school, does not attend kindergarten and has not been properly prepared for school.

Family situation and social environment

The children are tidy and they wear clean clothes. According to the teachers' remarks child neglect has not been observed in the family. Mrs. C. does not abuse alcohol. The psychological atmosphere is stable in the family. The children do not have any contact with their father as they were born out of wedlock and the affiliation was not recognised. It is known that the father is outside the country now. He is not involved in the children's upbringing.

Care plan:

- Signing the agreement of collaboration between the family and project specialists, where the responsibilities of parents and practical assistance by the project social workers are stipulated. The care plan contains the plan of activities aimed at the solution of problems and the surmounting of the crisis situation in the family;
- Regular visiting of family at home;
- Providing financial and humanitarian aid to the family;
- Providing emotional and practical support, legal and psychological counselling;
- Drawing up documents (birth certificate etc.);
- Referral of children to school;
- Drawing up documents for obtaining social benefits;
- Mother's job placement.

The following decisions were taken at the assessment meeting:

- To include the family into the family support and child abandonment prevention project for 6 months with regular review meetings every two months;
- To support the family financially at the rate of 400 lei monthly for the period of three months. The financial allowance will be spent on food, purchase of medicine and treatment for children.

The family takes an active part in the elaboration of the care plan. The family needs are paid much attention during this process.

In order to solve the family's problems and meet their needs the specialists of other organisations will be involved in the realisation of the care plan:

- Directorate for Public Health → for medical examination;
- Directorate of Education, Youth and Sports → for child referral to school;
- Medical, psychological and pedagogical Commission → for conclusions of specialists which are necessary for the child's referral to school;
- Civil registry → for drawing up birth certificates for three children;
- Territorial social security cash-desk → for drawing up documents necessary to obtain social benefits;
- Employment bureau → for the mother's job placement.

The case was closed after the problems were solved, the family became more stable and progress in the development of children became evident. Sector specialists continue to monitor the situation in the family, including the social situation.

Case study

Family assisted in the scope of Reintegration Project

Case description.

Nina was born in the Maternity Home № 2 of Chişinău municipality on January 19th 2000. The mother abandoned the child just after the birth and the girl was placed with the Municipal specialised Children's home. After a period of two weeks the girl was transferred to the Pathology department of the Children's Hospital for examination and subsequent treatment. Nina was transferred back to the Municipal Children's home on March 30th 2000. Social workers of the Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights began to study carefully the family situation. The report was considered at the weekly meeting of the Directorate's specialists. The decision was taken to assess the child and her family's situation in detail.

Family assessment

Family background

Vera, the child's mother is 18 years old. She was born in Chişinău. She was brought up in a complete family and has two younger brothers. She is currently a student. She met the father of the child, Petru aged 19 years, at the department. Their liaison was short and completed by the time Vera realised that she was pregnant. Petru learnt about the birth of the child later but he refused to resume their relationship and take care of the child. Vera was afraid to tell her parents about this situation and managed to conceal her pregnancy. Vera was not registered at the local clinic and did not visit a gynaecologist. The child was born prematurely at 7 months and Vera officially abandoned the child.

Relationship between the members of the family and relatives

Vera's parents learnt from an unknown source that their granddaughter was placed in a children's home. Following this quarrelling between the parents and children began in the family. Vera's mother suggested that the child should be taken home, but Vera's father strictly refused to discuss the topic. Moreover, Vera was prohibited from visiting her parents' home. Later on, the father explained that his decision was taken because he did not trust his daughter anymore, and she had disappointed him very much. It was painful for him to learn about the pregnancy from the other people.

By the time of the first meeting with a social worker Vera had never visited the child in the Children's home. She lived in the students' hostel with her colleagues. Her mother visited her from time to time, but the relationship between them was strained and tense.

In the meantime the social worker arranged several meetings with the child's mother and grandmother. The topic of discussion at the meeting was the child's reintegration into the birth family and reunification of the family.

At the assessment meeting the decision was taken to include the family into the Reintegration project on the basis of the following criteria:

- The child's age – up to one year;
- The mother started to visit the child regularly in the Children's home;
- Vera's mother and sisters changed their attitude towards this situation;
- Family conflict has been resolved;
- Vera agreed to get support and collaborate with the social worker;
- The child's reintegration into the birth family is in the best interests of the child.

Taking into consideration the fact that Vera does not want to abandon the child completely, the following decisions were made:

- To place the child with the birth family and render practical and financial support within 6 months by the specialists of the Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights. (in accordance with the perspective plan and the activity plan).
- To conclude an agreement between the social worker and the client. The criteria of collaboration and the responsibility of every party are stipulated in the agreement;
- To render financial support for the definite period of time with the purpose of the financial situation in the family improvement.

Care plan:

- To obtain adequate accommodation to meet the needs of the family;
- To monitor the child's state of health and development;
- Regular visiting of the family with the purpose of providing emotional support and monitoring the child's development. The frequency of visits to be once a week within the first two months from the inclusion of the family into the project. The frequency of visits to reduce with the progress in the family and stabilisation of family situation;
- Financial assistance and humanitarian aid provision;
- Psychological and legal counselling;
- Registration of the activity and work in the family;
- Conflict situations between the members of the family to be resolved in particular work with the child's grandfather aimed at family reunification;
- The family will be registered at the Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights and will be monitored by the specialists on family problems;
- Facilitating the family to obtain and gather the documents for social benefits as stipulated by the legislation.

Considerable progress in the child's development and the relationship between Vera and her relatives has been noticed at the review meeting. Vera returned home in 3 months and she has resumed her course of studies at the university. Her attitude towards her child is very serious. Both Vera's parents participate in the process of Nina's upbringing.

THE SMALL GROUP HOMES (SGH)

The project aims to provide a temporary home to children with disabilities or to those leaving large-scale residential units to family reunification or to be placed with Foster Carers. The placement lasts until the children's reintegration with their biological or extended families. If this is not possible an alternative placement is identified.

Objectives:

- To provide a small-scale family type residential facility to children coming from large scale institutions;
- To offer a temporary home to children who are to be reintegrated into their birth family or to be placed in a foster care family;

It is necessary to point out the fact that these kinds of centres do not replace existing institutions in our country - it is an alternative social service for children at risk. The centre provides a temporary family type facility for 20 children, who are assessed and placed from institutions. The youngest age group is 3-12 years; and one group is designed for children with disabilities. The categories of children – beneficiaries of the SGH – are very different and depend on complexity of their problems. These are children showing characteristic signs of institutionalisation: delay in both physical and intellectual development, challenging, aggressive, deviant behaviour (ungrounded tendency to lie, steal useless things etc.); they are psychologically and emotional unstable, they use “Street” behaviour and language; manifest personality deviations (they are envious, cowardly, two-faced, selfish, timid, suffer from different complexes, and are disoriented); it is difficult for them to get used to new environments and to trust adults around them. They are often afraid of adults, and some of the children show an indiscriminate attitude towards the adults who visit the SGH, they lack self-confidence and self respect as well as the abilities to communicate with peers displaying ungrounded superiority or inferiority complexes; they suffer from different health problems caused by the stressful situations they were subject to in their past (bulimia, enuresis) especially if these were not treated in time. The diagnoses of the children are quite serious: only 5 (8.7%) out of 62 children placed in SGH were diagnosed as healthy; the somatic pathology of these children showed a prevalence of malnutrition (12.8%), combined with other pathologies of the respiratory, cardiac, urinary, digestive, and sanguine systems; 32 children (59.2%) demonstrated a delay in intellectual development with mild to severe degrees of complexity; 12 children (21%) were diagnosed with infantile cerebral palsy with different types of spastic disorders, for example tetra-paresis, or spastic tetraplegia, inferior or superior spastic paraplegia, as well as pelvic functional disorders and progressive muscular dystrophy (Dushene syndrome); 12 children (21%) were suffering from epilepsy or epileptic syndrome combined with a dicky of intellectual abilities and severe language and vocabulary disorders; 7 children (12.3%) suffered from neurotic syndrome with night enuresis.

