Child Care System Reform

Serbia Country Assessment
ASSESSMENT OF THE CHILD PROTECTION IN SERBIA

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SERBIA

AUTHOR: Vera Kovačević, Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies

COMMISSIONED BY: UNICEF Serbia
                   Svetozara Markovića 58, Belgrade, Serbia
                   CONTACT PERSON: Maria-Luisa Fornara, UNICEF Serbia
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I Executive summary

Context and purpose of the Assessment

The project builds on previous UNICEF efforts to support the reform of child care services in the region. Such experiences to date indicate that the political champions to lead the systematic reform process have not yet emerged and that the political incentives for the reform have varied from country to country. This indicates that the political interest in welfare issues and the welfare of children continues to be rather limited (in comparison, for example, to the economic reforms, nation building or threats to political stability). External interests such as support to poverty reduction strategies, and EU-accession negotiations have proven to be useful catalysts for highlighting the importance of social protection issues. However, civil servants and government officials at local level continue to stress the need for mobilization of political will and leadership for the reform at the highest level.

These experiences also indicate that one of the major shortcomings, identified across the region, is the absence of comprehensive operational reform plans with clear targets, as well as operational and financial mechanisms to manage the period of transition between old and new service systems. There is also a noted need for technical ‘know-how’ and learning from the experiences of other countries in the region – particularly those with similar historic and social protection system backgrounds.

Objectives of the Assessment

The overall objectives of the Assessment include:

- an increase in understanding of the progress and shortcomings of the reform process in SEE, from the view of different stakeholders on county and regional level, which can serve as a ‘baseline’ for further reform support
- provide policy analysis that can serve as an input for further support for the reform process, among both local and regional/international actors

Methodology

In view of the specific objectives of this exercise and the need to place the Assessment in a participatory, collaborative, research framework, the emphasis of the document has been placed on the views and opinions of the key identified stakeholders gathered in the Assessment Steering Committee. The Assessment Steering Committee consisted of nine members, renown professionals from the government and non-government sectors. The Steering Committee held two group meetings. At the first meeting (May 2007) the SC members were informed on the concept of the Assessment (its framework) and provided their opinion on key issues that need to be covered under each particular Assessment chapter. Following comments received from the SC members and three independent experts on the draft document, the second SC meeting was held
on June 22. The SC members discussed the findings and recommendations and provided their input for finalizing the document.

In addition to the SC meetings, the Assessment used additional qualitative and quantitative data collection methods: desk review, interviews with members of the Assessment Steering Committee, individual consultations with Assessment SC members and other stakeholders, mapping (a map with the visual presentation of the governance system in Serbia in relation to child protection was created to illustrate the administrative division and services available for children)

The limitations of this Assessment are the following: the short timeline for producing it; the lack of systematized data; the lack of monitoring and/or evaluation on the implementation of strategies, or on the impact of different policies. For the above reason, the Assessment to a large extent relies on the impressions and opinions of the stakeholders assembled in the Steering Committee.

Findings and Conclusions

Target groups of children
Relevant legislation recognizes a variety of ‘traditional’ at-risk groups of children: children without parental care, children with developmental difficulties, children with behavioral disorders and children from the so-called “dysfunctional families”. As evident, the Laws still contain medicalized terminology for the description of these at-risk groups.

Planning and decision making (national and local level)
In the past several years progress has been made in recognizing the importance of planning and this resulted in formulating and adopting a number of planning and strategic documents and action plans. Also, the planning process involves a large number of relevant stakeholders, including the particularly important inter-sectoral bodies. However, there is still the need for serious improvement in this area.

At local level numerous social welfare planning programmes have been ongoing and have recently been mainstreamed. The social welfare planning process is being carried out at municipal level and it is expected that in the near future the majority of municipalities in Serbia will have developed social welfare development plans.

Reorganization of statutory services – “service purchasing” and gatekeeping at local level
As opposed to some other East European countries, Serbia has the advantage of having Centers for Social Work (CSW). Reforms of the CSW are under way and the main ideas and reform principles are clear, however the reform has still not started being implemented in practice. There is still much work to be done, particularly in the area of case management and defining the role of CSW in a modern social protection system.
Decentralization
Based on the current level of decentralization in Serbia and the existing situation in this respect, there is a professional consensus that there is a need to review and agree on the most important activities that need to take place both at central and local level as preparatory activities for decentralization and activities that should encourage provision of services that are already in the mandate of local governments.

Personnel issues
Personnel in social protection in Serbia have its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that there is a high level of education of CSW and residential institutions’ staff, many of whom have embraced the general principles of reform. The disadvantage is that a substantial number of employees lack new knowledge and that some municipalities lack professional staff. Also, some residential institutions staff are opposed to change and fear for their jobs in the process of transformation of institutions.

Gatekeeping at national level
In Serbia, different national level activities were initiated and implemented for changing the underdeveloped gatekeeping mechanisms at local level. These activities were aimed at developing alternative services at local level, implementing activities for establishing standards for service provision, empowering professional staff to become future gatekeepers in the system. Monitoring and complaint mechanisms are still overly legalistic but the basis has been established for their reform.

Material assistance for children and families
Cash benefits have been significantly consolidated and the system has been re-established. The amounts, targeting and coverage of material assistance, however, still need to be reviewed in order to ensure that this is actually going to satisfy at least the basic needs of children.

Community based services
Community based service reform was encouraged through two mechanisms – the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and the Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD) that at the same time present examples of good practice. In family support services, the Day Care Center services at local level are particularly important. In the area of foster care, through the implementation of parallel activities, significant progress has been made. Thus, in the last 7 years, the number of children in foster families has increased by one third.

Deinstitutionalization
Early on in the reform there was consensus on deinstitutionalization as one of the main goals. Throughout the reform period, the Ministry implemented various activities (training, education, defining plans, issuing instructions and rulebooks for preventing placement and for transformation of institutions) for supporting deinstitutionalization. There are positive effects in this process since the number of children without parental care in institutions decreased from 2200 children in the year 2001, to 1488 in 2007. However, there has been little progress in the
deinstitutionalization of children with disability. The speed of this process will depend on the development of alternative forms of care.

**Recommendations**

**Target groups of children**

- Up-date legislation needs with new target groups of children at risk where applicable;
- Replace medicalized terminology and introduce new terminology in line with child rights in the legislation, normative acts and official documents

**Planning and decision making at national and local level**

- Introduce systematic monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children and the Social Welfare Development Strategy, including reporting on progress;
- Finalize and implement unified methodology in strategic social welfare planning at local level;
- Define a programme for supporting local level in planning and decision making for social welfare services in the mandate of local governments. The programme needs to include instructions and methodologies on: the establishment of municipal inter-sectoral planning bodies; data collection and performing needs assessments; service development and service provision (including standards and licensing).

**Reorganization of statutory services – “service purchasing” and gatekeeping at local level**

- Define the role of CSW in the reformed social welfare and child protection system, with clear distinction between “role of gatekeeper” and “service provider”.
- Develop and implement a programme for achieving the CSW new role, necessary preconditions, clear sequencing and necessary steps. The programme needs to include:
  - capacity building of CSW staff in accordance with the new role;
  - system for licensing service providers, accreditation of services and education programmes
  - systematic introduction of case management in all CSW;
  - defining the roles and responsibilities in monitoring and supervision of the CSW “gatekeeping” function;
- Redefine Standards for CSW operation based on piloting the draft Rulebook on standards and work procedures of CSW and implement new standards in all CSW.

**Decentralization**

- Reach a consensus on the necessary preconditions and sequencing of decentralization in social welfare and child protection with the Ministry in the lead;
- Define and implement action plan based on consensus for decentralization.
Personnel Issues

- Design and implement comprehensive training programs in each of the reform areas through accredited training programs and standards of care;
- Design and implement training programmes for local level stakeholders in the area of social welfare planning and programme implementation;
  Organize specialized training programmes redefine ToRs for staff and review competency of social protection staff;

Gatekeeping at national level

- Continue developing alternative services (particularly family substitute services);
- Organize training and education for CSW staff for taking on “gatekeeping” function;
- Continue developing rulebooks and instructions for strengthening CSW “gatekeeping” function;
- Introduce quality monitoring and evaluation of CSW staff performance;
- Review the complaint mechanisms and harmonize with reformed social welfare system.

Material assistance for children and families

- Review targeting of cash benefits and introduce changes accordingly;
- Analyze pros and cons of merging the administration of cash benefits (child allowances and social welfare cash benefits) and reach decision on next steps.

Community based services

- Define standards for services and for service providers (state, NGO and private);
- Develop and implement a system for licensing and accreditation;
- Develop and set-up control mechanisms (including sanctions) for services and service providers;
- Develop and implement a programme for systemic and continued strengthening of the NGO sector for service provision.
- Analyze impact of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD), and other examples of good practices developed in cooperation with local and international organizations, and provide recommendations for future functioning;
- Analyze impact of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD) and provide recommendations for future functioning;
- Collect good practice, produce lessons learned and systematize the knowledge for policy input;
- Develop models of services (Day Care Center, homecare, etc.) as an input for developing standards;
• Analyze achievements and obstacles to foster care development to date, including the system of monitoring and provide policy recommendations for further development of foster care.

Deinstitutionalization

• Review existing plans for transformation of institutions (with clear links to family substitute and family support services);
• Review individual plans for children in residential institutions and plans for residential institution staff, including training and career development;
• Analyze and provide recommendations for improving the social protection system for children with disability, respecting the principle of social inclusion;
• Carefully formulate financial incentives for deinstitutionalization.
II Background of the Assessment

In mid 2006, UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS received regional funding from SIDA for a project entitled ‘The Reform of the Child Care System in CEE/CIS – taking stock and accelerating action’. The project takes place from June 2006 to December 2009. The project aims to address the following issues regarding the reform of child care in the noted regions:

- availability of a *continuum of services* in different communities and countries, which is able to address diverse vulnerabilities through individual planning, based on an aim of providing quality care for children;
- upgrading of *local capacity for planning and financing* of a continuum of services, since the reform is closely linked to good governance and decentralization. This issue is also linked to a need for a clarification of responsibilities and mandates (inter-sectoral co-operation);
- A need for careful *budgeting for the transition costs during the reform period* and *costing of the new child care services*.
- the situation regarding the *policy environment* in which the reform is taking place,
- the role of the state in the *gatekeeping* at national and sub-national level.

The project builds on previous UNICEF efforts to support the reform of child care services in the region. Such experiences to date indicate that the political champions to lead the systematic reform process have not yet emerged and that the political incentives for the reform have varied from country to country. This indicates that the political interest in welfare issues and the welfare of children continues to be rather limited (in comparison, for example, to the economic reforms, nation building or threats to political stability). External interests such as support to poverty reduction strategies, and EU-accession negotiations have proven to be useful catalysts for highlighting the importance of social protection issues. However, civil servants and government officials at local level continue to stress the need for mobilization of political will and leadership for the reform at the highest level.

These experiences also indicate that one of the major shortcomings, identified across the region, is the absence of comprehensive operational reform plans with clear targets, as well as operational and financial mechanisms to manage the period of transition between old and new service systems. There is also a noted need for technical ‘know-how’ and learning from the experiences of other countries in the region – particularly those with similar historic and social protection system backgrounds.

The project has **threefold objectives:**

1. To accelerate the reform of the child care system by facilitating a renewed commitment for the reform through a consultative process and lessons learned;
2. To build synergies between specialized institutions, NGOs, Governmental reform practitioners and financial institutions in their contributions to the reform by facilitating systematic exchange of good practices and lessons learned;

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1 The background of UNICEF involvement in child care system reform in CEE/CIS goes back to 1991 with the publication of the Innocenti report “Children in Institutions in Central and Eastern Europe”. The Romania office was first with follow-up on the issue. In 1995 child institutionalization was again treated in the publication “Child Institutionalization and Child Protection in Central and Eastern Europe” by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Center and this is also the start of a more systematic reporting on data on child institutionalization through the MONEE project and Social Monitors. The UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS was established in 1996 and attention to the issue in UNICEF programmes started at a regional level with the joint UNICEF-World Bank regional conference “Children Deprived of Parental Care: Rights and Realities” in Budapest between 22-25 October 2000. Since then UNICEF country offices have started engaging in dialogue with governments on alternatives to institutionalization and reforms of the child care system. An important contribution to developing the know-how was the regional joint UNICEF-World Bank project “Changing Minds, Policies and Lives”. The project also builds on the UNICEF and World Bank Conference ‘Children deprived of parental care – rights and realities in the CEE/CIS Region’, held in 2000. At the Conference, guiding principles for the reform were agreed among the participating governments and NGOs.
3. To facilitate access to the latest knowledge and know-how for reform practitioners and to expand the mechanisms for regional capacity development.

The Assessment that is subject of this ToR is one of the activities to be carried out during the Phase 1 of the project. It will be used to illustrate key elements for progress and current gaps in the reform processes in the target countries, in support for the preparation and work of the first sub-regional consultation, one in the SEE (covering Albania, Serbia, UNAP Kosovo, Montenegro, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey).

UNICEF has been working in Serbia since 1992. The UNICEF Child Protection Programme aims to build a protective environment for all children. Together with governmental and non-governmental partners, UNICEF in Serbia aims at achieving measurable results in child protection, i.e. influence child rights based policy development, enabling access and quality of services and facilitate the development of the community based alternatives to institutionalization, and have been working on:

- Development of national strategy on the prevention and protection of child abuse and neglect, including the development of general guidelines, referral systems, institutional protocols on preventing, detecting, reporting and referring cases of child abuse and neglect. (Adoption and implementation at of the General Protocol on Child Abuse and Neglect, including training of professionals in 13 LPA municipalities in cooperation with the Council for Child Rights and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy and the development of sectoral (special) protocols by relevant ministries on preventing, detecting, reporting and referring cases of child abuse and neglect based on the General Protocol
- Promoting the development of a social safety net, in which all sectors (social, judicial, law enforcement, health, and education) coordinate their efforts and actions to identify and adequately respond to violence against children. In particular, establishing multi-disciplinary teams at municipal level to respond to cases of child abuse and neglect and to become catalysts in developing referral systems;
- Strengthening the outreach capacity of social services through the expansion of a network of child protection mobile teams;
- A participatory research project on violence against children to ensure that children’s perception on violence and views on violence protection inform child protection policy development;
- The development of Republican and Local Plans of Action to redress violations of the rights of children;
- Developing mechanisms to ensure participation of children and opportunities for children to redress and claim their rights;
- A detailed report on the Social Welfare Development Strategy (SWDS) containing recommendations on the Transformation of Residential Institutions and Development of Alternative Forms of Care; de-institutionalization was prepared as support to the implementation of the SWDS
- Analysis of the Family Law, Criminal Code, Juvenile Justice Law, draft Child Ombudsman Law and the assessment of its compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European standards of was initiated and supported by UNICEF. Recommendations were broadly disseminated to inform further legislative development
- Support a comprehensive reform of the Juvenile Justice system.
Scope and focus of the assessment

The overall objectives of the Assessment include:

- an increase in understanding of the progress and shortcomings of the reform process in SEE, from the view of different stakeholders on county and regional level, which can serve as a ‘baseline’ for further reform support
- provide policy analysis that can serve as an input for further support for the reform process, among both local and regional/international actors

The specific objectives of the Assessment include:

1. identify benchmarks against which to assess and analyse the reform progress
2. assess and analyse (individually-per country and jointly – per region) progress of the child care system reform in the selected countries, in order to determine a baseline for further monitoring of the reform process
3. identify opportunities to accelerate the reform of the child care system
4. enable local ownership of the assessment process
5. enable a review and input for further UNICEF support for the reform
6. outline a “model planning (monitoring?) tool” to be used in subsequent sub-regional consultations (CARK, SC & RUB)

Format-wise, the focus is to be primarily on:

- the lessons learnt from the best practices, as identified by the involved stakeholders,
- relation of the child care reform with the wider social welfare reform efforts, and
- ensuring, as much as possible given the local circumstances and the assessment timeframe, the local ownership of the assessment process.

The assessment is also to feed into the preparation of the Conference. Hence, content-wise, the focus will be on 5 reform issues that are to be explored at the Conference:

1. policy environment for the reform,
2. service planning,
3. provision of a ‘service continuum’,
4. service gatekeeping at different level (national/regional/local),
5. costing, finances and budgeting.