The SGH provides a family type environment where these children are helped to get ready for family life with either parents or foster cares. They are encouraged to participate in the day to day routine of the household, as well as in other activities. In almost all cases an improvement in the children's health state was observed. The children with delay in mental development were supported to improve their abilities of self-help, and have been included into the mainstream educational system. Children suffering from cerebral palsy received medical care for neurological rehabilitation, including different kinds of physiotherapy (massage, occupational therapy) that brought about improvement in their general state, giving them certain freedom of movement and some of the children even started to walk with or without an adult's support. Due to the individual care and to the family environment created in the SGH children suffering from epilepsy stopped having fits, and started to register improvements in their physical, emotional and intellectual development.

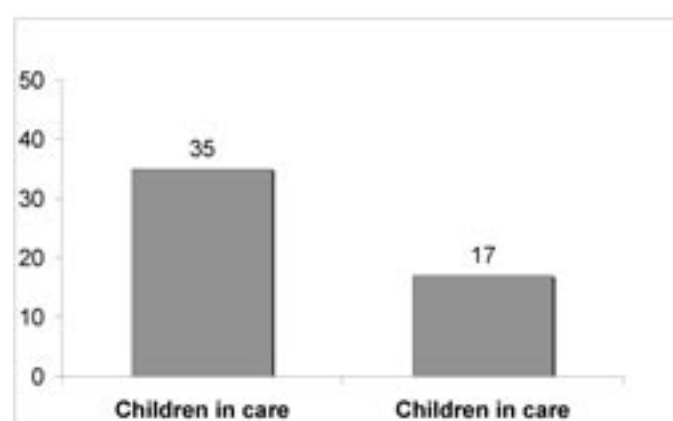
The Small Groups Home in Chişinău has been open since 1999 and represents the first alternative of this kind in the Republic of Moldova.

OUTCOMES IN
2002-2003:

Since April 2003, Chişinău local authorities have taken over the range of services provided by SGH.

Since the implementation of this project the Centre has provided its services to 62 children and 46 were reintegrated in their biological families. The children assessed and placed in this centre come from Hînceşti boarding school for girls with disabilities, the Municipal specialised children's home and the Republican children's home. Of the children reintegrated to their biological families, 33 children or 72 % were suffering from physical or mental disabilities and had spent many years in institutions. Now they are at home with their families and have been integrated in mainstream education. In 2002 the Small Group Homes had 35 children in care; 17 of them went back to their families.

Chart 3. SGH



Case study of a child placed in the Small Group Homes

The child's life story

Lenuța was born on 02.05.91 weighing 2.5 kg, she had normal development – at 6 months she started to sit, and at 2 years she started to speak. Unfortunately, when she was two she lost her mother. Her father remained with his 5 children, but decided to place Lenuța who was very young, into state care. Mainly because the child stopped speaking after her mother's death, the doctors diagnosed her as deaf and without speech.

In the summer of 1995, the medical psycho-pedagogical panel recommended that Lenuța's enter institutionalised care in Hînceşti Boarding School for girls with disabilities. At the beginning of 2000, after an assessment made by the professionals from SGH and upon the recommendations of the same medical psycho-pedagogical panel Lenuța was placed in SGH in order to be reintegrated into her birth family.

Assessment of the child

The time spent in the institution has made a lifelong impact on this child. According to the social worker, Lenuța was very withdrawn, frightened, and many times was absent – hidden in her own world. She did not answer questions, and spoke little. "While getting familiarised with Lenuța's file, as a key person, I was horrified. At different stages of the assessment of her personality, the girl was subject to an under appreciation of her intellectual development and skills. In my opinion the diagnoses – mentally retarded and deaf and mute, found in her file, are far from real. During 5 years this child suffered hunger, misery and cold. Besides this, when she came to the SGH we found bruises all over her body, which were proof of physical abuse." – these are only a sample of the social workers observations.

Results achieved

With time Lenuța started to change, she became more self-confident, more open and not as sad

as she was at the beginning. She made some new friends, but did not forget about the ones remaining at the boarding school. Lenuța is a tender, welcoming and wise child.

While in the SGH Lenuța went to an experimental auxiliary school for children with mental disabilities, where the teachers recommended her medical, psycho-pedagogical re-assessment. As a result it was recognised that the girl needed to be integrated into the mainstream education system. On the recommendation of the Ministry of Education she was given written permission to attend the gymnasium in Strășeni from August 2000, after reintegration into her biological family.

The eight months of her stay at the SGH helped Lenuța gain a certain amount of knowledge, skills and abilities. But the most important thing for her is the reunification with her family, the regained trust in the adults around her and her rehabilitation as a personality.

The reintegration of the child into his birth family

After reintegration into her biological family some obvious changes have been registered both in the general development of the child and in the day to day life of her father and her older brothers. Lenuța's return into the family made her father change his attitude towards a whole range of things, and what is the most important –to regain self confidence, regardless of the hard times his family was passing through.

At present Lenuța lives in her family and studies in the third form of Strășeni gymnasium.

FOSTER CARE SERVICE (FC)

This project aims to promote family centred social work services for children across the country. This service is adopted as a working model of care for children looked after away from home.

Objectives :

- To create a range of foster care working models;
- To promote the adoption and implementation of the Foster Care Service at all governmental levels and its replication across the country.

For a country like the Republic of Moldova, where the welfare policy for abandoned and disabled children is mainly based on large-scale institutions, the idea of placing these children in a family other than the biological one, which means to find a substitute parent for them, is new. Nevertheless, today, two years after its launch, the Foster Care Service has been implemented in three counties of the country - Chișinău, Cahul and Ungheni. In Ungheni the publicity campaign is underway, and some of the applicants for the position of FC have already been assessed and are now being trained.

In Chișinău, two years since the implementation of the FC service a team of Social Workers has been formed. They are responsible for the recruitment, assessment, training and the support of the foster carers. We have 18 foster carers who have in placement 29 children. In 2002, 8 foster carers were recruited, and 14 children were placed in FC families. In Cahul, in 2003 when Foster Care Service was implemented in this location 5 foster carers have been approved and 7 children have been placed, so far.

It is necessary to mention that currently the Law on the child in difficulty, elaborated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, in collaboration with a number of governmental and non governmental organisations – including EveryChild, containing provisions regarding the implementation of Foster Care Service in our country, has been submitted to the Parliament for approval. The legal basis for the development of this programme, until the approval of this Law by Parliament are the Regulations with regards to the foster care, elaborated in collaboration with the local partners and approved by the local municipal and county councils. The activity of EveryChild in this area is very much concentrated on the work with the community, aiming to help its members to become aware of the things they can achieve by applying the methods of family based education of the child. In general, the 2 years

experience gained since the implementation of the Foster Care Service in Moldova is a testimony of its amazing tendency to expand.

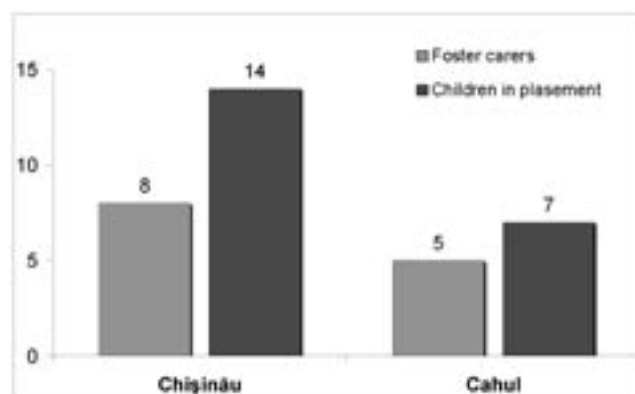
We also need to underline that until the enforcement of the national legislation on Foster Care the implementation of this service is funded by EveryChild Moldova. When this happens, the local administrative bodies of child protection will assume all the costs for the remainder of the implementation period of the project. In future, in accordance with the principle of sustainability promoted by EveryChild, this service will be entirely covered by the state.

To achieve this, a final assessment of the pilot-project will be performed at the end of the implementation period, using various assessment methods, and involving all the professionals that participated in the Foster Care programme – foster carers, children in placement and their birth families. These assessment results, coupled with adequate recommendations will be presented to the representatives of central and local governments with the aim of demonstrating to them the efficiency of this service in the field of child protection and the necessity to transfer this service into the responsibility of the State.

**OUTCOMES IN
2002-2003:**

Elaboration of the law on the protection of children at risk containing provisions regarding the implementation of the Foster Care Service in the R. of Moldova. Replication of the Foster Care service in the Counties of Ungheni and Cahul. Creation of the Foster Care Association. The FC Association was created in January 2002 with the aim to promote, strengthen, and replicate the FC service all over the Republic of Moldova. It is a non-profit, non-governmental, apolitical organisation. The most important objectives set by the Foster Care Association are strengthening the capacities of the foster parents to care for the foster children and plead for the observance of their own and their biological families' rights. At present the Association includes 14 Foster Carers who have 24 children in placement.

Chart 4. FC 2002



Case study of a foster care family within the Foster Care Service

Recruitment of the applicant

Maria, born in 1962, applied for the position of foster carer on December 7th 2000 at the information meeting to which she had been invited in order to familiarise her with details concerning the work. This meeting was of great interest for Maria, who was very active asking questions and at the same time, giving her reasons why she had taken this decision (to contribute to the improvement of the situation of children at risk). At the end of the meeting the applicant received a questionnaire to complete at home, together with all the other members of her family. The completion and the submission of the questionnaire was followed by the interview, which is another assessment stage in the recruitment process. During the interview Maria proved to be a sociable, welcoming person, thus convincing the commission that she was responding to the criteria outlined in the project.

The assessment of the applicant

The first visit to Maria's home was made on January 31st 2001. The SW met all family members

and evaluated their living conditions. The M. family consists of 4 people: Anatolie, the applicant's husband, born in 1962, who works as a tractor driver at "Apă Canal", Lucia, the daughter born in 1985, a pupil of the lyceum "V. Alecsandri", the son Valeriu, born in 1990, pupil at school Nr.194 from Colonița, and Maria the applicant. The M family live in Colonița, Ciocana centre, in an individual home with all facilities. They have 6 rooms in their house, a kitchen and a bathroom (living area – 68.9 m², total area – 152.5 m²). The house has electricity, water, natural gas, an individual heating system, and canalisation. After this visit the conclusion was drawn that this family fulfils all the conditions set by the programme, and the decision was taken to proceed with their assessment.

During the assessment, the applicant and the members of her family proved to be open, welcoming, honest and punctual. All 10 visits made by the social workers in the family were successful. The husband and the children supported Maria in her decision, and showed their willingness to help the people in need. All the adult members of the family agreed to be checked for criminal records, as well as to pass a medical examination. They also offered information about two reference persons that were to express their opinion with regard to the applicant.

Training of the applicant

During the assessment the applicant attended training courses (30 hours). Maria took an active part in the training, participating in debates, expressing and defending her own position in different situations or examples taken from life. At the same time, we insisted on her passing the knowledge gained to the other members of the family, to help them understand the reality of the service they would provide.

Approval of the applicant

In accordance with the information acquired during the period of assessment in the M. family, a report was compiled and submitted to the Foster Care Panel. On October 15th 2001 the applicant was approved for the position of foster carer and signed the contract of employment.

The Child's Placement

In accordance with the decision made by the FC Panel on October 30th 2001, the M family was recommended to take the child Șalamov Roman (d.o.b. 07.01.1999) from the Municipal Specialised Children's Home in short term placement. The family became acquainted with the child and his past. In order to establish mutual attachment relationships all the members of the family visited Roman. When the Foster Carer and the other members of the family concluded that strong attachment between the child and the family had been formed and that the carers were ready for this, they established the date of the child's placement in the M family (07.11.2001).

Roman was cheerfully accepted into the family. The child was placed with the diagnoses – chronic laryngitis. On November 30th 2001 Roman was hospitalised in the Municipal Clinical Hospital No. 1, in a grave condition. When he left the hospital, the doctor recommended monthly medical examinations and a special diet, as he was allergic to a range of food products. The foster carer respects all the doctors' recommendations. Although the child is very often ill, the foster carer is always ready to offer the assistance required.

The Child's reintegration

Over the period of this placement Maria, together with the other members of her family, participated in the child's life and shows real interest in his reintegration with the extended family, as his biological parents are in prison. From the moment he was placed until September 2002, the foster carer made significant efforts to have direct contact with the child's parents or grandparents. With the help of the SW, a meeting with the biological mother at the prison was planned for September 2002. This meeting did not bring about too many important changes in the boy's life. He remained very passive. As for the carer, she did not remain indifferent, as she knew that Natalia, the biological mother, was sentenced to 21 years. On the contrary, Maria insisted on getting the grandparents phone number, in order to establish contacts with them, thus preserving and developing the child's sense of identity, by direct and indirect relationships with his extended

family. Having obtained this information, in October 2002, Maria contacted the grandparents. They were welcoming and keen to meet Roman. The first meeting took place at the FC office, and proved to be a real success as the child recognised his grandparents. The carer remained very impressed by the grandparents. This meeting put a start to the development of very close relationships between the grandparents and the M. Family including Roman. They meet on a regular basis. At present these meetings take place at the FC office, at Maria's home, or at the grandparents' home. As Roman was not baptised, the carers together with the grandparents organised this event.

In conclusion, the short-term placement became a long term one. Roman's reintegration with his extended family is not expected in the nearest future, because, regardless of the efforts made by the grandparents the mother did not accept her child's reintegration with their family. Anyway, they declared that they would do everything possible to take the child into their family. The grandparents are satisfied and grateful to the foster family for the love and care they offer to Roman.

Maria is very competent in the work she does, she is an active and enthusiastic participant in all the training organised for foster carers. She often comes with new suggestions of topics for discussion over the next training that would be useful in the work of the FC. She participated successfully in the summer School organised in Vadul-lui-Vodă in 2002 for FC families and children in placement, and was very satisfied with it.

TEMPORARY PLACEMENT CENTRE FOR MINORS (TPCM)

The project aims to establish a service for street children which provides day care, education as well as medical and social rehabilitation with the long-term goal of integrating children into mainstream education, thus reducing the number of street children entering institutional care.

Objectives:

- To strengthen the capacity of the Centre to provide already existent services to children such as: psychological, medical and educational services;
- To establish a sustainable team of social workers within the organisational structure of the Centre that will work on reintegration of children with their birth families or placement with foster carers and integration of children into mainstream education;
- To develop the database including full information on all children accessing the Centre's service.

The activity of the Temporary Placement Centre for Minors presupposes the work with all the categories of children in need of emergency psychological and pedagogical intervention, with the exception of those who need emergency medical intervention. The children are provided with shelter, meals, medical and psychological assistance.