This two focus sets shall be explored through:

- the assessment against the benchmarks for child care policy reform (content-issue)
- analysis of progress of the reform (format-issue)
- recommendations for next steps (format and content issues).

Each of these processes requires detailed tools that shall be developed in the early phases of the assessment process and presented to the local researchers during their preparatory meeting in Croatia.

III Methodology

In view of the specific objectives of this exercise and the need to place the Assessment in a participatory, collaborative, research framework, the emphasis of the document has been placed on the views and opinions of the key identified stakeholders gathered in the Assessment Steering Committee. Together with the UNICEF CO, key stakeholders in the area of social protection reform and child care reform were identified. The identification of potential Assessment SC
membership included criteria for such as i) the potential members are re-known in their respective fields of expertise; ii) that they come from both government and non-government institutions and organizations; iii) they have been actively participating in the reform process from the beginning of transition; iv) they are actors who have been “agents of change” in the process of social protection and child care reform; iv) they are professionals who are well positioned to drive further changes and continue implementing the reform process (whether in government or non-government organizations).

Following the identification process the potential Steering Committee members were approached, informed on the Assessment process and invited to participate in the Assessment. Out of 14 potential members, 9 accepted to become members of the Steering Committee, providing the Assessment with a highly qualified group, both in terms of the institutions and organizations they represent and in terms of their personal qualifications. A list of the Steering Committee Members can be found in Annex 4.

After the individual meetings with a number of Committee members, the First Steering Committee meeting was held on May 7th 2007. At the meeting the stakeholders were informed on the concept of the Assessment (its framework) and their opinion was sought as to what they consider needs to be covered under each particular Assessment chapter. Input was provided on relevant issues that need to be addressed in the Assessment and suggestions were made regarding documents, sources of data, examples and experience that could be relevant for different sections of the document. A particularly interesting discussion was held regarding the issue of semantics and terminology used in the Assessment (more detail is provided in the section “Deliberation on terminology and its implications”).

The Second Meeting of the Assessment Steering Committee was held on June 22nd.

Prior to the meeting, the draft Assessment was translated into Serbian and sent to the SC members for comments. The same draft was also given to three additional independent experts (listed in Annex 5) for their comments. The comments received were extremely valuable, both in terms of the document’s contents, but also in pointing to issues that seemed unclear to persons who were “outside” the Assessment process.

The main purpose of the Second SC meeting was to discuss the analysis and reach agreements regarding the draft conclusions and propose country-level recommendations and results. At the meeting the SC members commended the Assessment and evaluated it as a good quality document providing an accurate picture of the social and child protection situation in Serbia. The members conveyed the opinion of the State Secretary of the Ministry who highly evaluated the Assessment, reiterating that it gave a realistic picture of the situation in the country and in the sector.

The comments of the SC members were discussed and incorporated into this (final) document, while the conclusions and recommendations were unanimously endorsed. The SC also stated that the Assessment can be considered a reference document for future activities in the area of social and child protection and for programming future donor assistance in this area.
The Assessment used both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods:

**Desk Review**
The documents relevant for the Assessment were discussed at meetings with the UNICEF CO and with members of the Assessment Steering Committee throughout the process of drafting the document. A comprehensive list of reviewed documentation is the Bibliography.

**Interviews with members of the Assessment Steering Committee**
During the drafting process, interviews were held with 4 members of the Assessment SC. The meetings involved in-depth discussions on particular issues in the area of expertise of the interviewed members and provided valuable insight into particular reform issues, both in terms of their genesis, present unresolved issues and gaps and ideas and plans on how to solve these issues, the proposed next steps, as well as good practices identified to date. There was no special interview guide developed, rather the discussions were led around each of the Assessment headings. These interviews were especially valuable because of the tacit and experiential knowledge on many issues, data and practices that are not systematically recorded in Serbia. The list of persons interviewed can be found in the Annex 5.

**Individual consultations with Assessment SC members and other stakeholders**
Throughout the drafting process individual consultations were held via e-mail and telephone with SC members. The consultations consisted mostly of clarifying particular issues and verifying data that are unavailable in existing documentation or on the internet and are often found only in an organization’s internal documents. This is particularly the case with the most recent data that has still not been systematized and/or made public.

**Mapping**
A map with the visual presentation of the governance system in Serbia in relation to child protection was created to illustrate the administrative division and services available for children, from local to national level (municipalities, national level governance and the Province of Vojvodina - regional level).

**Limitations**

i. The key limitation of this Assessment is the short timeline for producing it. The scope of the Assessment required more time for a quality analysis of the covered topics;

ii. This limitation is even more pronounced since in Serbia there is often a lack of systematized data requiring additional time for data collection and analysis. Therefore, the Assessment is mostly based on desk review and secondary analyses of available documentation and data.

iii. In Serbia there is still no systematized monitoring and/or evaluations on the implementation of strategies, nor on the impact of different policies. Therefore, an objective assessment of what has been achieved is difficult.

iv. For the above reason, the Assessment to a large extent relies on the impressions and opinions of the stakeholders assembled in the Steering Committee. Although the Assessment Steering Committee members could be considered as a “balanced” group of stakeholders, still, it is inevitable that some opinions and comments could be biased due to the particular positions and personal experience of the SC members.
IV Findings

1. Deliberations on terminology and its implications

As described in the segment on “Methodology” the statements, conclusions and recommendations described in the Assessment of Child Welfare in Serbia are based on available research, documents and individual discussions and group meetings with members of the Assessment Steering Committee.

During the first meeting of the Steering Committee, it became apparent that there is a need to highlight certain issues related to defining the concepts and terminology in the area of social and child protection. The issue relates to the following question – how to best “translate” the semantics of the social protection system in Serbia and the legal context in which it operates into the existing concepts and terminology used in the Western social protection systems? This is particularly relevant since the Western protection system is the one reform of social and child protection Serbia is most exposed to. Hence, an additional issue relates to how to best translate the terminology of the Western social protection into the Serbian context? The examples stated by the stakeholders, illustrate one of the challenges that transition countries have in reforming their systems in terms of defining new concepts and introducing these concepts and terminology into their legal frameworks.

- The Law on Social Protection and Social Security of Citizens (hereinafter: The Law on Social Protection) does not contain the term „service“ in the sense that this concept is used in modern social welfare systems. The word „right“ (in Serbian “pravo”) in the Law on Social Protection practically denotes the eligibility for certain services (such as placement in homes for children, adults or elderly, placement into shelters) and financial assistance (cash benefits in the form of attendance allowances and welfare benefits). The same terminology and meanings are found in the Law on Financial Support to Families with Children (for child allowances and parent allowances).

- Colloquially, there is a difference between the terms describing the organizational structure of a social/child protection program – “servisi” and a concrete and single service – “usluge”. In the US context, this would be “structural provisions” vs. “direct service/direct practice”, while in the UK context this would be a difference between “Services” vs. “provision”.

- For example, in this context, a „home for the elderly” is an „institution”, while the service is „care provision to the elderly” or „structuring the spare time of the elderly person”. Consequently, there is a misunderstanding regarding the term „service provider”, where there is no clear distinction whether the „service provider” is an „institution/organization” or a „professional, a volunteer or other individual” who directly provides the service, such as „care for an elderly person”. It is, therefore, necessary to clearly define the meanings of used terminology in a normative act and thus attempt to harmonize the terminology used in Serbia with the terminology used in the Western social protection systems. It is expected that the new Law on Social Protection will clearly define the term „services” and that the social welfare system will primarily be based on service provision, while the „rights” or „entitlements” - both as a term and de facto - will be used for cash benefits provided by the social welfare and child care system.

- Another example of potential misunderstanding in the usage of terminology is the term „gatekeeping”. Thus, in Serbia gatekeeping is often interpreted as the prevention of institutional

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2 The terminology used in this Assessment is a direct translation of the wording used in the legislation that is in force. In certain cases it is obvious that the terminology used is not „politically correct” in terms of modern social welfare, which only serves to highlight the need for changes and further reform.
forms of care. However, it is also possible to interpret „gatekeeping” as a set of legally and professionally defined procedures for determining what is in the best interest of the beneficiary and, in line with this best interest, recommends the provision of the most adequate services (in the existing terminology „fulfill the right or entitlement”).

Views have been expressed that it is necessary when using this term to highlight whether it is being used in the sense of determining the needs and the services that respond to the needs or whether it is being used in the sense of preventing the extensive use of services that are not in line with human and especially with child rights. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly define the terminology that will in fact differentiate between the two meanings of the term „gatekeeping”.

2. The governance system in Serbia in relation to child protection

2.1. The national level governance

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

As per the Law on Ministries (2007) the Ministry for Labor and Social Policy is mandated for “performing public administration duties in the areas of social protection and (protection of) family and children”. Thus, the Ministry is the key stakeholder in the area of planning and decision making in social and child protection.

In the past six years, since the initiation of reforms the Ministry has considerably changed its structure. In 2000, before the reform was initiated there were two Ministries dealing in issues of social protection and child care: the Ministry for Labor, Veterans and Social Affairs and the Ministry for Family and Children. In January 2001, following the election of the new democratic government, two new Ministries were established based on the previous two: the Ministry of Social Affairs (where a new department was formed mandated with issues regarding family and children) and the Ministry of Labor and Employment. In 2003, following new elections, these two Ministries were merged, with the structure of the sectors remaining intact. The Ministry had three sectors relevant for social protection and child protection: Sector for Social Protection, Sector for the Protection of Persons with Disability and the Secretariat (with the Human Resource function). Following the adoption of the Social Welfare Reform Strategy in 2005, the Ministry structure was reorganized and a new Department for the implementation of the social welfare reform strategy was established within the Department for Social Protection. In May 2007, a new government was formed and once again the ministry structure changed: the Sector for employment was detached from the previous Ministry, so now it is the Ministry for Labor and Social Policy (MOLSP). Since the new government has just come into office it is expected that the internal ministry structure will also be changed.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is a Program established by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The SIF reports to the Ministry and the SIF Steering Committee comprised of the Ministry staff, donor representatives, and public and civil society institutions representatives.

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3 The Law on Ministries is adopted by Parliament following each elections and the forming of a new government

4 The Social Welfare Development Strategy was adopted by the Government in 2005 based on Article 45, Paragraph 1 of the Law on the Government (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, no. 55/05 and 71/05 – Correction)
The Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD)\(^5\) operates under the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and is managed by the Sector for Persons with Disability. The Fund is financed solely from central budget funds, from lottery proceeds.

**Institute for Social Protection**

The Institute for Social Protection existed in Serbia until the nineties. Amendments to the Law on Social Protection, adopted in 2005 re-introduced the Institute for Social Protection and prescribed the mandate of the Institute. Currently, the Institute Development Strategy is being drafted and discussions are ongoing regarding the transferring of functions from the ministry to the institute.

**Other relevant Ministries**

The Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Health, The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government are important in terms of the inter-sectoral cooperation for implementing social protection and child protection policies in an integrated manner. The Ministry of Education is responsible for preschool, primary and secondary education and is thus linked to protecting the child’s best interest and the child’s right to live in a family, in an environment suitable for the child’s growth and development. The teachers are obliged to report on any indication on problems a child could be having in the family, such as, for example, abuse and violence, or dysfunctional relationships in the family. The teachers (school) must report these problems, and together with the CSW (police, etc.) actively work on finding the appropriate solution. The school, together with CSW can also develop preventive programmes for children, on issues such as antisocial behavior, substance abuse, sex trafficking, etc.). The Ministry of Health is involved directly in the social welfare system through the General Protocol on the Protection of Children from Abuse, Neglect and Violence. The principles and objectives of the General Protocol are operationally defined by individual protocols signed at local level, where one of the signatories are the local healthcare organizations. The Ministry for Public Administration and Local Government is responsible for the “local government system”. There is no direct link to social welfare, however, it is felt by the Assessment SC members that this ministry should become more actively involved in supporting local governments in delivering on their mandates, including the area of community-based social welfare and child protection service development.

**Ministry of Interior**

Department for Prevention and Suppression of Juvenile Delinquency is a newly established organizational unit in the Ministry of Interior. The department is tasked with monitoring, analyzing and reviewing the situation and trends in juvenile delinquency in Serbia, coordinates the work of organizational units, departments, sectors and groups working on the prevention of juvenile delinquency within 27 Police Directorates. The Department is also mandated with controlling and monitoring activities in this area, provides professional support and organizes

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\(^5\) Under the Lottery Law (2004) two funds were established that are financed from lottery proceeds: The Fund for financing organizations of persons with disability and social welfare institutions and the Fund for financing socio-humanitarian organizations. The first fund is not project based and operates based on requests sent by the organizations of persons with disability and social welfare institutions to the MOLSP. The second fund was “reformed” and operates according to set criteria and open calls for proposals for reform oriented projects. Since the official name of the fund is “misleading” it is mostly referred to as the Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD) but should not be confused with the first fund with a similar name.
professional training in line with the Juvenile Justice Code. The department also organizes joint activities with other ministries, through direct cooperation in solving concrete cases of crime prevention. This is the first step in the development of the future National Strategy for Preventing Criminal Behaviour. The Ministry gathered an inter-sectoral group of representatives from different ministries and experts, including UNICEF.

According to the opinion of the Head of the Department for Prevention and Suppression of Juvenile Delinquency in the Ministry of Interior, a member of the Assessment SC, much has been done in the reform of the police and judiciary in the area of children in conflict with the law, including the setting up of this Department. Still, although there is evident progress, there are still issues that need to be resolved, such as improving the cooperation at local level between the most relevant stakeholders.

The PRS Implementation Focal Point (PRS IFP) has the responsibility to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as to monitor and report on poverty trends in Serbia. The PRS Implementation Focal Point was established in September 2004 within the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office. The main tasks of the PRS IFP are to promote the PRS implementation, monitor, evaluate and report on PRS implementation, improve communication and encourage participation of all actors both at central and local level and establish institutional solutions that will support the PRS implementation. The PRS IFP produced the First Progress Report on the PRS Implementation in Serbia in 2005 covering the period of 2004 until mid 2005. The draft Second Progress Report has been prepared and is currently in the process of a public debate.

Inter-sectoral bodies:
At the national level, the government established a number of inter-sectoral Councils that are mandated to define strategies for particular vulnerable groups and/or other relevant issues that were insufficiently defined in Serbia. The Council members were selected as representatives of the most important stakeholders relevant for the Councils’ work - from government/sectoral bodies, academic institutions, think-tanks and the NGOs active in the respective field (either as the service providers or as the advocacy NGOs).

Council for Child Rights
The Council was established in 2002, as an inter-sectoral advisory body of the government of Serbia for issues related to child care and child rights. The Council members are the representatives of the Ministries in charge of the social policy, education, health, justice, police, local government, the academia from the University of Belgrade (The Teacher Training Faculty, the Faculty of Philosophy and the Law School) and the independent experts. The Council is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister or Minister.

The Council for Persons with Disability

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The Council was established by the Government in 2002 as an inter-sectoral advisory body of the government. The primary task of the Council was to draft the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disability (2005). The Council is presently being re-organized with the purpose of taking on the responsibility to monitor the Strategy implementation and will be chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration.

The Juvenile Justice Committee

The Committee was established as an initiative of Serbian Ministry of Justice in December 2004; composed of representatives of Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, most prominent experts in the area of juvenile justice, NGOs (Child Rights Centre, Amity,) Sida, UNICEF, Council of Europe, etc. The multi-sectoral, transparent, and comprehensive nature of the work of this Committee is an important vehicle for ensuring improved respect of the rights of children at risk and in conflict with the law, developing juvenile justice reform strategy and influencing juvenile justice related national policy. The Juvenile Justice Committee is also acting as the Steering Board of the Sida/UNICEF/MOJ “Children’s Chance for Change project”- Initiative to reform juvenile justice in Serbia;

At national level there are also a number of NGOs engaged in lobbying for improved respect of the child rights; taking part in drafting laws and/or consultative process in the policy /law development and monitoring and evaluation of the SIF and FOPD reform projects

2.2 Regional level governance

The position of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina is defined in the Constitution. The Province has its Assembly, Executive Council and Administration. Vojvodina has the Provincial Secretariat for Health and Social Policy. This level of government is the only official regional level in Serbia. The Secretariat has the mandate to implement the laws and other regulations of the Republic of Serbia in the area of social protection, but also the decisions of the Provincial Parliament and Executive Council. The Secretariat is tasked with solving complaints by beneficiaries on decisions of the CSW (related to CSW tasks mandated by the Province) and also gives approval for the establishment of private social welfare institutions on its territory. Vojvodina also has an established Institute for Social Protection. The Institute has the same functions as the Republic (national) Institute for Social Protection.