However, inadequacy of state financing and the out-dated soviet approach to the problems of "street children" lead to inefficiency and poor results for the services provided by the Centre, which is subordinate to Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Taking into account these circumstances, EveryChild Moldova initiated the introduction of amendments to the Regulations of the Centre and participating actively in the process of elaboration of the new Regulations.

The new Regulations of the Centre's activity were approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2002 after preliminary discussion. The Reception and Allocation Centre has been renamed the Temporary Placement Centre for Minors, and has also changed the direction of its activity. The current activity of the Centre is focused on social assistance and individual work with every child.

It should be noted that the changes mentioned above resulted in the demilitarisation of the Centre

and the introduction of a sustainable team of social workers into the organisational structure of the Centre. The responsibility of social workers lies with exploring the possibilities of reintegration of “street children” into their birth families, placement with foster families and the social rehabilitation of children. Social workers have been recruited and trained with the active support of EveryChild Moldova specialists. The course of training for the specialists of the Centre in the field of social protection of “street children” was taken in 2002. A specialist from India, invited by EveryChild Moldova, conducted the training. Thus, the team had the possibility to take a course of training in the field of family assessment, family support and reintegration with the involvement of local and foreign experts in the field.

Besides this, since 2001 EveryChild Moldova has begun to finance the reconstruction of the premises occupied by the Centre. The building was built 100 years ago, being an architectural monument of the city. Gradually, the front elevation of the building was refurbished, new windows were installed, the window bars were removed and the walls were fortified. A total of \$80,000 has been spent on the reconstruction of the building. The specialists of the Centre jointly with EveryChild Moldova submitted a project proposal to the Social Investment Fund Moldova to raise funds for the further reconstruction of the building. The project was approved and an additional \$70,000 has been obtained to complete the construction work. Commissioning of the Centre is scheduled for July 2003.

The Temporary Placement Centre for Minors received humanitarian aid from the UK Communication Workers Union in September 2002. The Communication Workers Union Humanitarian Aid was invited to Moldova by EveryChild Moldova. The donated items and food contributed to the more effective work of the Centre.

The capacity of the Centre is 1000 children annually; daily 25-30 children can be accommodated in the Centre, providing adequate funding is available. The statistics of the Centre show steady growth of the number of children in the Centre. The fact that within the last several years the Centre has accommodated more than 1200-1500 children, which greatly exceeds the capacity of the Centre and proves the correctness of the conclusion mentioned above.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2002-2003:

The radical changes of the Regulations of the Temporary Placement Centre for Minors accompanied by the reorganisation of the staff and principles of activity of the Centre. Establishment of the team of social workers and their introduction into the organisational structure of the Centre. Completion of the reconstruction of the building.

Case study

Services provided to two brothers placed with Temporary Placement Centre for minors

Description of the life of children:

Two children, Malvina, born 21.01.99, and Maxim, born 09.03.96, residing in the village of Saca, Strasen district were placed in the Temporary Placement Centre for minors on June 26th 2002.

The children's mother, born 08.12.59 in the village of Chelăuza, Chişinău County is a single mother with unfinished secondary education, she is unemployed, and is registered in the village of Saca, Străşeni district. The official information obtained in the city hall of Negreşti community, Chişinău Municipality confirmed that Claudia was born on the territory of the village Saca, but that she has not been resident there for more than 15 years. Her parents' house was sold many years ago and she is not registered in the civil registry of the village. Claudia says that she has no place to live and therefore, she can't support her children.

The mother has visited her children only once since their placement in the Temporary Placement Centre for Minors. Taking into consideration the fact that the children attend kindergarten, social workers asked the mother to visit the children at the weekend, when the children are in the Centre. However, the mother insisted on being given the address of the kindergarten. The

criminal check of the mother revealed that she has a criminal record. It was found that at present she is under investigation being charged with begging – under article 302. The following mother's visit was possible due to the intervention of TV and the people who prepared the TV report about these children. When they saw their mother the children began to cry, avoided seeing her and were scared. They even did not know her name. We managed to find out information about the past life of the children during the course of conversations with Claudia. The birth father of the child, Romanian by origin, works at the petrol station in Iași, Romania. The girl's birth father is Russian from Odessa. The mother does not know anything about the children's fathers and they do not know anything about them.

The children were placed in the shelter of the organisation "Salvați Copiii" in 2000 for one month. Later they were taken home by their mother who was not deprived of parental rights. Then, the children appeared in the street again being forced to beg in the area of the Centre for Motherhood and Childhood Protection.

By the time of their placement in the Centre, the children had not had contact with anyone outside and their attitude towards people was negative. The subsequent social workers' observation showed that the children lacked attachment to adults surrounding them.

Identified problems:

- Malnutrition;
- Psycho – pedagogical neglect;
- Children have been exposed to physical and emotional abuse;
- The mother abandoned the children;

Care plan:

- Creation of conditions for an adequate diet;
- Drawing up documents necessary for school attendance;
- Creation of a psychologically comfortable atmosphere for children, full of warmth and care, which might help children overcome negative traits of character and behaviour, previously acquired;
- Placement of children with the appropriate foster family, substituting their birth family.

Steps Undertaken:

- Children have been registered at the children's clinic of the Centru sector. Thus, the state of health of children was monitored;
- Children began to attend a specialised kindergarten № 80 "Ghiocel", in the groups for their age;
- Throughout the children's placement in the Centre they were observed by a social worker.

In order to solve the questions connected with the future life of children it was necessary to obtain the court order confirming that the mother was deprived of parental rights. After that procedure the preparation of all the necessary documents for the placement of the children with their extended family or foster or adoptive family was possible. Maxim and Malvina have been transferred to the Centre "Așchiiuța" run by non governmental organisation "Salvați Copiii" Moldova. The specialists of this Centre are looking for a family appropriate for the children. Matching foster families and children is the main purpose of the Centre.

DAY CARE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The project aims to establish in Cahul a new service for children with disabilities, which provides day care, education, medical and social rehabilitation, and the long-term goal being the integration of this centre into mainstream services for children.

Objectives:

- To develop the services provided by the Day Care Centre for children with disabilities in the Cahul County and integrate them into the existing range of national and county services for children with disabilities in Moldova;
- To promote a model of day care services for children with disabilities to ensure that best practice is incorporated into the government social policy on children with disabilities;
- To develop and raise the level of awareness and understanding among the governmental structures and the local authorities in particular, of the needs and rights of children with disabilities;
- To develop the capacity of families with disabled children to care for their children at home and to create a self-support group of parents with children with disabilities;
- To enable children with disabilities to fulfil their physical, emotional and intellectual potential, as well as to develop independent living skills.

The Day Care Centre for children with disabilities was opened in the municipality of Cahul on September 12th 2002. The decision concerning the necessity of the Centre was taken on the basis of the assessment of the situation of children in Cahul County. The assessment was undertaken by EveryChild Moldova in collaboration with UNICEF. It revealed among other things the large number of children with special needs. It was identified that in the majority of cases the parents of children with disability are forced to place their children in large-scale state institutions or to leave them neglected at home without any stimulation for their development. The families who do not wish to place children in state institutions refer them to mainstream kindergartens. However, the educational process in such kindergartens does not correspond to the needs of development of children with disabilities. The parents' opinion poll revealed many parents wanted to bring up children at home provided that day care social services for children with special needs are available.

Therefore, it was determined that the Day Care Centre for children with disability is the most effective model of both the prevention of children's institutionalisation and the facilitation of their reintegration from institutions to birth families. The local authorities of the Cahul County provided the building that has completely been reconstructed, furnished and equipped. The process of refurbishment was funded by EveryChild Moldova and UNICEF. In addition, EveryChild Moldova participated actively in the process of the recruitment and training of specialists of the Centre. In the course of the training the experience and expertise of technical advisers from the United Kingdom were utilised.