2.3 Local (municipal) level governance

Local (municipal) governments

There are 167 municipalities in Serbia. Each local government has a Department for Social Issues. Within this Department, larger municipalities have a sector in charge of child protection, while in smaller municipalities these tasks are performed by one or two staff members of the Department. The duties of this sector/employee are to receive requests from potential beneficiaries and implement the decision on fulfilling the following “rights”: 
- The “right” to child allowance,
- The “right” to parent’s allowance,
- The “right” to maternity allowance,
- Categorizing a child with developmental difficulties.

Payment of the allowances is financed from the central level and is in the mandate of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MOLSP).

The Centers for Social Work (CSWs) are established by local governments. The CSW report to the Ministry for the functions they perform according to so called “non-transferable duties”, while they report to the local governments for the so called “transferable duties”.7

In terms of the work procedures and internal organization, the Centers are organized either according to the “category” principle or a “territory” principle. The “category” principle is present in the larger CSWs, especially in those with a larger number of staff8, divided into professional teams and sub-divided into professional task forces for different vulnerable groups. Thus, for instance, in Kraljevo9, the CSW has the following organizational structure:

1. Team for the protection of children and youth
   i. Task force for the protection of children and youth deprived of parental care
   ii. Task force for the protection of children from dysfunctional families, minors who enter into premature marriage and other categories of children and youth
   iii. Task force for the protection of children with behavioral difficulties and children with developmental difficulties
2. Team for the protection of adults and the elderly
3. Team for planning, reporting, analytical work and prevention.

The task forces consist of professionals with different educational profiles, such as pedagogues, psychologists, social workers and legal specialists.

The rest of CSW in Serbia are organized according to the “territorial” principle, meaning that the staff members (usually a very limited number) are assigned a defined geographical area in the municipality and the staff member is responsible for all the beneficiaries that reside in the designated area.

Residential institutions for children
In Serbia there are three types of residential institutions for children: homes for children without parental care, institutions for children and youth in conflict with the law and homes for children and youth with disability.

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7 An example of “non-transferable” duties are those that CSW are tasked with by the national level government according to different legislation, such as providing social welfare entitlements, cash benefits, attendance allowance, placement into residential institutions. The so called “transferable” duties are those that CSW are tasked with by the local governments, such as organizing home care services.
There are 12 independent residential institutions for children deprived of parental care and 5 homes that form part of the Centers for Social Work, 3 institutions for children and youth in conflict with the law and 3 institutions for children and youth with disability.

Committees at local level
The professionals from the social protection sector and members of the SC highlighted a specific problem regarding children with developmental difficulties. Both legally and conceptually, the Law gives the possibility to categorize children’s developmental disability which consequently deprives them of the right to an inclusive education and ghettoizes them in special educational facilities. The Law supports the establishment of the Committees for Child Categorization that consist of professionals from different sectors who are convinced that they are acting in the best interest of the child through the child’s exclusion. These Committees are acting according to a Decision regarding the Categorization of Children with Developmental Difficulties from 1986 that is still in force. These Committees are organized in the local communities and, paradoxically, have a multi-sectoral membership, thus sustaining the concept of child exclusion throughout different systems related to child care (education, social welfare, health care, etc.). Within the framework of the reform process the Ministry for Social Affairs implemented a project entitled “Protection of the rights of children with special needs” (2002-2003) with the aim of changing the procedure for assessing the level of development of children when enrolling into primary school. The fact that, in spite of these types of initiatives generated in one sector (social welfare), there have been no changes in another sector (in this case, education), points to the lack of systematic inter-sectoral cooperation at the central government level.

3. Background of the social and child protection reform in Serbia
Reforms in the area of social welfare and child care in Serbia started immediately after the democratic changes in October 2000. The inherited social protection system was characterized by dramatic poverty of the population and a dysfunctional social welfare system. The activities undertaken by the new government were based on a two-pronged approach (Matkovic, 2005). The first involved activities aimed at stabilizing the system and concerned urgent issues, such as reinstating regular payment of social welfare benefits, repayment of accrued debts, improving the conditions in residential institutions, etc. The second block of activities was aimed at formulation of reforms in the system. The reform was headed and led by the Minister for Social Affairs who came into office primarily as a professional (and not a politician) and who had previous extensive research experience. This resulted in a professional approach to defining the reform strategy in the area of social welfare, including the building of a professional consensus around key reform issues. Key topics were tackled through the activities of the Working Groups established at the Ministry in the period 2001-2003, consisting of professionals from the government structures, academia, NGOs and local and international consultants. The clear leadership of the Ministry enabled an efficient “pooling” of resources (human and financial, budgetary and donor-funded), resulting in a coordinated support to the establishment of new, government-owned policies. During that period all documents related to child protection were initiated.

The main reform issues addressed during this period (2001-2003) were:
Changes in the area of social welfare benefits (these changes are described in more detail in Chapter 9. Material assistance for children and families);

Changes in the area of social welfare services, including decentralization, deinstitutionalization and development of alternative forms of care and incorporating the NGO sector into service provision. “… the changes were supposed to ensure the availability of services, their designing according to the needs of the beneficiaries and the opportunity to choose” (Matkovic, 2005)

Reforms in the area of social welfare service provision were implemented through two mechanisms: reform projects and special funds for financing projects at local level.

Reform projects started in 2002 and included the following most important issues:

- the strategy of foster care development (instructions for program implementation, staff training organized regionally throughout Serbia, preparation of training curriculum for foster care families, establishing regional networks, launching national, regional and local campaigns adjustment of foster care allowances, preliminary changes of the relevant legislation,
- transformation of residential institutions (analyzing the possibility of institutions providing alternative services, such as day care centers for persons with disabilities, creating regional centers for foster care, shelters, “half way houses” in the process of decreasing the number of beneficiaries in institutions,
- development of integrated social protection at local level (situation analysis and capacity building, together with launching pilot programmes in five municipalities for joint action in the protection from violence, abuse, juvenile delinquency, care of children without parental care and children in conflict with the law) and the
- development of standards for professional work, procedures, protocols in Centers for Social Work (CSW), such as protocols on protection against violence, changes in the functioning of categorization committees for children with special needs, human trafficking, etc.

Two special funds were established in 2002 and 2003 with the principle aim to support the development of community based services (see section on Community Based Services) – the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and the Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD).

According to the opinion of the Assessment SC members, the pace of reforms in the area of social protection and child care was significantly faster in the initial phase of transition.

3.1 Role of international development partners in the reform process

Throughout the transition period, international support to the social welfare sector was considerable. The support was oriented at mitigating the effects of the ebbing of humanitarian assistance and in supporting newly emerging development projects and programs. In the past six years, the largest donors in the area of social welfare were:

- bilateral donors - the governments of Norway, Italy, Great Britain, Switzerland, USA, the Netherlands, and
- multilateral donors - the World Food Program, ECHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, WB, UNDP and EAR.

In the first years of transition (2001-2003) donor funds were used for paying debts previously accumulated in the system\(^\text{10}\), piloting changes in welfare criteria for the purposes of budget planning, improving living conditions in residential institutions and collective centers for refugees and IDPs (the last two were financed mostly from humanitarian assistance). Following these urgent interventions, donors were requested to provide support in defining and implementing further reforms in the social welfare system. The assistance consisted of financing consultants (local and, when needed, international) who were teamed up with professionals from the social welfare system into working groups\(^\text{11}\) on the identified reform issues and on “pooling” donor and government resources for programmes such as the Social Innovation Fund (SIF).

In terms of child protection, the role of UNICEF was particularly mentioned by the Assessment SC members, who have for years cooperated with this organization. They highlighted that, even before the reform started in Serbia and all throughout the six year reform period, UNICEF provided support in the area of research on different child groups at risk in Serbia. Support was provided both to the NGO and government sector in:
1) Setting up the comprehensive, disaggregated data base (Dev-Info) to facilitate compiling data that was (and in some areas still is) missing and in commissioning analyses necessary for defining new policies in the area of child care and child rights.
2) System strengthening- capacity building of professionals from different sectors (social, health, education, police, judiciary, etc). as well as students, on child rights based innovative methodologies in dealing with children at risk (victims of abuse and neglect, children with disabilities, children in conflict with the law, etc)
3) Facilitating intersectoral, multidisciplinary as well as cooperation between GO and NGO sector on a local community level aimed at early identification, improved prevention, protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of children at risk (children without parental care, victims of abuse and neglect, children with disabilities, children in conflict with the law, etc).

4. Strategies and research underpinning the reform of child and social protection

During the transition period, several documents and strategies were produced with the aim of enhancing social welfare and child protection in Serbia. All documents affecting child protection are based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other UN documents such as the Millennium Development Goals and the World Fit for Children declaration.

One of the first government strategies that address the issue of vulnerable groups and groups of children at risk is the Poverty Reduction Strategy of the republic of Serbia (PRS) (Government

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\(^{10}\) For example, in 2000 the social welfare (cash) benefits, such as child allowances, were in arrears for more than two years. All these donor funds were channeled through a specially established one-off fund that was audited and monitored by the independent agencies. While the government committed to reinstating a regular payment of entitlements, the donor funds were used for paying the accumulated debts in the system (funding obtained from the DFID and the Government of Norway). Thus, during 2001, the payments became regular, while by 2003, all debts for social assistance were settled, including the debts for child allowances and welfare cash assistance for poor families (MOP).

\(^{11}\) See the section on “National Level Planning and Decision Making”
of Serbia, 2003). The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2004-2006) was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2003. The document analyzed the role of some priority sectors (employment, education, health care, social protection, environment, etc.) and the position of certain vulnerable groups (children, women, refugees and displaced persons, Roma, the elderly, etc.) through the perspective of the transition and economic development effects on poverty and provided a framework for alleviating poverty during the transition process. In addition to addressing the issue of children within different sectors, the PRSP also has separate chapters dedicated to “Poverty Reduction among Children” and “Poverty Reduction among Youth”. As stated in the chapter on child poverty:

"According to the data obtained in the Survey on the Living Standards of the Population, poverty has hit children hardest, particularly those aged 7-14 (12.71% of the poor) and children aged 15-18 (10.72%), mostly in multi-family households (16.05% of the poor) and in families where parents are unemployed (21.34%). However, it is noteworthy that due to the structure of the sample covered by the Survey and due to insufficient desegregations of the data, poverty amongst some categories of children (Roma, single mothers, refugees, etc.) is probably masked. The nature of the Survey is such that the problems of children's poverty are not sufficiently visible."\(^{12}\)

The lack of reliable data for both child and youth poverty was compensated in the PRS through the involvement of a large number of experts, NGOs and donors who provided their input based on available research.\(^{13}\)

The Serbian PRSP has been evaluated by both local and international stakeholders as one of the first truly participatory processes in the country (IMF and IDA, 2004: 3). Analyses and policies (including child protection) were proposed by an Expert Working Group consisting of the most prominent experts in their respective fields and these were commented on by other stakeholders through Advisory Committees (AC). Two of the committees are relevant for child protection, the Civil Society AC and the International Development Partners AC. The UNICEF CO was an active member of the International Development Partners AC and supported the child protection policies in the PRSP framework. The UNICEF CO also provided support to the process by seconding a staff member to the PRSP Management Unit.

**The National Plan of Action for Children 2004-2015 (NPA)** (The Government of Serbia, 2004) is the most important document that defines policies towards children in Serbia. The plan was adopted in 2004 and is based on four principles: the best interest of the child, non-discrimination, the right to life, survival and development and participation. Following the adoption of the PRSP, the stakeholders from different sectors (both government and non-government) active in the area of child welfare and child rights, strongly supported by the UNICEF, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Save the Children Norway, recognized the need for formulating a national plan for children. The formulation of the NPA was lead by the Council for Child Rights, established by the Government of Serbia as an advisory body to the government. The NPA is based on all relevant Serbian and international documents and focuses on poverty and social exclusion of children in line with the wide definition of poverty and social exclusion.


\(^{13}\) One of the sources stated in the chapter on “Poverty Reduction among Youth” is UNICEF (2002)
In relation to child protection, the NPA states the following goals:

- **Reduce poverty in children**

- **Improvements in the protection of children deprived of parental care, that will require reforms in the social protection system in order to develop the conditions for providing high quality, effective, economically viable services.**

- **Establish a comprehensive system of protection from abuse and neglect that will provide protection for children that is based upon the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in particular the general principle of protecting the best interests of the child.**

The **Social Welfare System Reform Strategy 2006-2008** (The Government of Serbia, 2005a) was adopted as a result of the reform projects initiated during 2003\(^{14}\). The reform projects, the experience from the Social Innovation Fund and other initiatives have led to a critical mass for the large scale social welfare reform. Drawing on the experience from these initiatives, the Ministry developed its’ Social Welfare System Reform Strategy, which foresees improved use of resources and enhanced outcomes for social welfare beneficiaries by enabling local governments to plan and commission a more appropriate range of social services, with a greater emphasis on community-based services. The Strategy is also founded on the other ones prepared by the Government prior to its adoption\(^{15}\).

The main goal of the Strategy is to reduce poverty and develop more efficient social welfare. The measures proposed in it are to ensure the following impact:

- **increased service beneficiaries responsibility for his/her own social security** (through the decentralization of responsibilities and resources for social welfare and the development of non-profit and private service providers),

- **local and regional integration** (based on the development of community-based services and the networked continuum of services available in the community),

- **more efficient social welfare institutions** (through the establishment of the Social Protection Institutes, mandated to perform further strategic planning, based on own professional assistance, research and evaluation, as well as through the financial and professional support provided by the SIF, introduction of new standards and methods of work organization, professional training, licensing, accreditation, supervision, control and impact evaluation. In addition, more efficient planning performed by the CSWs and networking with other systems and sectors to ensure this desired impact),

- **pluralism of service providers**

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\(^{14}\) Reform projects initiated by the UN Agencies, the European Union, bilateral organizations and other relevant local and international NGOs. The Strategy notes the following major reform projects: Development of an Integrated Social Welfare Model at the Local Level, Standards and Organizations of the CSWs, Transformation of Residential Institutions, the Strategy for the Development of Foster Care and Adoption and Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect.

\(^{15}\) Among others, the PRS, the Employment Strategy and the National Action Plan for Children
(through the incentives for the development of the non-profit and private sector, such as relevant legislation, tax incentives, introduction of acknowledgements and awards for humanitarian actions, donations and volunteer activities
- the continuity of services
  (related to the previously stated desired impact)
- Transformation of institutions and development of community (and/or family) based support services
  (through the reduction of the number of beneficiaries in residential care institutions and the initiation of the small group homes at local level)

At-risk groups of children are highlighted within the Strategy in relation to the transformation of residential services (particularly for children in conflict with law, children with disabilities and children without parental care) and initiation of community-based family-substitute and family-support services (particularly for children with disabilities and children without parental care), and in targeted training programs for the social welfare professionals. The Strategy also addresses the issue of the transformation of material assistance for children and families.

In 2005, the government approved the **Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disability (2007-2015)** including programs that need to be implemented in order to improve the position of children with disabilities. As with other strategies for particular vulnerable groups, the PRSP provided an impetus for formulating a separate strategy for persons with disability. In terms of social and child protection the Strategy defined a special goal “for securing social security to all persons with disability and the full and unhindered respect of the right to social security”. Different measures in the Strategy specifically target children with disabilities, particularly in the area of inclusive education.