Main directions of the activity:

- Identification and assessment of children with special needs in Cahul County;
- Access to primary education among children with special needs;
- Medical care, rehabilitation therapy;
- Providing training for parents and the staff of the Centre on providing assistance to children with special needs;
- Social protection provision;
- Legal counselling;
- Database development.

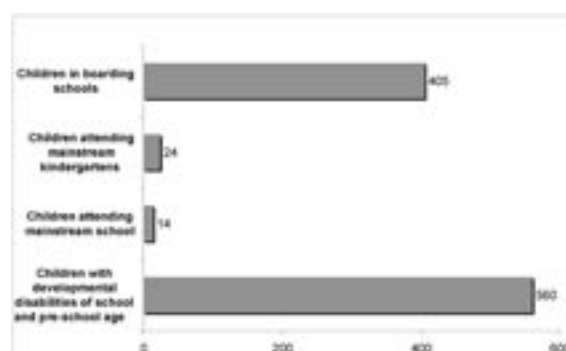
It should be noted that the seminar "Development of alternative services for children in crisis" was organised on the day of the official Opening of the Day Care Centre on the initiative of the National Council on children's rights protection. Information on positive experiences in this field achieved by EveryChild and UNICEF were presented at the seminar.

EveryChild has worked in Cahul County since 1999. The following projects have been implemented for the above-mentioned period of time: Family Support and Reintegration Project, ECHO Project and Foster Care Project.

**ACHIEVEMENTS
IN 2002-2003:**

According to the statistics 560 children of preschool and school age with disabilities have been registered in Cahul region. Among them only 14 children attend mainstream schools, 24 children attend kindergartens, the rest, 405 children, are placed in state institutions, situated in Cahul, Chrihana Veche and Cuza-Voda. A total of 46 children attend the Centre daily.

Chart 5. Cahul Day Centre



SUPPORT OF STRUCTURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The project aims to create and strengthen the professional capacity of the structures for the protection of children's rights at the local level and promote the system of Directorates across the country.

Objectives:

- To strengthen the Directorate's capacity to develop, implement and deliver social services for children and their families;
- To promote political and professional commitment to the Directorate as an efficient structure for assisting children and families;
- To promote the provision of a qualitative range of services available to children and their families.

The Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights (DCRP) is a new local state structure set up at the level of local authorities for the protection of children and families at risk. The first structure of this kind was created in 1997 on the initiative of EveryChild Moldova at the level of Chişinău Municipality. In the beginning of the year 2002 the second Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights was set up supported by the County Council and approved by the Government of the Republic of Moldova. At the level of Ungheni Council the projects are being implemented in collaboration with the Child Protection Department, Directorate for Social Protection with the financial support of UNICEF.

Initially, Chişinău Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights' sole partner in implementation of alternative services was EveryChild Moldova (the first collaborative projects have been implemented in Chisinau Municipality). Currently, the Directorate develops active collaboration with more than 20 local and international NGOs in a range of social services including: Centres

for children with physical and mental disability, services for street children and leavers (alumni) of boarding- schools.

The Cahul County Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights is currently developing the strategy for the implementation of alternative social services for children and families of the county being in difficult situations. The following projects are being developed in collaboration with EveryChild Moldova: Family Support, Reintegration and Foster care. Inclusion of the team of social workers implementing projects into the structure of the Directorate was a vital necessity for the continuation of the given services development. Moreover, the programme of the Directorate was expanded to include new projects, which were implemented jointly with EveryChild Moldova: Day Care Centre for children with disability, which is the main centre carrying out medical and social rehabilitation for children with special needs from the entire county. It is a Centre of training for parents to take care of children with special needs (the project has been implemented with the close collaboration with UNICEF. Additionally, the database includes information on children and families in need of social support from the state.

The basis for the provision of family and child focused social services was created only 6 months ago in Ungheni as a result of the positive collaboration of the partners who have contributed to these projects implementation. Moreover, these services are based on the creation of the family atmosphere indispensable for the child's development and education. Seven social workers have been recruited. Social workers in collaboration with the specialists in this field promote and develop services as an alternative to the children's placement in large-scale state institutions. At the present moment the family support service, prevention of children's institutionalisation, reintegration of children into the birth family and foster care service are being implemented.

EveryChild Moldova continues to provide technical support in the field of the services provision promoted by the organisation to all the teams working in the given structures. Strengthening of the professional skills of the specialists working in this field is very important in the process of securing our projects sustainability. Therefore, sustainability allows us to elaborate and implement new services depending on the needs of children and families and to promote the positive experience at the level of local authorities in other locations.

It should be noted that the structures for the protection of children's rights set up at the local level is an example of our positive experience, it was implemented by EveryChild Moldova and transferred to the state.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2002-2003:

Promotion of structures for the protection of children's rights in the Republic. The Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights setting up in the Cahul County.

DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

The project aims to develop, implement and expand the techniques of monitoring of children and families protection services as well as maxim is the effectiveness of the process of services provision.

Objectives:

- To collect, store and rapidly access the information on families and children registered within the Chisinau Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights.
- To draw up the statistical data on children and families. The data will provide information about the number of families in desperate need for social support, major problems faced and type of intervention required.

- To analyse the information collected and use it as a lobbying tool so that the national government formulates the social policy according to the needs of children and families.

The database started to operate in 2000 in Chişinău Municipality after a three months trial period. The trial allowed the introduction of modifications to the Database structure and interface following the wishes of the users so that the Database could be as user-friendly as possible. In addition to this, the computer network connecting all sectors of Chişinău Municipality, allowing centralised access and the control of the information introduced onto the Database has been installed in Chişinău Municipality.

In 2002 the Database, created by EveryChild Moldova was expanded and installed in Cahul and Tiraspol. The database was installed to enable the measurement of the impact of poverty on families. The specialists of the Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights of Cahul County are utilising the Database.

It should be noted that the database in Tiraspol has been elaborated according to the specifics of Transdniestrian legislation with the necessary changes for collection and storage of information in the Russian language. The project has been elaborated with the purpose of collection of information and compiling families profile aimed to help social workers with the assessment of the families. It is a copyrighted programme owned by EveryChild. But the programme is provided at no charge with the understanding that the structures for the protection of children's rights will use it for activities associated with the Family Support Project.

In this view, it is planned to get the reports on the additional criteria depending on the needs of the user in the scope of this project.

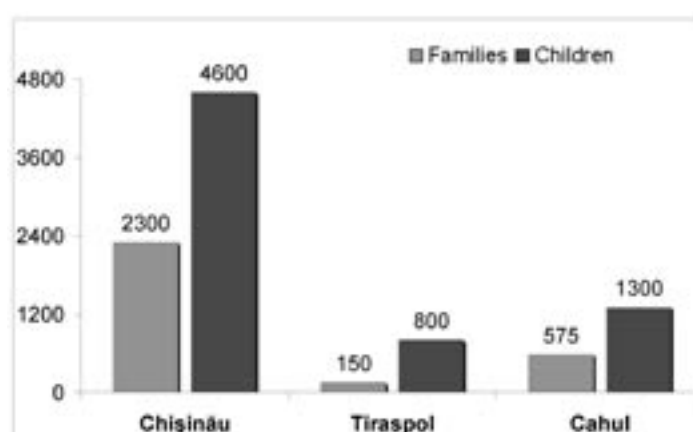
**ACHIEVEMENTS
IN 2002-2003:**

The expansion and utilisation of the database in Cahul and Tiraspol.

On the basis of the information collected, the additional means of obtaining statistic information from the database has been elaborated.