In the framework of the Roma Decade (2005-2015), the National Council of the Roma National Minority (established in 2003) adopted the Strategy for Integration and Empowerment of the Roma on 6 April 2004 **Strategy for the integration and empowerment of Roma**. The draft Strategy was developed in 2002 by a working group established in the Ministry of Social Affairs and subsequently taken over by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of Serbia and Montenegro. Issues that need to be addressed with regard to social protection of Roma and for Roma child protection are highlighted in the document. Thus, one of the recommendations in the Strategy states “…one must remember the high number of Roma who are vulnerable to a higher degree and in great need of adequate social protection, due both to the discrimination they may face and their status as a marginalized group.” The Strategy was further elaborated into thematic action plans (for Roma education, health care, employment and housing). The action plan for social protection of the Roma population is still not finalized. Although the Strategy contains recommendations and activities that need to be implemented in the area of social protection and the protection of Roma children, the lack of a social protection action plan makes it difficult to monitor progress in this area. The draft of the Second Progress Report on the

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Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia states that progress has been made in the implementation of the action plans for Roma health care, employment and education. For the implementation of the Roma healthcare, the government allocated 750 thousand Euros, while the Roma education action plan is being implemented through projects financed by donor funds, such a project for the functional education of Roma aged 15 to 33 years of age, supported by the Roma Education Fund. Although efforts are being made in improving the position of the Roma population, one of the important issues highlighted in the Strategy that has still not been resolved is the lack of official identification/registration documents of many Roma that directly excludes them from accessing the social protection system. Discussions are ongoing with the Ministry of Interior on how to find a solution for the lack of identification documents, particularly those living in Roma settlements, in order for them, and particularly the children, to be able to access the social welfare, education and health care systems.

The Strategy for Youth Development and Health in the Republic of Serbia 2007 – 2012 (The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia, 2006) recognizes the following particularly sensitive, marginalized and socially disadvantaged youth groups: young people without parental care, the homeless, those placed in correctional institutions, the poor, those who are not included in the school system, members of national and religious minorities, young people who need special support, refugees and IDPs. Although the Strategy is naturally focused on health issues, it also stresses the importance and need for an interdisciplinary approach, based on the community-based activities that should combine two complementary approaches: a) to provide each young individual with access to information and healthcare services; b) to provide targeted interventions to particularly vulnerable, marginalized and socially endangered groups of young people. In addition, the Strategy recognizes the need to address the issues of youth health (including legislation) in the wider context of their overall needs and in this context states: ‘Obligations in the area of youth development and health are not clearly defined among certain healthcare levels, or among other sectors. It is clear that this area is within the jurisdiction of several ministries.... However, the intersectoral approach to youth health is missing, as well as the active participation of young people in part of the preparation and adoption of legal regulations related to them.”

The Strategy of Local Sustainable Development has been adopted by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) and is waiting for government approval. The Strategy provides the framework for defining sustainable development strategies at local level and within this context the need to develop poverty reduction programs. This Strategy complements the efforts for introducing strategic planning at municipal level by recommending that all local governments develop their Local Sustainable Development Strategies. These strategies contain a section on developing action plans on poverty reduction and including socially excluded groups into the planning process.

Local Social Welfare Development Strategies are being developed in municipalities throughout Serbia through the programs coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

19 More information available from http://romaeducationfund.hu/
Different projects and programs are addressing the issue of strategic planning in the area of social welfare development, child care and/or more broadly poverty reduction. It is crucial that these programs continue being implemented and coordinated by the Ministry and that the lessons learned be translated into policies that will support more efficient social protection and child care at local level.

The implementation of the PRS at the local level represents one of the fundamental principles of the overall PRS implementation. The PRS provides for each municipality to develop its integrated strategic development plan that includes the recommendations of the PRS. The PRS Focal Point in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has, in cooperation with the SCTM and other partners, conducted an exercise **Mapping of the Existing Local Strategies and Implementing Bodies** in all the municipalities on the territory of Serbia. Consequently, data were collected and a database established containing the existing local strategic documents. The process should ensure easier prioritization, planning and more efficient coordination of their activities at the local level to the institutions of the Republic of Serbia and the international developmental partners. According to the findings of Mapping exercise, 140 municipalities have developed some kind of a strategic plan, while 27 municipalities have not even initiated drafting of strategic/action plans. The total number of strategic/action plans drafted or in the phase of phase of drafting is 396. Thereof, 157 municipal plans have been adopted. Some form of inter-municipal strategy is developed in 79 municipalities. The areas that municipal strategies focus on are: a comprehensive socio-economic development plan (34%), Environmental Protection Strategy (15%), Strategy of Local Economic Development (13%), Social Welfare Strategy (8%) and an Action Plan for Children (6%). The other areas tackled by strategic/action plans are represented up to 5%.

5. Target groups of children

**Conclusion:**

Relevant legislation recognizes a variety of ‘traditional’ at-risk groups of children: children without parental care, children with developmental difficulties, children with behavioral disorders and children from the so-called “dysfunctional families”. As evident, the Laws still contain medicalized terminology for the description of these at-risk groups.

General surveys cannot fully cover individual groups such as households living in slums, refugees and IDPs in collective centers, children in residential institutions. National indicators are also often not adequate for assessing the situation of vulnerable groups, or for identifying regional and urban-rural differences. Still, as already mentioned, at least for some vulnerable groups there has been research and studies that can indicate the degree of poverty and exclusion of these groups in Serbia and serve as a basis for formulating and implementing policies to address these issues.

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Target groups of children as identified in relevant legislation

The Law on Social Protection (1991) defines the categories of children who have the „right” i.e. are entitled to social protection. The categories stipulated in the law are: children without parental care, children with developmental difficulties, children with behavioral disorders, children from dysfunctional families. The Law does not recognize poor children as a vulnerable group; poor children are generally defined under the category „persons and families who are financially insecure”

According to opinions expressed by the Assessment Steering Committee (SC) members, it is expected that the new Law on Social Protection (planned to be enacted in 2008) will overcome this demeaning definition of children and youth according to categories and that it will be based on needs and services that can be provided within the social welfare system and correspond to the identified needs. The Law should also re-define the „child right” that is in the current Law interpreted as the „right/entitlement of the child to be placed in a social welfare institution”. In the case of „children with developmental difficulties”, this results most often in the placement and isolation of this child in an institution, against the child’s best interest and basic rights. Or, in the case of children from “dysfunctional families”, the present Law stipulates that the child has the „right” to be placed in a social welfare institution – home for children, and does not have an alternative „right” to services that would support the child’s natural family in reverting to responsible parenthood.

The Law on Financial Support to Families with Children was adopted in 2002, with amendments in 2005. The law defines child allowances as a social policy measure, the amount of child allowance (which is equal for all eligible children) and provides better targeting of the poor. The families with children with disabilities and single parents, foster parents and guardians are placed in a favorable position in this Law in order to encourage protection of children without parental care outside institutions.

The Law on Preventing Discrimination of Persons with Disability was adopted in 2006. The Law is based on the principles of non-discrimination, respect of human rights and dignity, promoting participation in all spheres of social life and in decision-making processes related to persons with disability, including children. The Law contains a separate Article that deals with “measures for providing social security of persons with disability and their families”. Since the Law has been recently enacted, the Ministry needs to develop action plans for its implementation.

The Education Act in Serbia was enacted in 2003, with amendments adopted in 2005. The novelty in the amendments is that it has become obligatory for children aged 6 to attend Pre-school preparatory classes four hours per day for 6 to 8 months. Such education, as defined under the Law, is free of charge i.e. it is paid from the central budget. The same Act also defines the right to education and access to all educational institutions. Primary school is obligatory for all children. Regarding children with developmental difficulties, the Act foresees the establishment of Committees for Child Categorization.

23 The terminology used in this Assessment is a direct translation of the wording used in the legislation that is in force. In certain cases it is obvious that the terminology used is not „politically correct” in terms of modern social welfare, which only serves to highlight the need for changes and further reform.
The Act on Pre-school Education has also been prepared by the Ministry of Education and is now in Parliamentary procedure. The Minister for Education and Sports described the foreseen changes in an interview given to the daily newspaper “Danas” in May 2006: “This Act will enable the transformation of the current uniform pre-school education system that still functions predominantly as state-owned, into a decentralized and diverse system that will take into account both the educational and development needs of the children... The private sector is also included into the pre-school education system” 24

Children in conflict with the law in Serbia have also been recognized as a specific target group that needs to be addressed in order to upgrade the respect of the rights of this group of children at risk. In Partnership between UNICEF, the Government of Serbia - Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy and Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education and Sports – and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) the project “Children’s Chance for Change “ was implemented between 2003 and 2007 to promote and facilitate the comprehensive and multidisciplinary reform of the juvenile justice systems in Serbia. The project resulted in the formulation and adoption of the Juvenile Justice Code in January 2006. The Code is in line with the international standards of protection of the rights of children in conflict with the law, such as the development of alternative community-based care, including diversion measures and mediation, and improving the care and protection of children, especially children in custody and children in correctional facilities. The Code groups all provisions relevant to juveniles who are criminally charged, those who are victims of crimes and witnesses to crimes in one law representing serious intent to have national legislation harmonized with the international standards.

The new Law on Police for the first time incorporates a provision in Article 38 that deals with the implementation of police procedures regarding juveniles. A police officer for minors has been introduced in the law as competent for juveniles alleged offenders and in juvenile related criminal cases. In exercising police authority the Law stipulates that it is mandatory for the minor to have present a parent, adopter or guardian and in case that they are not available it is obligatory that the representative of the CSW must be present.

Groups of children in Serbia at risk of social exclusion, particularly highlighted in strategies and documents

Although existing legislation potentially provides protection to all groups of vulnerable children, this protection is not comprehensive for different reasons. A portion of poor children are not covered by cash benefits (“exclusion error”) due to lack of documentation, insufficient knowledge on the part of their parents on entitlements, etc. Additionally, the amounts of cash

benefits are often insufficient for securing the minimum security for all vulnerable children. Also, in many communities there are no family support services, such as Day Care Centers, although the provision of this service is in the mandate of local governments. Until recently, some types of services did not even exist and were missing in legislation, such as protection of children victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

One of the identified problems of the „exclusion error” is also the fact that legislation was not modified during the turbulent and dramatic nineties which, for example, led to the lack of regulation for the large influx of refugees and IDPs into Serbia. Different strategic documents identified vulnerable groups of children who are to a large extent insufficiently protected through existing legislation.

**Child poverty**

According to a Survey based on specially processed LSMS data from 2002 and 2003,

“In Serbia over 155 thousand children are poor. An additional 155 thousand are at risk of falling below the poverty line”.

Poverty is most present in households with children living in rural areas and in less developed regions. Child poverty is much wider among the rural population, especially in the regions of South-eastern and Western Serbia. These areas are also characteristics for their inferior accommodation, remoteness from relevant institutions, inferior infrastructure and utilities, such as roads, water supply, electricity, etc. Children living in the rural and least developed parts of Serbia are potentially exposed to the risk of being socially excluded not only due to lack of income and low consumption, but also because of “socio-cultural” poverty.

The children groups at risk in Serbia who are at risk of poverty and exclusion described in the above document are briefly presented below.

Described below are those children groups that have been identified as particularly poor and excluded in Serbia (excerpts from “The State of Children in Serbia 2006 - Poor and Excluded Children”, UNICEF, Belgrade, 2007):

- **Roma Children in Roma Settlements**
  67 per cent of Roma children from Roma settlements are poor, 62 per cent of Roma households with children are under the poverty line, while 90 per cent consider themselves poor. Since the basic population of Roma children is 37,315, it can be estimated that in Roma settlements 25 thousand children are poor.

- **Children with disability**
  Official data show that in mid 2006 approximately 6 thousand children with disability received attendance allowance and other types of state assistance. An additional 760 children with disability live in residential institutions. The NPA reiterates that there are

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26 Ibid
no reliable data, or systematic registration of information on children with disability. Research indicates the position of persons with disability is very difficult, that there is insufficient sensitization of the public to the rights of children with disability and an extremely low attendance of these children in the education system.

- **Children deprived of parental care**
  The latest Ministry data show that approximately 7,500 children deprived of parental care included in the system of social protection. Out of this number the majority is living in the guardianship of a relative, 1,700 are accommodated in residential institutions, and approximately 3,500 are living with foster families. Compared to 2004, when the NPA was formulated, the number of children in foster families has increased and the number of children in residential institutions has decreased. The conclusions of the NPA however are still valid, and there is still an unacceptably high use of institutional forms of protection.

- **Children Victims of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Violence**
  The study “Schools without violence – towards a safe and stimulating environment for children” findings show that: Physical punishment is still commonplace in disciplining and raising a child in Serbia. Almost every third child in Serbia is exposed to violent behavior by their teachers. Among these, a significant number is exposed to physical punishment. Different indicators show that at least one fourth of primary school children are exposed to violence by their peers, while according to different indicators between 5 and 10 per cent of the children are extremely endangered.

- **Children from Refugee and IDP families**
  During the last ten years there has been much research done on the refugee and IDP population documenting their extremely difficult financial situation, but also their social exclusion. Among refugee and IDP children, the most excluded are those living in collective centers.

The Research on Family Beliefs and Care Practices study also shows the difficult position of refugee and IDP households with children 0 – 6 years old. Refugee and IDP households with young children have inferior accommodation. As many as 41 per cent of these households are tenants (compared to 12 per cent of the total population) and must pay rent as an additional expense.

### 6. Planning and decision making

**Conclusion:**
In the past several years progress has been made in recognizing the importance of planning and this resulted in formulating and adopting a number of planning and strategic documents and action plans. Also, the planning process involves a large number of relevant stakeholders.

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27 UNICEF, Schools without violence – towards a safe and stimulating environment for children , (2006), Plut D. and Popadic D. Main findings from the study conducted with 26947 students and 3937 adults from 50 primary schools

including the particularly important inter-sectoral bodies. However, there is still the need for serious improvement in this area.

At local level numerous social welfare planning programmes have been ongoing and have recently been mainstreamed. The social welfare planning process is being carried out at municipal level and it is expected that in the near future the majority of municipalities in Serbia will have developed social welfare development plans.

**National (republic) level planning and decision making**

**Stakeholders in the area of planning and decision making**

As per the Law on Ministries (2007) the Ministry for Labor and Social Policy is mandated for “performing public administration duties in the areas of social protection and (protection of) family and children”. Thus, the Ministry is the key stakeholder in the area of planning and decision making in social and child protection.

As already mentioned, reforms in the area of social welfare and child care in Serbia started immediately after the democratic changes in October 2000 and were aimed at changes that needed to be made in the areas of social welfare benefits and social welfare services (see section on Background of the social and child protection reform). Introduction of changes into the system required a strong Ministry leadership in consensus building and planning the pace and sequencing of reforms.

Due to the lack of capacity in the Ministry at the time (see section on Personnel Issues at National Level) support was requested from different donors for providing consultancy support for reform efforts. One part of the support provided by the international community was aimed at formulating the analytical basis for decision making and for formulating strategic documents in the area of social welfare.

Since 2001, the major Ministry programs that were supported by international development programs in the area of service planning and decision making were:

- The work of several working groups relevant for child protection reform – working groups for poverty, local level services and transformation of residential institutions. These working groups were the first to be established at the onset of the reform process in order to identify the strategic direction of the reform. The working groups were supported by UNICEF and UNDP,
- Programs for providing a basis for decision making and strategic documents related to planning, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy (supported by the World Bank) and Social Welfare Development Strategy (supported by the Government of Norway)
- Raising standards, access and self-reliance” program supported by UNICEF in the initial phase (2002-2004) and Government of Norway (GoN) (as of 2004 onwards) grouped 5 previously initiated projects into a coherent programme. The 5 projects under this programme that are still in the implementation phase are the following:
  - Development of an Integrated Social Welfare Model and Local Level
  - Development of Professional Standards, Procedures, Protocols and Norms
  - Transformation of Residential Institutions in the Social Welfare System and Development of Alternative Forms of Social Care
- The Strategy for the Development of Foster Care and Adoption
- Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect.

It is expected that these projects will provide important policy input for planning and decision making in all of the related areas.

**Inter-sectoral Councils**

At national level the government established a number of inter-sectoral councils for defining strategies relevant for improving social protection and child protection is Serbia.

**The Council for Child Rights** was in charge of formulating the NPA for children. Following the adoption of the NPA, the function of the Council (as an advisory body) became less clear. The Assessment SC feels that there is a need to establish an operational body for the implementation of the NPA.

**The Council for Persons with Disability** drafted the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disability. According to the Assessment SC members, the Council is presently not particularly active and discussions are ongoing regarding its future role.

**The Juvenile Justice Committee** is multisectoral committee acting as an advisory body to the Ministry of Justice, in charge of coordination and furthering the development of juvenile justice related reform aimed at increased protection of the rights of children at risk and in conflict with the law, in line with the Convention of the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments (UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, UN Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial measures, UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of juvenile justice, European prison rules, etc.).