- At present the database of Chişinău Municipality contains data on 2300 families and 4600 children;
- The data on 575 families and 1300 children has been introduced into the database in Cahul;
- The database contains data on 150 families and 800 children in Tiraspol.

Chart 6. Completion of DB



SOCIAL PEDAGOGUES OF CHIȘINĂU MUNICIPAL DIRECTORATE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TRAINING PROJECT

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Chișinău Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights staff by delivering to the social pedagogues basic training in social work, enabling them to work more closely in partnership with existing children and families services in the sector offices of Chișinău.

Objectives:

- To improve the knowledge and skills of the pedagogue team in social work and their involvement in direct work with families and their children;
- To involve the Social Work departments from Moldovan Universities in the training;
- To establish the collaboration between the Social Work Team and Pedagogues Team in delivering services to families and children.

Fifty social pedagogues, employees of Chișinău Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights are being trained and are acquiring the necessary skills in the field of social protection in the scope of the project. The social pedagogues work in the clubs for minors (youth clubs), situated throughout the territory of Chișinău Municipality. They are people who know best the situation with children and families in their area. Due to the lack of knowledge in social work they cannot offer the helps required for meeting children's needs. The knowledge obtained in the field of social protection help them to identify children and families at risk and refer them to the team of social workers working in the Directorate. Moreover, the programme envisages their active involvement in the assessment and provision of direct assistance to children and families.

Social pedagogues have taken 4 courses of training. The latest of them was arranged and conducted in April 2002, beginning a new stage in the training process. The programme of this training was diverse, including theoretical and practical courses as well as the elaboration and presentation of micro projects enabling practical utilisation of the knowledge gained. In the meantime, the second part of the training is being devised on the basis of the assessment of the needs of the participants in the programme. Social Pedagogues of Chisinau Municipal Directorate for the protection of children's rights. Training Project began in February 2001 with the initial course of strengthening of the professional capacity of social pedagogues in the field of both identification of children and families at risk and their participation in families assessment together with social workers. During the year the social pedagogues were given the opportunity to take a course of training in the basic provisions in the field of social protection in the scope of the project. The training course was provided by specialists from the U.K. in conjunction with the representatives of Bălți State Pedagogical University.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2002-2003:

Strengthening the professional capacity of social workers through the development of new skills of social services provision to children at risk.



GRANTS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME FUNDED BY DFID (DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM THE U.K.)

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights in providing child-centred services as well as to influence national policy and legislation concerning support for the family and child protection.

Objectives:

- To increase the access of the practitioners delivering existing services to information on the latest social work methods in the region and in Europe as a whole;
- To establish a regional network of practitioners and a system for sharing information on the delivery of services for children and families;
- To successfully analyse and promote nationwide lessons learnt, ensuring they are incorporated into national social policy;
- To engage with decision-makers and policy-makers in order to facilitate inter-ministerial co-ordination on issues pertaining to children and families and in the implementation of policy concerning the family and child protection;
- To develop a press strategy in order to promote and share best practice in childcare and raise public awareness of children and families issues;
- To promote the development of the advocacy and lobbying capacity of the communities, involving parents, children, social workers, and local NGOs.

Implementation of the alternative social services gives the opportunity to decrease the number of children placed in large-scale state institutions. The interest of specialists working in this field and decision – makers in alternative social care is considerable. Many representatives of the local authorities wanted to implement such services in their districts. However the lack of knowledge and experience prevented them from doing so. For example, the Chişinău Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights has been successfully delivering innovative social services for almost 3 years, however the staff has not had an opportunity to engage and debate with other practitioners and policy-makers in the region and Europe.

“Health and Social Care Partnership” Programme funded by DFID and implemented by EveryChild Moldova in collaboration with Chişinău Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights makes provisions for on the one hand, training activity, conferences in particular. On the other hand, it identifies and engages with decision-makers and policy-makers in order to facilitate reforms in the child-care system which will affect the whole country. The programme presupposes publishing of materials on the reorganisation and development of family – focused social services for children and families.

At the end of 2002 within the project a summer school for 15 foster carers and their foster children from Chişinău Municipality, Cahul and Ungheni was organised at the resort Vadul-lui-Voda. During the week specialists in the field of Protection of Children's Rights jointly with social workers of the project “Foster Care” were familiarised with new techniques in the field of foster care.

In autumn 2002 the international Conference “Partnership in development of the Alternative Social Care for families and children in crisis” was organised. During three days specialists in the field of child protection from Albania, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, United Kingdom, Rumania, Russia, Ukraine and the United States of America participated in the conference. They had an opportunity in workshops and plenary sessions to discuss different problems associated with the development of the children’s rights at the national, regional and local levels, de-institutionalisation of children, prevention of abandonment of children and subsequent placement in large-scale institutions; street children: their social rehabilitation and integration into society; development of foster care in Moldova and countries of the region.

In general, the majority of the events, provided by the project were aimed at raising the level of knowledge of specialists and social workers in the implementation of the “Foster Care project” and other alternative social services developed by EveryChild Moldova. At the same time it is aimed at strengthening the team skills and improvement of the capacity to provide foster care services by foster carers, so important for children deprived of parental care.

The experience gained in the result of these activities has been shared nationwide and has contributed to the development of the national policy in the field of the Protection of Children’s Rights and the implementation of new social services into the social policy, approved by the Government. Moreover, the project facilitates raising awareness among public about the problems of children and families, protection and lobbying by communities, to which children and families belong, by means of active propagation of the results of the Foster Care project among the representatives of the central and local authorities, NGOs, both local and international and the mass media.

The project “Foster Care” implemented in Chişinău Municipality is to be the nationwide model for both legislation and positive practice.

“ STRENGTHENING FORMAL AND INFORMAL FAMILY SUPPORT”

PROJECT, FUNDED BY SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

The project aims to promote family focused social care for children in Transdnestria and adopt as the principal means of caring for children looked after at home.

Objectives

- To strengthen the capacity of families and communities to care for their children;
- To strengthen political and professional commitment to a family focused and intersectoral approach to childcare;
- To build the capacity of local government partners to provide services by supporting them to exercise their rights and obligations provided through the process of decentralization;
- To analyse and promote examples of best practice amongst local government;
- To improve the quality and range of services available to vulnerable children and their families;
- To pilot and improve assessment and gatekeeping criteria to prevent institutionalisation of children and promote de-institutionalisation;
- To increase public awareness of new policy and practice of family focused social care for all children.

This project began in December 2001 and concluded in December 2002. On one hand, in the project location site many children are cared for in state institutions. Living conditions in institutions are not appropriate for the child to fulfil his/her physical, intellectual and emotional potential. Children’s rights are not fully respected and their needs are not fully met in most of the institutions. There are no alternatives to institutionalisation for children who are temporarily or permanently deprived of parental care.

On the other hand, although EveryChild has been promoting family based care for children at the local level through the establishment of practical working models of a range of services for children and families at a decentralised municipal level i.e. family support and reintegration projects have been implemented in this region for more than three years, the number of children admitted to institutional care is increasing, the gatekeeping system is only at the embryonic stage, the prevention of child placement in state institutions is therefore not sufficient.

As a the result of the implementation of the project and the activity of the “Family for Children” Fund, and EveryChild Tiraspol many positive changes among families in the project target group have been observed.

Positive changes as a result of the support:

- The improvement of children’s health state;
- The living conditions improvement;
- The improvement of financial situations within the families;
- The understanding of the necessity to change the attitude to life.

Effect on the activity of “Family for Children” Fund

- The level of professionalism of the team of social workers has been raised;
- The authority of the “Family for Children” Fund among state and non-governmental organisations has been raised;
- The intersectoral cooperation between the corresponding governmental structures and organisations has been strengthened;
- The relationships between the municipal housing and communal services and NGOs (Psychiatric Association);
- The cooperation with the Directorate for Education, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Republican Children’s Hospital has been strengthened.

The direct benefit for Tiraspol State Administration is the enhancement of the professional skills of the specialists on family support i.e. family support service is to become the part of the state structure. The state administration will be able to utilise the project database for making social analysis.

It is necessary to note that within the scope of the project “Strengthening Formal and Informal Family Support in Tiraspol”, funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation the self-support group for parents in difficult situations has been formed. In other words, the self-support group served as a basis for the development of a new type of social services – family counseling.

The Round Table organised in the scope of the project facilitated the process of unifying NGOs and their close collaboration with state structures. As a result, the Council of NGOs in the field of social protection was formed and the network of NGOs working in the field of social protection was formed.

Achievements:

- 19 families in crisis where there is a risk of one or more children being placed in institutions have been supported.
- 26 families with very poor living conditions have been supported
- 35 families where children needed special medical care have been supported

Case study Family assisted in the scope of the Project «Strengthening Formal and Informal Family Support in Tiraspol», funded by the Swiss Agency for development and cooperation.

Project period: July – December 2002

Katia Timoshka, born September 16th, 2001 with the diagnosis: organic affection of the central nervous system.

Family history: The child’s mother, Svetlana, is a single mother. At birth the girl’s pathological

development was diagnosed at the Maternity Home. Svetlana's parents refused to take care of their granddaughter, as she was a disabled child. The young mother had to move to the relatives, where she now lives. The relatives' financial resources were very small, however they were trying to support Svetlana. She experienced serious financial problems because the child needed permanent care. The problems were complicated by the fact, that she didn't receive any child benefit, as she needed to draw up the document confirming that the child had disability first (disability certificate).

Case history: At birth the child was diagnosed as having an organic affection of the central nervous system. The child was registered at the Children's Clinic. Paediatricians, neuropathologists and visiting nurses visited the family on a regular basis. It was necessary to take a course of examination and treatment at the Centre for Motherhood and Childhood Protection in Chişinău, but the mother couldn't afford it financially.

Project Support: The project social workers got the referral from the Tiraspol Children's Clinic where the child was registered. The family was assessed and included into EveryChild Family Support Project from July to December 2002. Social workers worked out the care plan to support the family. It was planned to facilitate the drawing up of the necessary disability document and the child benefit drawing up. The family was supported emotionally, socially and financially within the scope of the project. All the documents have been obtained and the mother's financial situation improved as she has access to state child benefit and financial support from the project. Social workers worked on the problematic relationship between Svetlana and her mother and met with Katya's grandmother to attempt to persuade her to change her attitude towards the child. While the family was in the project the relations between Svetlana and her mother gradually improved, they now communicate and Svetlana's mother visits the child and takes care of the girl.

In November 2002 the family was included into the SDC funded project for medical support. The child has been referred for examination and treatment at Chisinau Centre for Motherhood and Childhood Protection. The Centre's doctors confirmed the diagnosis and recommended an additional course of treatment at home under the neuropathologist's observation. The necessary medicine have been bought and the course of treatment taken. (See the List of Medicine IV)

Child's State of Health after treatment:

Katya's state of health improved after treatment, the spasms were reduced and the motor activity of the child increased. The child's behaviour was more active than before treatment. Unfortunately there is no possibility to treat the child completely due to the seriousness of the disease.

« DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT RISK OF THE UNGHENI COUNTY » PROJECT, FUNDED BY UNICEF

The project aims to promote the idea of family-based care by means of setting up practical models of the alternative social services for children and families at risk at the decentralised level

«Development of social services for children and families at risk of the Ungheni County » Project funded by UNICEF Moldova and implemented by EveryChild Moldova, began its activity in August 2002. Project's implementation is for a period of two years.

As a result of the positive collaboration of the project partners: Ungheni County Council, UNICEF and EveryChild Moldova complex social service came into existence. The service is child centred and is based on the idea of provision of family-based care for the child. The structures implementing the project are County Directorate for Social Protection and County Department for the Protection of Children's Rights.

Seven social workers have been recruited. They promote and implement alternatives to placement of children in the large-scale state institutions jointly with the specialists in this field. Social workers and other professionals received appropriate training. It should be noted that the directors of the territorial Directorates working in the field of social protection of children and families have been included into the process of training.

At present the following activities are being organised within the project:

- Family support and prevention of children's institutionalisation
- De-institutionalisation of children and their reintegration with birth families, if possible;
- Family- based services and foster care provision.

Foster Care Service is at the initial stage of implementation. The publicity campaign is in full swing. Candidates, who wish to become Foster Carer are in the process of being assessed and trained. In the publicity campaign advertising materials published with the support of UNICEF are being widely disseminated. The candidates for the position of foster carer and other people may get these materials at the project presentations or in other public establishments (Prefecture, City Hall, Hospitals, Schools, Kindergartens, bus stations, railway stations, Employment bureau etc.). The local mass media (TV, newspapers) publish information and advertising materials about this service. Besides advertising for candidates purpose, the attention is also to familiarise the public with the alternative social services for children and families.

It should be noted that during the first 6 months of the project implementation in Ungheni county 140 children and 48 socially vulnerable families received financial and social support and 5 children have been reintegrated from state institutions to their birth families.

The success of the project became possible due to strengthening of the professional capacity of the team as well as intervention by other specialists if necessary. The latter contributed much to the formulation of social policy in the field of protection of children's rights through of practical realisation.

**ACHIEVEMENTS
IN 2002-2003:**

A total of 48 families with 148 children have been supported within of the project; 5 children have been reintegrated into their birth families; and the Foster Care project has began to be implemented.



EVENTS HELD IN 2002

Support of setting up Cahul County Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights.

The Directorate for the protection of children's rights, the second structure of this kind in the republic of Moldova was set up on February 4.

The Directorate was set up with the purpose of promoting and implementing at the level of local authority, sustainable mechanisms of family-based care, prevention of children's placement with large – scale institutions and the formation of a network of social protection services. Cahul County Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights was set up on the initiative of EveryChild Moldova in collaboration with UNICEF and supported by Cahul County Council. The decision regarding the creation of this structure was approved by the Government of the Republic of Moldova at the end of 2001.

Charity concert

Different information activity covered by mass media (press conferences, radio Moldova interviews, International Moldova radio, radio Antena – C, radio Free Europe, news in press agencies, articles, newspapers) were organised within the information campaign dedicated to the new organisation- EveryChild, formed as a result of a merger of two charities from the U.K. the European Children's Trust and Christian Children's Fund GB. The purpose being to form positive public opinion regarding the merger and support and strengthening of trust towards the services implemented by ECT, and subsequently, by EveryChild. However, the most important event was the organisation of the charity concert "Together – for children".

The concert was held on March 27, 2002 in the National theatre "Mihai Eminescu". Representatives of the central and local government, as well as different local and international NGOs were present at the concert. The exposition of the pictures of the projects implemented by our organisation was organised in the theatre hall. An urn for donations was installed in the auditorium.

In the course of the performance EveryChild Moldova gave 10 wheel chairs to children with special needs from Chişinău and Cahul. Financial means collected in the result of the concert (about \$1 700 US) were used entirely for the purpose of charity: the provision of automatic washing machines, electric & gas cookers and other equipment for Cahul Day Care Centre for children with disabilities. Many vulnerable families received financial assistance. For example, one family with 17 children received a washing machine.

It should be noted that the concert was shown on the National TV on the threshold of the Easter holiday.