**Parliamentary bodies**

In the Serbian Parliament there are several Committees on issues related to social protection and child care. These committees are: Committee on Poverty Reduction, Committee on Labor, War Veterans and Social Affairs, Committee on Gender Equality, Education Committee and European Integrations Committee. There is also a Children’s Rights Sub-Committee and UNICEF and NGOs are actively lobbying for “up-grading” it into a Committee.

**Strategic documents**

The extensive reform of the social welfare system resulted in a multitude of legislative changes, strategic documents and plans. The key documents relevant for enhancing the reform in Serbia in the area of service planning and decision making are the **Poverty Reduction Strategy** and **Social Welfare Reform Strategy**. Both documents can be considered national level planning documents, and both documents highlight the need to strengthen planning at local level for improving community based social welfare and child protection (see section on Local level planning and decision making)

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29 For more detail see section “Strategies and research underpinning the reform of child and social protection in Serbia”
The Annual Operational Plan of the Ministry (the so-called GOP) In the framework of the public administration reform, the so-called ‘Joint Project’ is being implemented. In 2006, this project resulted in the annual operational plans defined in 6 ministries, including the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy. These plans are the first step towards programmatic budgeting. Within the defined annual plan of the Ministry, a significant number of program and project activities are planned for enhancing the position of children in the social protection system. It remains to be seen whether the newly established government will take ownership over this plan and begin with its implementation.

Local level planning and decision making

The lack of proper strategic planning at local level has been identified by all reform documents produced during the social welfare reform process. Thus the PRSP (2003) states “The importance of involving the local level of the Government both in identification of problems and policies, planning and implementation has been emphasized throughout the strategy. Even though a number of initiatives are ongoing to strengthen the Local Self Government (LSG) much work is still needed. There is also need for closer co-ordination of ongoing initiatives to better exploit potential synergies and share lessons learned”. And in the area of social protection, it once again reiterates: “Thus, there is a need to... strengthen the capacities of staff at lower levels of government, particularly in the area of social policy, on which inadequate attention is currently being paid at municipal level.”

Social welfare reform at local level was instigated by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2001, together with central level reforms. Still, reforms in the area of social welfare service planning were mostly implemented through projects and programs supported by donors directly working at municipal (local) level. The programs recently completed or ongoing are:

- Social Policy Reform Project (2002-2005) supported by DFID, which piloted a multi-sectoral partnership approach to social policy planning in four municipalities;
- Development of Local Plans of Action for Children supported by UNICEF (first in 3 municipalities, and then in an additional 13, with current plans to develop these LPAs in a further 5 municipalities in Serbia);
- Tools and Mechanisms for Local Development, supported by the Government of Norway and implemented by CLDS and SCTM, were Local Strategic Social Welfare plans were developed in 10 under capacitated municipalities (2006/2007);
- Support in the implementation of the Social Welfare Reform Strategy, supported by DFID and the Government of Norway, where 24 municipalities have been selected for

30 The so-called Joint Project is a Norwegian funded project “Towards the More Effective Implementation of Reforms – Improving Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, and Reporting”. The Joint Project is currently supporting the development of operational planning for ministries, with the aim of adapting the public service system to changing needs, and of training public servants in operating effectively in multi-disciplinary teams.
31 The Annual Plan states the following mid-term goals: 1. (2009) in the area of social and child protection: the basis for integrated social protection for the vulnerable groups, more efficient cash benefit system, developed network of services at local level, improved quality control mechanisms in the system; 2. (2008) improved quality of family and child protection and 3. (2010) Conditions created for improving social protection of persons with disability, developed mechanisms for planning, implementation and monitoring social protection policies for persons with disability.
33 Ibid, Table, p.lvi
34 Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, see section on “The links between the central and local level planning and decision making”
the programme that includes social welfare strategic planning and local strategy implementation (on-going)

- Planning Services at Local Level, a UNDP/EAR supported programme that will provide assistance in drafting strategic social welfare plans in 80 municipalities in Serbia (on-going)

All of the mentioned programmes had the objective of building the capacity of local level stakeholders (usually the groups consisted of representatives of local governments, CSWs, local health and education institutions, civil society) for social welfare strategic planning, based on a participatory approach and an integrated approach to identifying needs and planning of community-based services. Although the implemented programmes often used different methodologies (since they are financed by different donors), they have all developed similar mechanisms at local level. These mechanisms included setting up of municipal strategic planning bodies consisting of the relevant stakeholders for participatory approach to planning, performing social welfare needs assessments in the municipality, and identifying services that need to be set up for responding to the identified priority needs in the municipality. The role of CSW in the municipal planning bodies has been very important due to their knowledge and experience in social protection and child protection (see section on Reform in relation to other professional activities of the CSW).

The number of programs in the area of local level planning in the area of social welfare testify to the need for supporting local governments and other relevant stakeholders at local level in addressing the responsibilities they have under the law regarding the provision of services at local level and in taking the lead in decision-making on social welfare issues in their domain. The Ministry has also recognized the need to support the local governments in this new role of service planners and commissioners. That is why the Ministry has taken the lead on coordinating all of the ongoing social welfare strategic planning programs and for this purpose established a Joint Committee for the selection of municipalities assisted through different donor programs. The ongoing programs together with the completed projects will cover the vast majority of municipalities (local governments) in Serbia (approximately 120 municipalities in Serbia out of a total of 150 municipalities without Belgrade). The approach taken in coordinating strategic planning programs can be considered a positive example of “pooling” efforts to maximize results and extract lessons learned. A successful implementation of these programs is crucial for developing social welfare services at local level in Serbia and is an opportunity that must not be missed. In addition, these coordinated programmes will compile lessons learned from the past and lessons generated by new programs and will provide input for policy changes in the area of social welfare planning at local level.

Strategic documents produced in the area of planning are the Local Sustainable Development Strategy and Local Social Welfare Development Strategies (see section on Strategies underpinning the reform in Serbia).

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35 The Joint Committee consists of the following representatives: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Government, Ministry of Finance, PRSP Team, Social Innovation Fund, CLDS and UNDP.

36 In Serbia there are a total of 167 municipalities (150 + Belgrade with 17 municipalities). The city of Belgrade needs to be addressed by separate programmes due its specificity of being a large city with many municipalities and also due to the fact that the Law on the City of Belgrade is still missing. This Law is needed in order to clearly define the mandate of the city and of its municipalities in different areas, including social welfare and childcare.
The links between the central and local level planning and decision making

Throughout the reform process, the Ministry produced different tools for enhancing the planning process and improved service provision at local level.

To that effect, from the beginning of the reform process, the Ministry issued numerous “rulebooks” and “instructions”, such as “rulebooks” for guardianship, foster care, adoption and the recent “Instruction for avoiding incorrect procedures in placement of children and youth in residential institutions”. The aim of the instruction is to reinforce the procedures stipulated in the Family Code (enacted in February 2005) in respecting one of the basic rights of the child to live with his/her parents. The first paragraph of the instruction states that prior to determining the placement of a child under 18 years of age into any type of institution, the Centers for Social Work are under the obligation to request for a formal opinion from the Ministry.

The CSWs produce their own annual workplans which they send to both the Ministry and local governments. These plans are defined according to the “rights” in social protection and are based on the outdated method of registering beneficiaries, where for instance, there is no formalized registering of family violence. As stated in the Social Welfare Development Strategy “The current record keeping and documentation filing system is often unsuitable, incomplete, and impedes an adequate assessment of beneficiaries’ needs and planning of social welfare services”. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce planning based on the needs and priorities identified in the local community in the form of local strategies for social protection for each municipality. The role of the CSW is crucial in the strategic planning process at local level and should take on a coordinating role.

An additional link between the central and local level in the area of social welfare planning is the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) in Serbia is the association of all the local governments in Serbia. The SCTM is actively involved in the process of knowledge transmission in the area of local strategic planning, including planning in the area of social welfare services. The SCTM disseminates knowledge in this area through different mechanisms such as the SCTM Social Policy Council, the recently established Training Center that is in process of discussing a unified methodology for social welfare strategic planning at local level and the monthly SCTM Newsletter.

7. Reorganization of statutory services – “service purchasing” and gatekeeping on local level

Conclusion:

As opposed to some other East European countries, Serbia has the advantage of having Centers for Social Work (CSW). Reforms of the CSW are under way and the main ideas and reforms...
principles are clear, however the reform has still not started being implemented in practice. There is still much work to be done, particularly in the area of case management and defining the role of CSW in a modern social protection system.

Reform of the organizational structure of the CSW

In Serbia there are 135 CSWs, meaning that almost all municipalities in Serbia have their own Center for Social Work. As already described in the introductory part of the Assessment (see the heading Deliberations on terminology and its implications), the roles and status of the Centers for Social Work in Serbia are legally defined based on the existing legislation (the Law on Social Protection, Family Code) and in the Social Welfare Development Strategy (2005).

The roles of the CSW are dual, since they are responsible for fulfilling “rights” in the mandate of the central level (the so called non-transferable duties) and also for fulfilling the “rights” in the mandate of local governments (the so called transferable duties).

The CSW in Serbia are still working according to “Instructions on the organization and team work in CSW” issued in 1995. In view of the need to change the role and mode of functioning of CSW in Serbia for establishing a modern social protection system, the Ministry produced a draft Rulebook on standards and work procedures of CSW in 2006. Work is ongoing in defining Standards and (new) work procedures in the CSW and planning social welfare services - statutory services and direct services (family support and family substitute). The Standards will be piloted in a number of municipalities (the pilot municipalities will most probably be those selected for the UNDP/DfID project and some additional municipalities). Within this framework, the role of CSW as a “gatekeeper” and the roles of local governments and CSW as “service purchasers” will also be discussed and the results will provide input for the new Law on Social Protection which is expected to address the issue of defining the new role of CSW.

The unclear role of the CSW causes different problems in their operation. One example was provided by a member of the Assessment SC: The Director of the Department for Prevention and Suppression of Juvenile Delinquency in the Ministry of Interior commented that there was a problem of the lack of 24 hour availability of staff from CSW. This issue was addressed by the Ministry for Labor, Employment and Social Policy by sending an Instruction to all CSW on the obligation of all centers to organize on call shifts for their staff. Thus the CSW staff will be available around the clock for all emergency cases, including cases of juveniles in conflict with the law. It is expected that this measure will facilitate cooperation of all stakeholders at local level and prevent the situation where a child’s rights are endangered, such as the situation where a child is detained in a police station longer than necessary.

Case management reform

As indicated by the Assessment SC members, when it comes to case management, the reform results in Serbia have until now been partial. Some changes have been introduced in 6 CSW under the Ministry of Social Affairs project “Development of Professional Standards, Procedures, Protocols and Norms” initiated in 2003. One of the project outputs was the draft Rulebook on standards and work procedures of CSW (2006). The draft Rulebook will be piloted
in a number municipalities and will include activities related to the introduction of case management and new methods of operation of CSW. It is expected that the projects will result in lessons learned that will enable the introduction of case management as a new work method into social protection and child care in Serbia.

Reform in relation to other professional activities of the CSW

One of the important roles of the CSW is their involvement in strategic planning of social welfare services ongoing in the majority of the municipalities in Serbia. The CSW are often (particularly in small and undercapacitated municipalities\(^{40}\)) the crucial member of the social welfare planning bodies at local level, since they posses the knowledge and experience in assessing the needs of the vulnerable population and also in proposing the services that need to be established for responding to the identified needs.

Another issue that is being discussed in the professional community addresses the role of the CSW in providing cash assistance (MOP) to beneficiaries. The existing dilemma is presented in the World Bank’s Serbia Social Assistance and Child Protection Note from June 2006\(^{41}\):

“Many CSW staff would gladly transfer the bureaucratic tasks of benefit administration – especially checking documents and filling out paperwork to the municipalities, to allow them to focus on their social work tasks. On the other hand, they are also concerned about the lack of capacity within the municipalities, and worry that they would lose touch with their clients if they no longer came to the CSW to file their MOP applications.”

At municipal level, the delivery of community based social welfare services hinges on the CSW and a small but growing number of NGO service providers. The CSW already fulfils a wide range of functions and the development and delivery of community based services is an additional one some are choosing to take on, when funding can be sourced. Very often the CSWs do this in collaboration with local NGOs. But the NGO sector is in an early stage of development and few NGOs have the capacity to successfully lead the delivery of complex welfare services.

Responsibility for the funding of community based social welfare services have been devolved to local governments. Yet their ability to do so is limited, particularly in poor municipalities where social need is more acute. Furthermore, to date, local authorities have generally not been party to social welfare reform efforts. They therefore prefer to defer responsibility for social welfare services to the CSW and as a result, local government funding for welfare services is rarely a priority.\(^{42}\)

In order to make it possible to divide the roles of “service provider” on one side, and “service purchaser” and “gatekeeper” on the other, one of the principle tasks is to develop services at local level (a “market” of service providers).

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\(^{42}\) CLDS (2005) Final Report from the project «Operationalizing PRS at Local Level» available in hard copy
Costing, financing, budgets

The Centers for Social Work are mostly financed from central level. The central level finances the salaries of the employees and the greater part of the running costs of the centers. The number and structure of employees is determined according to a rulebook and normative act and is based on the number of inhabitants in the municipality. The local budget finances additional staff in the Centers who work on the provision of social welfare programmes that are in the mandate of local governments. Participation of the local budget in the running costs is left to the discretion of the local governments. Capital investments in the CSWs are an obligation of local governments.

There is 2600 staff employed in the Centers for Social Work throughout Serbia that receive their salaries from the central (republic) budget. In 2007 the gross monthly amount for CSW staff salaries amounts to 1.7 million Euros. Presently the net average monthly salary in the CSW is approximately 400 € (gross 600 €), which is four times the salary in 2001. For illustration purposes, the situation in 2000 was even much worse, since the average salary in Serbia was only 45 Euro.

The National Investment Plan (2006) allocated approximately 132 thousand Euros for investments in the social protection system. These funds, allocated from the central budget are aimed at improving the working conditions of the CSW (purchasing of cars for field visits, sanitary vehicles, PCs) and building/refurbishing premises for organizing support programmes for children deprived of parental care, purchasing equipment for residential institutions, purchasing vehicles for the transportation of beneficiaries in municipalities with opened day care centers.

8. Decentralization

Conclusion:

Based on the current level of decentralization in Serbia and the existing situation in this respect, there is a professional consensus that there is a need to review and agree on the most important activities that need to take place both at central and local level as preparatory activities for decentralization and activities that should encourage provision of services that are already in the mandate of local governments.

In the majority of European countries decentralization was the result of a natural development process with, generally speaking, positive outcomes. Less developed countries (often “pushed” by the donor community) began pursuing this model. Since Serbia is one of the last countries in the region to enter the transition process, lessons learned from other countries were used as the

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43 Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Protection of the Republic of Serbia – Annual report (2006) (Internal documents) Belgrade: MOLES; available in hard copy and data obtained from the “Costing, finances, budgets questionnaire” filled out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for the purpose of this Assessment

44 Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Affairs (1992) Rulebook on normative acts and standards for the operation of CSW in performing public duties


47 Meeting on "Decentralization of Social Welfare" (2006) Conclusions from the Minutes of the meeting
basis for opening discussions regarding the pace and form of decentralization (particularly in the area of social protection) that is best suited for the country.

The importance and dilemmas concerning decentralization are best illustrated by the on-going debate taking place in Serbia. In the course of the past year, different professional views have been presented through studies (i.e. Matković, 2006) and 2 round tables. The main conclusions and recommendations from the round tables are summarized below.

The most important preconditions for decentralization are the even development of democracy, and the strengthening and balanced capacity building of central and local government level, local sectoral organizations, and also of the NGO sector and civil society as a whole. In order to have successful decentralization, control mechanisms need to be strengthened at the central government level, so that entitlements and services could be provided without discrimination and with the necessary quality.

In the area of material assistance there is no convincing proof that speaks in favor of decentralization of social assistance, child allowances and other entitlements for the poor, especially in the short term. Cash assistance has a basic redistributive function, so they need to be formulated in legislation adopted at central level, at least for the minimum amounts, as entitlements of general interest. This is particularly important in a country where there are large differences in the development between different communities and where due to the lack of regions, the next level of government are the municipalities.

In the area of social welfare services in the short term the main problem is not how to decentralize, but how to motivate local governments to start financing those services that are already in their mandate. Therefore, the first step, or prerequisite for securing improved social welfare at local level is finding mechanisms to develop the services that are already by law in the mandate of the local governments – Day Care Centers, shelters for victims of violence, etc.