Summer school

At the end of 2002 within the project the summer school for 15 foster carers and their foster children from Chisinau Municipality, Cahul and Ungheni was organised at Vadul-lui-Voda resort. Within a week specialists in the field of child rights protection alongside social workers of the project "Foster Care" were familiarising with new methods in the field of foster care.

The organisation of the summer school organisation is included into foster care development programme throughout the RM programme and is funded by DFID. The organisation of the cultural and entertainment programme in the summer school for 50 natural and foster children aims to strengthen their health and the relationships. Two experts from Russia participated in the work of the summer school. They were very interested in EveryChild activity and they suggested that the collaboration in the field of alternative social services between NGOs working on the territory of the former Soviet Union should be continued and extended as all these countries inherited the same problems.

International Conference „Partnership in the development of alternative social services for children and families at risk”

EveryChild Moldova jointly with the Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights of the City Hall of Chişinău Municipality organised the international conference in Chişinău “Partnership in the development of alternative social services for children and families at risk” on November 13th-15th, 2002. The event was held in the Republican Palace. Experts in the field of social protection and child protection from Albania, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Great Britain, Rumania, USA, Russia and Ukraine participated in the conference. The purpose of the conference was to enable the exchange of the experience in the field of the development of social services between former soviet countries, for mutual sharing of the information on the existing problems in the field of the protection of children's rights, identification of new ways of reforming and strengthening this field.

During 3 days the participants at the conference had the opportunity in workshops and plenary sessions to discuss different problems associated with the development of the children's rights at the regional, national and local levels, de-institutionalisation of children and prevention of abandonment of children and their subsequent placement in large-scale institutions, street children: their social rehabilitation and integration into society and the development of foster care in Moldova and the countries of the region.

The representatives of the Government of RM and City Hall of Chisinau Municipality, international NGOs participated in the work of the conference. The conference was funded by DFID within the “Health and Social Care Partnership” programme. The materials of the conference are planned to be published in the second half of the year 2003 with the financial support from DFID.

Day Care Centre for children with special needs

The centre was opened on September 12, 2002. It represents the kind of social services for children with special needs (both physical and mental) residing in Cahul County. Up to 40 children accessed the services of the Centre. The Centre is a basic establishment providing opportunities for medical and social rehabilitation of children with special needs from the Cahul county. It is also a training centre for parents to enable them to provide adequate care for children with special needs.

The basic objectives of the Centre are the prevention of children's abandonment and children with special needs further placement in large-scale state institutions and child separation from the birth family. This will be achieved by means of restoration and stimulation of their physical, mental and emotional potential, development of their skills of independent life and by means of the parents' and the representatives of communities active involvement into the process of children's socialisation. The concept of the Centre makes provisions for children's integration into the system of general education, Public health and social protection. The parents have the opportunities for training in the field of stimulation and rehabilitation of children at home.

Initially, children from 3 to 12 years, living in families were included into the rehabilitation programme of the Centre. Later, the services will be provided for newborn children and children reintegrated from state institutions on the basis of the agreement with the Cahul Municipal clinic.

The opening of the Centre was made possible due to the joint efforts of Cahul County Council and the charities UNICEF and EveryChild. Acting on the basis of tripartite memorandum of collaboration. The County council provided the premises of the former kindergarten and resumed responsibility to pay maintenance fees and wages for the staff.

It is necessary to note the initiative and active assistance on the part of the local authorities in setting up the Centre. This attitude is very significant for us, as it is a guarantee of the project sustainability. Together with UNICEF our organisation covered the expenses of the full reconstruction of the building to enable provision of a high standard childcare for children with special needs. The system of autonomous heating and sewerage have been installed, the rooms are equipped with specialised rehabilitation equipment and furniture. The children's playground in the yard of the Centre has been fitted out. In addition, serious attention was paid to the training of professionals. Transport, specially designed for children with special needs was purchased.

The personnel of the Centre consist of the following specialists: physiotherapist, psychologist, speech

therapist, social workers etc. Due to the grant obtained from the Canadian Embassy in România we had the opportunity to organise a serious training course for the specialists of the Centre, including not only a theoretical course, but also the possibility to visit and study the activity of similar Centres, in the Ukraine, România and the Republic of Moldova. The preparation for the activity of the Centre included detailed assessment of children with special needs and compiling the lists of those who will use the specialised services of the Centre, including a medical and social profile of every child. The children's parents were engaged in the preparatory work for the Opening of the Centre. Two of the most active parents had the possibility to participate in the international conference, arranged by the Ukrainian Association of parents having children with special needs.

Cahul Day Care Centre was design as a model of new type of social services for children and parents that can be replicated in other counties of the country. The main condition for setting up such services is the initiative and participation of the local authorities. In fact, this is the sole guarantee of sustainability of such projects.

Seminar "Development of social services for children and families at risk in Cahul County"

The seminar was organised on the initiative of the National Council for the Protection of Children's Rights with the participation of experts from EveryChild and UNICEF. The seminar was held on September 12th, 2002 in Cahul. The objective of the event was the familiarisation of specialists in the field of social protection and decision – makers responsible for the formation of social policy from other County Councils (chairs of the County Councils for the Protection of Children's Rights the alternative social services for children and families at risk, implemented in Cahul County by EveryChild in collaboration with UNICEF. The following themes have been discussed: assessment procedure, selection and support of families in the scope of family support and reintegration service, Foster Care Regulations and placement procedure, entry criteria for children using the services of the Day Care Centre for children with disabilities. In the course of the seminar the possibility of setting up at the local level of structures for the protection of children's rights with the elaborated mechanism of family support and for the promotion of the positive experience gained in this field has been considered. It is necessary to note that the Deputy Prime Minister Valerian Cristea and the Chairman of the National Council for the Protection Children's Rights participated in the seminar.



PLANS FOR FUTURE

Creation of the Resource Centre

The effective models in the field of protection of children's rights exerting positive influence on the entire sector of social protection in the country have been implemented for the latest 6 years. Despite the fact, that the local authorities throughout RM recognise the necessity of the reform of the existing childcare system, the legislative basis and methods facilitating the implementation of the given changes are not well enough developed. Moreover, the approval of the Law of social protection of children at risk, elaborated by the group of the representatives of governmental and non- governmental structures and submitted for the consideration of the Parliament of the country is being delayed by the vague reasons. However, despite this, there is a vital need for dissemination and replication of the positive experience in the field of children's rights protection throughout the country. The on-going training of practitioners is necessary for the successful implementation of the reform in the system of protection of children's rights. This is possible only if a well-developed methodological basis and highly qualified professionals are available.

In this respect EveryChild Moldova plans to set up the Resource Centre in 2003 within the Municipal Directorate for the Protection of Children's Rights in Chişinău.

The decision was made to use the Department of methodology, monitoring and assessment of the Directorate as a bases for this Centre. EveryChild Moldova will assume all the financial expenses associated with the implementation of the project i.e. acquisition of the equipment necessary for the effective work of the Centre, acquisition of stationery, organising and carrying on seminars and trainings, remuneration of the local experts invited to facilitate the trainings when necessary etc.

The creation of this Centre will contribute to a great extent to the successful implementation of the reform in the system of protection of the children's rights thus contributing to the improvement of the quality of social services provided to children and families at risk.

Organisation of the second Summer School

EveryChild is planning to hold the second summer school for foster carers and social workers implementing foster care project. This time foster carers from three locations where the project is being implemented will participate in the work of the summer school. One of the main objectives of this event, besides the familiarisation with new methods of work in foster care, is the creation on local level of the affiliated Foster Care Association in Cahul.

The organisation of this Summer school is part of a programme of development and implementation of Foster Care Service across the RM, and is partially financed by DFID.