For decentralization to continue in this area, particularly when the NGO sector needs to become much more involved in service provision, other preconditions must also be met. Primarily this means the development of standards, accreditation and licensing and, once again controls mechanisms, and also planning at local level.

In the area of placement of beneficiaries into institutions there is a clear recommendation that the only possibility is asymmetrical decentralization (transfer of mandates to the City of Belgrade and Vojvodina Province) within the context of the accepted reform principle to decrease this form of social protection and child protection.

It needs to be reiterated that decentralization does not represent a pure transfer of mandates to the local level, but also the inclusion of different stakeholders (private and non-government sector) into service provision. Thus, for example, even if the central level continued to completely

48 One on “Decentralization of Social Welfare” held in November 2006, organized by the Ministry and supported by UNDP and the other on “Financing transferred mandates to local level in the area of social protection” in March 2007, organized by the SCTM and supported by the Council of Europe
regulate foster care, the development of this type of service does represent the decentralization of placement services because the service is not provided by a state institution but by the family. In the forthcoming period foster care allowances in Serbia should definitely remain at central level. It must not be allowed that the allowances are late and are not paid regularly, because in the current economic situation this could lead to de-motivation of the foster families. By transferring this mandate to the local level, not only could the stability in financing be jeopardized, but it could well happen that in some municipalities where traditionalism is predominant institutions could be seen as a better type of placement for the child.

Finally, it needs to be underlined once again, that in Serbia decentralization is a top-down process, meaning that reforms are led from the central level. The success of decentralization will to a large extent depend on acknowledging reality, in taking a gradual approach and in including the largest number of social protection stakeholders in the process of conceptualizing reforms. Selecting the most appropriate modes of financing can enable finding the right balance between local and national priorities.

Since Serbia has just constituted a new government, it will be extremely important that the momentum in this area is maintained, that discussions continue and a consensus is reached on the pace and sequencing of decentralization in social welfare in Serbia.

**Costing, finances, budgets**

The majority of social protection programs are financed by the central budget. The republic budget finances 90% of the total expenditure for social protection. The republic level is mandated with the cash benefits that are directly or indirectly aimed at securing the minimum social security, such as social assistance and child allowances. Some social welfare services are financed and defined at central level; thus in Serbia, residential institutions, foster care allowances and also the majority of services provided by the Centers for Social Work are all in the mandate of central level government.

Local level governments are mandated only with one-off payments to poor citizens and services such as homecare, daycare centers, and shelters. The local level governments in Serbia spend on average only 2% of local budgets for social welfare and this includes not only services but also the one-off payments to the poor. The range and difference in social welfare expenditures of local level governments in Serbia is large and ranges from 0.1% to 5%.

**Republic and municipal budgets in 2006 (in billion Dinars)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of govt.</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Social protection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In billion Dinars</td>
<td>In billion EUR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data obtained from the “Costing, finances, budgets questionnaire” filled out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for the purpose of this Assessment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republic</th>
<th>505,8</th>
<th>6.32</th>
<th>18,7</th>
<th>0,23</th>
<th>3,70%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipality/City</td>
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<td>1.72</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>0,04</td>
<td>2,34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>643,9</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>21,9</td>
<td>0,27</td>
<td>3,47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 9. Personnel issues

**Conclusion:** Personnel in social protection in Serbia has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that there is a high level of education of CSW and residential institutions’ staff, many of whom have embraced the general principles of reform. The disadvantage is that a substantial number of employees lack new knowledge and that some municipalities lack professional staff. Also, some residential institutions staff is opposed to change and fear for their jobs in the process of transformation of institutions.

The transition process in Serbia placed a heavy burden on the public administration in general and consequently on the staff at both Ministry and local level (CSW and residential institutions). The need to simultaneously stabilize the dysfunctional social protection system and embark on reforms presented a huge challenge for the professionals working in the area of social welfare. At the beginning of the transition process, in early 2000, reliance on the resources of NGO community (however modest) in this field was also practically impossible, since there was a complete lack of cooperation between the NGO sector and the social welfare system. However the situation has improved and nowadays there is a number of joint initiatives and examples of good practices on cooperation between GO and NGO sector aimed at improved protection of the rights of the child.

**Personnel issues at national level:**

The lack of capacity for driving the reform was particularly evident at the level of the Ministry that needed to spearhead changes both at central and local level. The first democratic government elected in 2000 faced the difficult task of identifying quality staff within the civil service (many of whom were marginalized due to political appointments) and to attract new professional staff into the government. Both tasks were extremely difficult and two reasons can be provided as illustration: one, there was a years long “negative selection” of civil servants (due to political reasons and low salaries civil servants often sought employment elsewhere) and two, quality staff was difficult to attract for the same reasons (salaries were low and there was still an inherited mistrust of working for the government – regardless of the democratic changes that just took place).
Faced with this major challenge, a number of newly appointed Ministers (including the Minister of Social Affairs) approached the international development partners for assistance. The requests for assistance were clearly presented to the donor community with defined professional profiles of the consultants needed for providing support in defining the reform process, the need for having knowledge on Serbia and on the system that needs to be reformed (and consequently knowledge of the local language). In some cases, this resulted in requests for the donors to provide support through financing a concrete individual consultant. Thus, the Ministry for Social Affairs benefited from the support provided by UNICEF in placing a consultant with extensive experience in the region at the disposal of the Ministry and in promoting reform in the area of social protection. In parallel, the UNDP Office in Belgrade also set up a Capacity Building Fund Program\textsuperscript{50} that provided crucial support to numerous Ministries in the process of reform. Other international development partners also provided assistance in bridging the lack of capacity that was evident at the beginning of the transition process in Serbia. The role of these consultants was crucial in providing strong focal points for the reform processes, bringing together knowledge from within the system and knowledge on “where the system should go”. This resulted in more substantial local ownership of the policy changes.

Gradually, with the change in government and the economic recovery of the country, the salaries in the public administration increased. This alleviated the problem of attracting quality staff into the central government. Additionally, the main reform directions were defined in the previous period, thus, once again, alleviating the pressure of needing to re-vitalize the existing system and simultaneously setting up the reform of the system. Therefore, it can be said that although much still needs to be done, the situation of “crisis management” in the Ministry has passed.

According to discussions among relevant stakeholders, the Ministry needs to direct its efforts at formulating policies based on numerous experiences gathered over the years and to reorganize the staff in order to best address these issues.

**Personnel issues at local level**

The majority of the personnel working in the social welfare system in Serbia are employed in CSW and residential institutions. One of the main characteristics of the staff employed in the system is their high level of education. The high education level of the social protection system personnel provided a good basis for implementing the top-down reform process defined by the Ministry. Following the definition of the strategic goals in the area of social protection at central level, numerous national and regional conferences were organized to reach a professional consensus on the reform. In order to include all of the personnel working at local level, 4 regional conferences were held in 2001 and bulletins were published on reforms in social protection.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{50} UNDP (2002) News Archive, article on Capacity Building Fund Donors Meeting, November 2002. Belgrade: “The (Capacity Building) Fund helps ministries and public agencies define their mission and functions, rationalize their structures, simplify their administrative procedures, and build the knowledge and skills of their staff so as to be better able to deal with the effects of change…” available from http://www2.undp.org.yu/files/news/undp_news_cbfdonors_29112002.pdf

The main reform-oriented programs started in 2002 and were aimed at foster care development, transformation of residential institutions, development of integrated social protection at local level and the development of standards of professional work, procedures and protocols. In principle, each reform issue strategically defined at central level was “transferred” to local level staff through two basic tools: targeted training and education programs and instructions/decisions/rulebooks for program implementation sent to CSW and residential institutions personnel. Thus, for example in the area of foster care development and adoption the Ministry implemented the projects “Strategy for the development of family placement and adoption in Serbia” and “Steadily towards foster care”. The first project included trainings of CSW and residential institution staff for implementing new standards for foster care development (533 professionals were trained). The second project implemented a training of trainers (ToT) programme for 77 professionals who in turn trained 1700 foster parents. The training programmes were developed by local experts and trainings were held by professionals from the Ministry and CSW. The ToT programme was jointly developed by Ministry and social welfare institutions staff following an education programme they attended in Hungary for implementing the PRIDE programme for training foster parents. Trainings on adoption and on experience in the implementation of the Family Code were also held for CSW staff. Additionally, within the operation of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) numerous trainings were held at local level. Since its establishment in 2003 the SIF organized trainings in the area of project management and partnership building for over 400 professionals from the state and NGO sector.

However, six years into the reform process, the opinion of the SC members is that still much work needs to be done in terms of raising the level of competence of the personnel working in CSW and residential institutions. The capacity of personnel at local level varies and to a large extent depends on their participation in different projects. In some areas such as in the area of planning social protection at local level, education and training have until now had been project-based and partial. Therefore, there is a need to define and implement a comprehensive personnel education and training program for each of the reform areas, including the protection of vulnerable groups through the accredited training programs based on defined standards. These programs need to include capacity building for the other relevant stakeholders at local level, too, including NGO service providers and local governments.

There were comments made by the Assessment SC members that “fatigue” is present in the employees working in the system due to various reasons, such as the slowing down of the reform process during the past couple of years, new demands without adequate support, political appointments of insufficiently competent staff into managerial positions, etc. This is an additional challenge that the new Ministry will need to address.

**CSW personnel**

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52 Information on training and education and on the adopted rulebooks was obtained by a member of the Assessment SC in e-mail exchange.

53 For example, in 2005 the following rulebooks were adopted: Rulebook on registration and documentation on foster care”, “Rulebook on the induction programme for foster care”, “Rulebook on registration and documentation on adopted children”, “Rulebook on induction programme for adoption”
According to the initial findings of the most recent statistics of employees in CSW there are currently 3006 staff employed (excluding the Directors and Managers). Out of this number, 1997 persons have a university degree (social workers, legal specialist, pedagogues, sociologists, defectologist, andragogues, etc.). Although these figures are the most recent, the same structure was present in the system at the time when the reform processes were initiated.

Out of 3006 CSW employees, 2600 of them are paid from the central budget, while the rest are paid from the municipal budgets. For the staff paid from the central level, the amount of 1.7 million Euros is spent monthly which is around 14% of the total expenditures for social welfare (without child allowance expenditures).

CSW personnel and the NGO sector
One of the challenges related to CSW personnel is the potential “drain” of professionals from the state sector (CSW) to the NGO sector. This “drain” could be caused by different reasons - higher salaries/fees in the NGO sector that is mostly donor funded, working on reform projects that are more interesting than the “bureaucratic” tasks in the CSW, etc. Aware of this potential danger, the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) was set up in such a way that only projects submitted in partnership between the CSW and NGOs receive financing, thus motivating the staff from CSW to remain in the system, have a chance to work on reform projects and also transfer knowledge to the NGO sector.

There is informal information that a number of professionals from the CSWs work both in the center and in an NGO. This issue needs to be explored further and solutions need to be found during the transition period, since currently there is insufficient capacity for service provision in the NGO sector. Therefore, there is a need to define a programme for building the capacity of the NGO sector in the area of social welfare and child care service provision without jeopardizing the quality of staff in the CSW. The Assessment SC members provided an illustration that supports this assumption. In the III SIF call for proposals there was a lack of good quality NGOs that applied for funding. Some of the possible reasons mentioned were: NGOs are not interested in working in the area of social welfare; the status of NGOs as social welfare service providers is unclear and unresolved status, including the problem of the lack of a Law on NGOs in Serbia, all of which results in poor quality of staff in NGOs active in the area of social protection. The representative of the SIF in the Assessment SC informed the stakeholders that the SIF has identified this problem and that an analysis is being conducted on the issue.

Personnel in residential institutions
In the three main types of residential institutions for children in Serbia (for children without parental care, children with learning disability and children in conflict with the law) there is a total of approximately 1350 staff, out of which 700 are professional workers.

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54 For the first time in Serbia a Statistical Report is currently being produced based on the reports produced annually by all the CSW and residential institutions in Serbia (still unpublished).
55 A defectologist is an educational specialist dealing with children with disabilities; an andragogue is a teacher for adults.
The figures are not precise due to the fact that there are three residential institutions for children where adult beneficiaries also reside (since they remain in the home after turning 18) and there are also children in homes for adults, so it is difficult to separate the number of staff that takes care of children only.
Within the reform projects initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2002 (see section on Background of the social and child protection reform in Serbia) the project on transformation of residential institutions was particularly important for personnel in residential institutions. In the framework of this project trainings were organized for the staff in the area of strategic and action planning for integrated social welfare. Representatives of all residential institutions (together with staff from CSW and local governments from municipalities where the homes are located) also participated in seminars on two topics: 1. preparing the child for changing the type of care. This seminar was based on a draft document that was later adopted, printed and distributed in the form of a Rulebook on procedures for selecting and changing the type of care; and 2. Improving child work programmes for children remaining in institutions. This seminar was based on the Proposed framework for developing the rulebook on child work programmes in social welfare institutions. The education and trainings were implemented by local experts. Training for children homes personnel was also provided within the project “Protecting children from abuse, neglect and violence”, where they participated together with representatives from other sectors – education, health, police, justice, etc. In addition, 850 staff from residential institutions and CSW participated in training on implementing Instruction for avoiding incorrect procedures in placement of children and youth in residential institutions (see section on “Links between central and local level in planning and decision making”). Following the training and education programmes plans were produced for the transformation of each of the institutions. These plans include personnel issues, such as planning education programmes for staff who will have different roles in the new, transformed institution. Still, the feeling of the Assessment SC members is that the issue of personnel working in residential institutions needs to be addressed by separate programs within the transformation of institutions.

10. Gatekeeping at national level

Conclusion: In Serbia, different national level activities were initiated and implemented for changing the underdeveloped gatekeeping mechanisms at local level. These activities were aimed at developing alternative services at local level, implementing activities for establishing standards for service provision, empowering professional staff to become future gatekeepers in the system. Monitoring and complaint mechanisms are still overly legalistic but the basis has been established for their reform.

In the area of gatekeeping at national level, the reforms were also initiated at the beginning of the transition process by the Ministry for Social Affairs in the period 2001 – 2003. Activities aimed at building a consensus on the reform process and on respecting child rights were initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2001. Four regional conferences and one national conference

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(The term “gatekeeping” can be defined as the system of decision making that guides effective and efficient targeting of services aiming to ensure that services are provided only to those who meet tightly specified eligibility criteria. It focuses primarily on the needs of the child. Efficient gatekeeping has one agency responsible for coordination of the assessment of the child’s situation. A range of services to support children and families need to be made available in the community to prevent institutionalization. At the same time there must be a set of alternatives to institutional forms of substitute care including foster care and adoption. Efficient information systems to monitor and review decisions and their outcomes need to be in place.)
were organized for professionals from the social welfare and child protection system (CSW and residential institutions) where consensus was reached on the major reform directions, and it was agreed that de-institutionalization was one of the first issues that needs to be addressed. This was important in terms of the implications for the development of gatekeeping mechanisms that will enable decision making on child protection in line with the child’s best interest.

In order change the way gatekeeping mechanism act at local level - and thus contribute to reducing the number of children entering into residential institutions - the reform process in Serbia initiated a number of activities for developing alternative services at local level.

One of the principle activities was the development of foster care as an alternative for institutional placement. Foster care development was led and organized from the national level government i.e. the Ministry of Social Affairs. A comprehensive programme for foster care development was organized such as legislative changes (defining legal criteria for the types of families that can become foster families and placing foster parents in a favorable position in order to encourage this form of child protection); organizing education and training for professional staff, development of rulebooks for foster care and launching campaigns for attracting foster parents and for informing the public.

The other important mechanisms established at national level for the development of alternative services at local level are the already mentioned transitory mechanisms in the form of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and the Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD). The funds provide a framework for the development of alternative forms of social protection and new services by infusing additional funds into the system for covering the transition costs for the establishment of these new services at local level. The SIF and FOPD have been functioning since 2003 and have generated a wealth of experience that need to be systematized into lessons learned. Presently, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in partnership with other relevant stakeholders, is in the process of compiling the lessons learned that will provide the necessary input for policy changes in this area. Experience so far has shown that there is a need to find mechanisms for developing services that are already in the mandate of local governments (e.g. Day Care Centers, homecare, shelters, etc.). Another challenge is examining the issue of allocating an additional amount of funds from the central budget for stimulating the development of these services at local level.

In terms of standards for services, which are necessary for the further development of alternative services in Serbia there are still no standards developed. There are different initiatives that are working on developing minimum standards for certain types of services, and the on-going projects on strategic planning at local level (for more detail refer to the section “Local Level Planning and Decision Making”) are also planning on tackling this issue in more detail.

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58 Amendments to the Law on Social Protection and the Law on Financial Support to Families with Children
59 Consultants have been engaged by UNDP and by CLDS for setting up initial draft service models that will serve as input for defining minimum standards.
Since it is agreed that the Centers for Social Work (CSW) need to become the main gatekeepers of the social welfare and child protection system in Serbia, the *gatekeeping function of the CSW* has been gradually built through different mechanisms, such as trainings and education organized for the CSW staff on reform issues, instructions for program implementation (such as for example for foster care), rulebooks for guardianship, foster care, adoption and the recent “Instruction for avoiding incorrect procedures in placement of children and youth in residential institutions” (for more detail refer to section on “Links between central and local level in planning and decision making”).

In the area of defining *standards for the management of services* i.e. for the work of CSW, the project “Development of Professional Standards, Procedures, Protocols and Norms” was initiated by the Ministry in 2003 and has resulted in the draft Rulebook on standards and work procedures of CSW produced by the Ministry in 2006. The draft Rulebook will be piloted in a number of municipalities in Serbia and the lessons learned will be used for defining the final Rulebook and policies for introducing standards and work procedures in all of the CSW in Serbia. In addition, the Ministry and UNDP are implementing a project that will provide elements for defining standards for services, including elements for costing of individual services.

The regulatory system for both services and staff in Serbia still needs to be developed. The issue of licensing and accreditation of service providers is being discussed among professionals, as well as licensing and certification of professionals working in the system.

**Monitoring mechanisms**

In Serbia, the “monitoring of professional work” and “inspection” is defined in two laws, the Law on Social Protection (1991) and the Family Code (2005). Within the Law on Social Protection both “monitoring of professional work” and “inspection” (monitoring whether everything is according to the law) are defined. The Law on Social Protection stipulates that “inspection” is in the mandate of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and thus in the Ministry there is a separate sector for inspection. “Monitoring of professional work” is defined in the Family Code as a function of the Ministry, while the Law on Social Protection stipulates that “monitoring of professional work” should be delegated to the Institute for Social Protection.

The *complaint system* in Serbia is also set up in a formalistic manner, where the beneficiary may file complaints on any of the “rights” defined in the Law on Social Protection, Law on Financial Support to Families with Children (2002) and the Family Code. The beneficiaries can file a complaint to Ministry if they are not satisfied with the “decision” issued by the CSW or residential institution. Within the Ministry, there is a specialized department for solving complaints. If the beneficiary is not satisfied with the decision of the Ministry, he/she may go to court. As commented by the Assessment SC members, there is a lack of capacity of the beneficiaries to use their complaint rights. The lack of the beneficiaries’ capacity is manifested in lack of information on their rights and on the procedures for filing complaints. Other types of

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60 For more detail refer to the section “Reorganization of statutory services”
61 For more detail refer to the section on The Governance system in Serbia in relation to child protection
monitoring systems such as self-assessment and performance indicators also need to be developed.

In Serbia a draft Law on Child Ombudsman has been prepared by Working group with the following composition: Child Cultural Centre- Belgrade (as initiator) Save the Children UK, Child Rights Center- Belgrade, local experts, UNICEF, People’s Office of the President of Republic, and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy who submitted the draft Child Ombudsman Law to the parliament. The draft law is currently in the parliamentary procedure.

11. Material assistance for children and families

Conclusion: Cash benefits have been significantly consolidated and the system has been re-established. The amounts, targeting and coverage of material assistance, however, still need to be reviewed in order to ensure that this is actually going to satisfy at least the basic needs of children.

At the beginning of the transition process in Serbia the minimum safety nets were practically destroyed. Social welfare (cash) benefits, such as child allowances, were more than two years delayed, and other allowances (social assistance – MOP and attendance allowances) between 26 and 32 months and the accommodation in the social welfare (residential) institutions was paid irregularly. Huge delays in payments, as well as devalued and low amounts of social assistance also caused a great fall in the number of beneficiaries of certain entitlements.

This situation demanded that the reform in the area of material assistance starts promptly. It was thus initiated at the very beginning of the reform process in 2001. The first changes for stabilizing the social welfare (cash) benefits system were changes in legislation (see below).

In the early days of the reform, Serbia had a serious problem with the lack of reliable data on which to base the reform and implement policy changes. Therefore, at the request of the Ministry, the WB supported the Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS) in 2002. The Survey was used as an analytical foundation for policy changes and legislative changes in the area of social welfare. The 2002 and 2003 LSMS were also used in formulating the PRS for Serbia and also for a series of other documents.

Key legislation and strategic documents

In the early 2002, the Law on Financial Support to Families with Children was enacted. One of the main features of the Law is the clear differentiation between social policy and population policies. The new Law defines child allowances as a social policy measure. It also stipulates that the universal entitlement to child allowances is abolished, the child allowance amounts are equal for all children and targeting of the poor is improved through a more precise definition of income and property, while considering eligibility. Families with children with disabilities and single parents, foster parents and guardians are placed in a favorable position in this law in order to encourage protection of children without parental care outside residential institutions. The Law
also eliminated regional differences in the eligibility criteria, through the establishment of a uniform threshold for the entire territory of Serbia, ensured maintaining the real value of the allowances (through indexing welfare and thresholds with the costs of living) and, to the extent possible, provided continued access to this benefit.

Amendments to the Law on Social Protection and Social Security of the Citizens was prepared towards the end of 2002, but adopted only in 2005, due to the change in government. These amendments to the Law also eliminated previously existing differences between municipalities in the eligibility criteria for social welfare assistance and introduced a uniform absolute poverty line at the level of the republic, ensured maintaining the real value of social welfare benefits through indexing with the costs of living and continued access to entitlements. Amounts of attendance allowances persons (and children) with disability were considerably increased. Some legal criteria regarding the types of families that can become foster families were defined, and the concept of professional (or specialized) foster care was introduced, although this concept is limited to staff who may lose their jobs during the process of deinstitutionalization. As an initial step for a different treatment of the beneficiaries, their representatives were incorporated into the governing bodies of residential institutions.

The PRS for Serbia\(^{62}\) also addresses the issue of material assistance and presents the policy changes that need to be introduced in the area of social assistance and child allowances. The main objectives stated in the PRSP related to material assistance are the following: 1. widen the provision of social protection, through paying higher amounts of assistance and widening the safety net to include the most vulnerable groups; 2. ensure access for all who are eligible for social protection but are currently not participating, including Roma, refugees who will soon become citizens, IDPs, etc.; 3. improved targeting of entitlement programmes to those most in need and maintain fiscal sustainability.

**Costing, finances, budgeting\(^{63}\)**

The data for 2006 in the area of material assistance in Serbia are as follows:

**Material Assistance** (social welfare cash benefits):
- 48 thousand families, with an average amount per family of approx. 55 Euro
- 40% are single-member households
- total annual expenditure is over 30 million Euro
- the share in the republic budget is 0.6%

**Child Allowances:**
- number of children beneficiaries is 440 thousand (30% of the total number of children in Serbia)
- amount per child per month is approximately 20 Euro

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- on an annual basis, this amounts to more than one monthly salary
- total expenditures for child allowances annually are more than 100 million Euro
- the share in the republic budget is less than 2%

**Attendance Allowances:**
According to the Law on Social Protection (1991) attendance allowance is intended for home carers ("persons who take care of a beneficiary who is, due to injury or illness, unable to take care himself/herself").

**Attendance allowance beneficiaries in 2005 and 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2005</td>
<td>24,890</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>31,601</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>27,279</td>
<td>76 €</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**12. Community based services**

**Conclusion:** Community based service reform was encouraged through two mechanisms – the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and the Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD) that at the same time present examples of good practice. In family support services, the Day Care Center services at local level are particularly important. In the area of foster care, through the implementation of parallel activities, significant progress has been made. Thus, in the last 7 years, the number of children in foster families has increased by one third.

As already discussed in the previous sections, reform of the social welfare and child protection system in Serbia requires the development of community based services. For this purpose, the Ministry of Social Affairs established two mechanisms for developing community based services in Serbia: the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and the Fund for Financing Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (FOPD). The SIF (as well as the Fund for Financing Organizations for Persons with Disabilities - FOPD) have the following main characteristics:

- It finances projects/initiatives at local level,
- It ensures sustainability and/or co-financing from local governments,
- It gives priority to partnerships between government and non-governments sector,
- It includes built in qualitative and budget auditing.

Both funds can be considered examples of good practice (see Portfolio of Good Practice Examples in Annex 7).

With support from the Government of Serbia, Government of Norway, UNDP, European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) and the Government of Great Britain, the SIF has supported the development of community-based social services in municipalities and the formation of

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64 Data refer to beneficiaries of the central budget and not those who are entitled to the same allowance through the Pension Fund. If they receive the entitlement from one source, they cannot receive it from the other source.
partnerships between state and NGO service providers and local self-governments (LSGs). The Social Innovation Fund was established in 2003 as a reform tool and mechanism for:

- Decentralization
- Covering transition costs
- Transformation of residential institutions/deinstitutionalization
- Good practice transmission
- Supporting reform at local level

The extent of the work done by the SIF can be illustrated by a sentence from the SIF website: "So far, we have invested 5.2 million Euro into development of social protection and we have supported 212 projects in local communities of Serbia”.

Since its establishment in 2002, the Fund for Financing Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD) supported approximately 100 projects. The Fund was established by the Ministry to support local initiatives for improving the position of Persons with Disability, since there was a provision in the Law on Lottery that proceeds from the lottery could be used for financing organizations of persons with disability. This Fund is, therefore, financed exclusively from the government budget, from the lottery funds.

**Family support services**

In order to support the deinstitutionalization and the improved care of children with disability, a professional consensus was reached by stakeholders in the area of social protection and child care at the very beginning of the reform that the Day Care Centers need to be developed at local level, in order to enable the parents to keep the children at home. This form of care, together with other forms of support (mainly different kind of activities organized for children with disability), were mostly supported and developed through the FOPD. The majority of local governments still didn’t open the daycare centers for children with disabilities, which in part can be explained with the lack of financial resources in the local budgets, since this service is in the mandate of local governments. There is an idea that in a number of municipalities the initial funds for opening day care centers will be provided through the NIP. It should be mentioned that a number of donors have become involved in financing the establishment of daycare centers for children with disability at municipal level. According to the Ministry data, Day Care Centers are organized only in the larger towns/cities (approximately 10) in Serbia.

In Serbia, family violence was for a long time an issue that was not publicly discussed. The NGOs were the first to start addressing family violence and informing the public on women and children victims. “Counseling against Family Violence” is a Belgrade NGO committed to the protection of the victims of home violence and sex trafficking.

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67 National Investment Plan
According to the data from the City of Belgrade Secretariat for Social Protection*, in Belgrade, there is a network of Day Care Centers consisting of seven Day Care Centers for children with disability accommodating 300 children. The accommodation of children is mostly financed by the City of Belgrade, and the average price per child in 2006/2007 is 350 Euros per month. The number of staff in the Day Care Centers is determined according to a normative act. Additionally, within the Day Care Center service network, a number of nurses (12) and doctors (2) is financed from the Republic Health Insurance Fund. The parents participate in the accommodation costs of the children up to 50% of the attendance allowance amounts (less than 30 € per month). The children with the most severe disabilities do not participate in accommodation costs. These costs include transportation costs of the children from and to the Day Care Center which form a substantial share of the total accommodation costs.

One of the good examples of Day Care Center Services is a Center organized by parents of children suffering from RET syndrome. (For more detail refer to Portfolio of Good Practice Examples, Annex 4).

Another illustrative example of Day Care Center Services can be found in the town of Pozarevac. The director of this Day Care Center informed that it was completely built by donor funds. The capacity of the Day Care Center is for 30 children, while presently only 20 children are accommodated there. It is estimated that this is due to the fact that only children from the town of Pozarevac are accommodated there, since there are problems with charging accommodation costs for children from another municipality (town). In that respect many municipalities have had negative experience since there is no mechanism that would “force” one municipality to pay for services provided in another municipality. The cost per child is approximately 300 Euro and there is also cost-sharing by the parents up to 50% of the attendance allowance amounts (less than 30 € per month).

* Secretariat for Social and Child Care of the City of Belgrade is in charge of day care center services for the territory of Belgrade. More information available from http://www.beograd.org.yu/cms/view.php?id=202022

They currently run four shelters in the Belgrade City area, three for the victims of home violence and another one for the victims of human trafficking. Recently, famous TV station in Serbia started promoting the idea through a public campaign and raised the awareness of government institutions (Belgrade Land Development Agency and the Rakovica municipality), the private sector and the general public, thus presenting a good example of public-private partnerships. Another good example cited by a member of the project SC is the example of the city of Zajecar where the municipality gave 8 apartments for setting up safe houses for victims of violence and abuse. Still, comments were made that the state is not doing enough in supporting the financing of the safe houses and that their functioning is still mostly financed by donor funds.

Other forms of family support services in Serbia are mainly provided by the CSW. These include different types of counseling. There are no official data on whether the NGO sector is included in providing these types of services.

**Family substitute services**

Foster care existed in Serbia even before the reforms were initiated. As a form of child protection, it was equally present as institutional care. At the beginning of the reform process, there were 2200 children in homes for children without parental care, while 2100 were in foster
care. Since deinstitutionalization was an important reform objective from the very beginning of the reform process, it was clear that, as a precondition for this objective, it was necessary to further develop this form of alternative care that already had a sound basis in Serbia - especially having in mind that the financing of this form of care was provided from the central budget.

The objective of the reform in the area of family substitute services was also to improve the quality of foster care families and their structure, but also to promote kinship foster care. The steps undertaken for developing foster care were reaching a professional consensus through the already mentioned Conferences on Social Welfare System Reform at national and regional level held in 2002. These conferences led to the consensus that foster care is a type of care in the best interest of the children. Training programmes were developed and conducted for the implementation of new standards for developing and improving foster care and a guidebook was developed for professionals from CSW. The trained staff provided trainings for future foster parents. The CSW staff also conducts the assessment of potential foster parents through interviews in the CSW, home visits and interviews and also through assessments during the Induction programme for foster parents organized by CSW trained staff.

Further development of foster care and getting a “better quality” of foster parents necessitated the change of legislation (for instance the change that a maximum of three children can be placed in one foster family). In parallel, the fees for foster care were significantly increased and at the end of the process a campaign was launched for “recruiting” foster families. At the same time, kinship families could access foster care fees. As a result of all of these processes in 2007, in residential institutions for children deprived of parental care in Serbia there are 1562 children, while 3200 are in foster families.

At the same time there are data documenting the change in the structure of foster care families showing that the share of families living in urban areas and with higher level of education has increased. As already mentioned, the development of foster care was defined as one of the main reform goals of the Ministry at the onset of the reform process. For this purpose a working group was established within the Ministry tasked with developing foster care. Throughout the reform process, which is still ongoing, the recommendations of this team were translated into policy and normative changes. In 2005 the following Rulebooks were adopted: “Rulebook on detailed conditions for foster care” and “Rulebook on the induction programme for foster care” and sent to all CSW.

Through these reform efforts and campaigns, foster care was positioned as an important reform issue in social welfare in Serbia. Thus, in his inauguration speech in May 2007, the Prime Minister mentioned foster care as an important form of child care in Serbia. “This will also be achieved through construction of small centers for the elderly, development of the institute of

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70 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia (2005) No.67/05
71 Ibid
foster care and improvement of conditions for placing children without parents, mentally disturbed children and children with disturbed behavior into foster care families.”

Foster care of children with developmental difficulties as a form of Specialized foster care was supported through issuing rulebooks that stimulated families for specialized foster care by increasing the foster care fees. The Ministry estimates that approximately 25% of the foster parents already take care of children with learning disability. The Social Innovation Fund, for foster care projects gives priority to projects for the development of specialized foster care and the empowerment of foster parents to take care of children with this type of disability. Specialized foster care is also foreseen in the Juvenile Justice Code for children in conflict with the law.

Adoption is regulated in the Family Code (2005) and harmonized with international conventions in the area of adoption and child rights. The Family Code introduced an obligatory preparation for adoption. CSWs staff who are trained for this purpose implement an Induction programme for adopters.

According to the opinion of the SC members, in the implementation of the Family Code there is still a need to improve procedures and there is also room for including the NGO sector in training programmes for future adopters and foster parents, and also for implementing different programs for the support of the children and their new families. It is necessary to implement the concept of child rights more systematically and change the attitude where adoption is seen as a means of satisfying the needs of parents without children. Instead emphasis needs to be placed on the right of the child to live in a family environment.

Guardianship is also regulated by the Family Code. Guardianship is provided for children without parental care and for children under parental guardianship in cases where the interests of the child are in conflict with the interests of the parents. For a complete and adequate enforcement of the Family Code the Ministry is obligated to adopt by-laws and rulebooks for the efficient implementation of the adopted legislation. The first draft rulebooks have been produced by professionals from the Ministry and are awaiting formal Ministry approval and adoption.

Costing, finances, budgeting

Foster care in Serbia is financed from the central level. This is important in order to provide stability and equity in the foster care service provision. Following reforms in the area of foster care development (trainings and campaign), the Ministry decided to significantly increase foster care allowances and child care fees in order to additionally motivate potential foster parents. The foster care allowances and the child care fees are regulated by a Rulebook on criteria for service costs of services financed by the Republic issued by the Ministry in 2003.

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73 Information was received by e-mail from the Assessment SC member from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

74 Data obtained from the “Costing, finances, budgets questionnaire” filled out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for the purpose of this Assessment

75 Ministry of Social Affairs (2003) Rulebook on criteria for service costs for services financed by the Republic
In 2007, the foster carer’s fee for one child amounts to approx. 100 € per child (150 € gross), while the costs per child amount to approx. 140 € per child. In the case where there are two or three children in foster care, the carer’s fees are around 64 € per child plus contributions (approx. 100 € gross), while the costs per child are the same. Changes have been introduced regarding the financing of kinship families and they can now access foster care allowances so that more children could be placed in these types of families.

13. Deinstitutionalisation

**Conclusion:** Early on in the reform there was consensus on deinstitutionalization as one of the main goals. Throughout the reform period, the Ministry implemented various activities (training, education, defining plans, issuing instructions and rulebooks for preventing placement and for transformation of institutions) for supporting deinstitutionalization. There are positive effects in this process since the number of children without parental care in institutional care decreased from 2200 children in the year 2001, to 1488 in 2007. However, there has been little progress in the deinstitutionalization of children with disability. The speed of this process will depend on the development of alternative forms of care.

In Serbia there are three types of residential institutions for children: homes for children without parental care, institutions for children and youth in conflict with the law and homes for children and youth with disability.

There are 12 residential institutions for children deprived of parental care with a span of 60 to 150 places available, except for Belgrade, where the capacity is 700 places in 5 homes. The total number of children residing in homes for children deprived of parental care, according to Ministry data from December 2005 was 1,593 children which represents 81.3% of the full capacity of the homes. The total number of children is decreasing and has fallen by 4.3% in 2005 when compared to 2004.

There are also 5 homes for children deprived of parental care that form part of the Centers for Social Work. Although these homes are of smaller capacity (between 20 and 50), the opinion of the Assessment SC members is that these homes that have proven to be a poor solution and the intention is to either close these homes or change their status to that of other residential institutions.

There are 3 institutions for children and youth in conflict with the law and 3 institutions for children and youth with learning disabilities. These institutions are characterised by a large number of beneficiaries (from 300 to 650).

Services provided to children without parental care in social welfare (residential) institutions are incomplete and do not empower them for independent living. Under such conditions, children

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76 These 5 homes form part of one institution.
remain in institutions too long and leave them upon reaching adulthood, i.e. upon finishing school, most often with no further support for independent living.

Children with disabilities placed in three residential institutions are particularly vulnerable. They usually spend their entire life in an institution, so that institutions which were originally meant for children with disabilities gradually became institutions for the accommodation of adults as well. These institutions are characterized by a large number of beneficiaries (from 300 to 650), children and adults ages from 4 to 50, even older, which exceeds the number prescribed by norms and standards. The facilities are in poor condition, the staff structure prescribed by norms is inadequate, and care-takers are insufficiently trained for the application of contemporary work methods. All of this raises issues regarding respect of beneficiaries’ rights.

Deinstitutionalization was formulated as one of the main objectives of the social welfare reform in Serbia. At the Ministry, in 2002 a special Working Group was established for deinstitutionalization and transformation of institutions. Additionally, as already mentioned, a professional consensus was reached that this is not a good form of care for children. The establishment of alternative forms of care was agreed to be a precondition for deinstitutionalization, while simultaneously plans are being devised for the transformation of residential institutions. As already mentioned (see section on Planning and Decision Making) throughout the reform process the Ministry organized trainings and issued rulebooks and instructions with the aim of preventing placement of children in institutions. The most recent instruction, from November 2006, states that prior to determining the placement of a child under 18 years of age into any type of institution, the Centers for Social Work are under the obligation to request a formal opinion from the Ministry.

The Social Welfare Development Strategy defines the following Measures, Activities and Mechanisms for the transformation of residential institutions:

- Adopting a medium-term plan for the transformation of institutions;
- Adopting individual transformation plans for each institution with children;
- Adjusting the existing network to the process of transformation of institutions.
- Adopting specific programmes for training and improving professional skills of all stakeholders involved in the protection of beneficiaries in residential care.

Although the planned timing for the above activities stated in the Strategy was 2006, the activities are still ongoing.

The process of transformation of institutions in Serbia is, according to the opinions of the Assessment SC members, a dynamic process where different activities are on-going simultaneously. This process is closely linked with the projects on social welfare strategic planning at local level. (see section on “Local Level Planning and Decision Making”). Following the training and education programmes (described in section on Personnel Issues) plans were produced for the transformation of each of the institutions. These plans include individual plans for children, plans for personnel and plans for using the institutions premises for opening alternative services. Still, the feeling of the Assessment SC members is that these plans need to be reviewed and made operational. A project on the transformation of institutions for
beneficiaries with difficulties in intellectual development has started. It is expected that the lessons learned from this project will feed into policy changes in this area.

In line with the individual plans for the transformation of residential institutions for children, support to the deinstitutionalization process was provided also by the III call for proposals of the Social Innovation Fund (September 2006) that identified as its first priority the “linking the third call for proposals with the programme of transformation of institutions led by the Ministry, i.e. the development of social welfare services that support the transformation of residential institutions”. The second priority of the call for proposals was the development of other innovative social welfare services at local level. The priority target children groups in the call for proposals are: children deprived of parental care, children with developmental difficulties and children with behavioral disorders. The SIF project selection committee selected 35 projects for financing, out of which 13 projects are directly linked to the transformation of institutions, either for the development of alternative services (foster care, daycare centers, clubs for children in foster care) or for supporting children leaving the institution. An additional 17 projects have been approved that target children and youth services.

The transformation of institutions has also become publicly recognized as a priority reform issue and was mentioned in the inauguration speech of the Prime Minister: “… the government will intensify the reform of the system of social care through measures such as adoption of laws on social care, improvement of quality of social services, transformation of institutions of social care…” 78

Costing, finances, budgeting79

In homes for children deprived of parental care there are a total of 1488 children. The total cost per child is 415 €. Due to the reform process and the resulting deinstitutionalization a part of the empty places are also paid for, thus increasing the cost per child to 450 € per month.

In homes for children with learning disability there are currently 835 children. The costs per child amount to 300 € including health care insurance.

Homes for children are financed from the central budget. A ”cost per child” is determined by calculating the running costs plus a number of employees who do not provide so called ”social work services”. In addition, the central budget pays for the salaries of a number of professional staff (social work service provision) whose number is determined according to normative acts linked to the number of children in the institution. Major investments in the homes are also paid from the central budget. In the homes for children a part of the expenses is covered by the health care budget (nurses, doctors and part of the costs that are also determined by the health sector).

79 Data obtained from the “Costing, finances, budgets questionnaire” filled out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for the purpose of this Assessment
V Recommendations

5. Target groups of children

5.1 Up-date legislation needs with new target groups of children at risk where applicable;
5.2 Replace medicalized terminology and introduce new terminology in line with child
rights in the legislation, normative acts and official documents.

6. Planning and decision making at national and local level

6.1 Introduce systematic monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the National
Plan of Action for Children and the Social Welfare Development Strategy, including
reporting on progress;
6.2 Finalize and implement unified methodology in strategic social welfare planning at
local level;
6.3 Define a programme for supporting local level in planning and decision making for
social welfare services in the mandate of local governments. The programme needs to
include instructions and methodologies on: the establishment of municipal inter-sectoral
planning bodies; data collection and performing needs assessments; service development
and service provision (including standards and licensing).

7. Reorganization of statutory services – “service purchasing” and gatekeeping at local
level

7.1 Define the role of CSW in the reformed social welfare and child protection system,
with clear distinction between “role of gatekeeper” and “service provider”.
7.2 Develop and implement a programme for achieving the CSW new role, necessary
preconditions, clear sequencing and necessary steps. The programme needs to include:
• capacity building of CSW staff in accordance with the new role;
• system for licensing service providers, accreditation of services and
education programmes;
• systematic introduction of case management in all CSW;
• defining the roles and responsibilities in monitoring and supervision of the
CSW “gatekeeping” function;
7.3 Redefine Standards for CSW operation based on piloting the draft Rulebook on
standards and work procedures of CSW and implement new standards in all CSW.

8. Decentralization

8.1 Reach a consensus on the necessary preconditions and sequencing of decentralization
in social welfare and child protection with the Ministry in the lead;
8.2 Define and implement action plan based on consensus for decentralization.

9. Personnel Issues
9.1 Design and implement comprehensive training programs in each of the reform areas through accredited training programs and standards of care;
9.2 Design and implement training programmes for local level stakeholders in the area of social welfare planning and programme implementation;
9.3 Organize specialized training programmes, redefine ToRs for staff and review competency of social protection staff;

10. Gatekeeping at national level

10.1 Continue developing alternative services (particularly family substitute services);
10.2 Organize training and education for CSW staff for taking on “gatekeeping” function;
10.3 Continue developing rulebooks and instructions for strengthening CSW “gatekeeping” function;
10.4 Introduce quality monitoring and evaluation of CSW staff performance;
10.5 Review the complaint mechanisms and harmonize with reformed social welfare system.

11. Material assistance for children and families

11.1 Review targeting of cash benefits and introduce changes accordingly;
11.2 Analyze pros and cons of merging the administration of cash benefits (child allowances and social welfare cash benefits) and reach decision on next steps.

12. Community based services

12.1 Define standards for services and for service providers (state, NGO and private);
12.2 Develop and implement a system for licensing and accreditation;
12.3 Develop and set-up control mechanisms (including sanctions) for services and service providers;
12.4 Develop and implement a programme for systemic and continued strengthening of the NGO sector for service provision.
12.5 Analyze impact of the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD), and other examples of good practices developed in cooperation with local and international organizations, and provide recommendations for future functioning;
12.6 Collect good practice, produce lessons learned and systematize the knowledge for policy input;
12.7 Develop models of services (Day Care Center, homecare, etc.) as an input for developing standards;
12.8 Analyze achievements and obstacles to foster care development to date, including the system of monitoring and provide policy recommendations for further development of foster care.

13. Deinstitutionalization
13.1 Review existing plans for transformation of institutions (with clear links to family substitute and family support services);
13.2 Review individual plans for children in residential institutions and plans for residential institution staff, including training and career development;
13.3 Analyze and provide recommendations for improving the social protection system for children with disability, respecting the principle of social inclusion;
13.4 Carefully formulate financial incentives for deinstitutionalization.

VI Lessons Learnt

1. Strong leadership of the responsible ministry (government) is the only way to ensure proper donor coordination and synergy of donor assistance in supporting the reform process. This includes the use of mixed working groups on particular reform issues, consisting of professionals from the statutory social welfare system, independent experts (from academia, NGO sector) and targeted international expertise. International experts need to have good knowledge of the local system and should work together with local experts.

2. The responsible ministry needs to produce a framework for supporting the development of services at local level. Development of community based services is very difficult without the direct support from the ministry (through the CSW) and without financial support. Indirect support should also be provided to local governments (for service planning) and to the NGO sector (for developing service provision). The top-down process does have its advantages in terms of being able to “instruct” CSW and thus provide country wide coverage. In parallel capacity needs to be built at local level and the ministry should have a clear role in this process.

3. Gathering good practice in the area of service development and systematizing it into lessons learned is something that needs to be incorporated earlier in the reform process. This is particularly important in the situation where standards for services have not yet been developed. It seems that the “piloting” of different project initiatives has been going on for too long because there was no systematized collection of generated knowledge and no feedback into the system at policy level.

4. The SIF and FOPD have been recognized as good examples of mechanisms for covering “transition costs” of the reform. The effects of these funds have been largely positive and could be replicated in other sectors and also in other countries. Analysis of the impact of the funds needs to be performed and lessons learned need to be systematized.

5. Sustainability of implemented projects i.e. developed services is also an issue that has not been solved in the best manner. Sustainability is ensured only for services that become embodied in the legislation i.e. become official decisions of municipal authorities in the form of “extended rights”, which often does not occur with services developed through projects. Different mechanisms need to be introduced to ensure greater sustainability, including financial mechanisms.
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http://www.parlament.sr.gov.yu/content/lat/akta/akta_detaili.asp?Id=158&t=Z
Annex 1: List of Abbreviations

AC – Advisory Committees
AM – Aide Memoire
CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency
CLDS – Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies
CSW – Centers for Social Work
DFID – Department for International Development
EAR – European Agency for Reconstruction
ECHO – European Commission Humanitarian aid
EU – European Union
FC – Family Code
FOPD – Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability
GoN – Government of Norway
IDA – International Development Association
IDPs – Internally Displaced Persons
IMF – International Monetary Fund
IMG – International Management Group
LSGs – Local Self-Governments
LSMS – Living Standards Measurement Study
MoLESP – Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy
MoLSP – Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
MOP – cash assistance
NGO – Non-governmental Organization
NIP – National Investment Plan
NPA – National Plan of Action
PRS IFP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point
PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SCTM – Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities
SEE – South East Europe
SIDA – Swedish International Development Agency
SC – Steering Committee
SIF – Social Innovation Fund
ToR – Terms of Reference
UN – United Nations
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNCRC – United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
WB – World Bank
Annex 2: Terms of Reference

Assessment of the Child Welfare System in the SEE Region: Terms of Reference for Local Researcher

1. BACKGROUND

In mid 2006, UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS received regional funding from SIDA for a project entitled ‘The Reform of the Child Care System in CEE/CIS – taking stock and accelerating action’. The project takes place from June 2006 to December 2009. The project aims to address the following issues regarding the reform of child care in the noted regions:

- availability of a **continuum of services** in different communities and countries, which is able to address diverse vulnerabilities through individual planning, based on an aim of providing quality care for children;
- upgrading of **local capacity for planning and financing** of a continuum of services, since the reform is closely linked to good governance and decentralisation. This issue is also linked to a need for a clarification of responsibilities and mandates (inter-sectoral cooperation);
- A need for careful **budgeting for the transition costs during the reform period** and **costing of the new child care services**.
- the situation regarding the **policy environment** in which the reform is taking place,
- the role of the state in the **gatekeeping** at national and sub-national level.

The project has **threelfold objectives**:

4. To accelerate the reform of the child care system by facilitating a renewed commitment for the reform through a consultative process and lessons learned;
5. To build synergies between specialized institutions, NGOs, Governmental reform practitioners and financial institutions in their contributions to the reform by facilitating systematic exchange of good practices and lessons learned;
6. To facilitate access to the latest knowledge and know-how for reform practitioners and to expand the mechanisms for regional capacity development.

These are to be addressed through **activities** carried out in several phases:

A. Phase 1 – Sub-regional consultations in order to prepare a Ministerial Conference to take place in 2008, potentially in connection with the CoE and its Council of Ministers. The Conference is to be prepared through three sub-regional consultations (2006-2007; in SEE, CAK, concluded by SC and RUB consultation). Each consultation will review the progress and shortcomings of the reform process in the sub-region and identify opportunities for accelerating the reform.

B. Phase 2 – Follow-up to sub-regional consultations (through, i.e. debriefings and roundtables, the Ministerial Conference and the dissemination of outcomes (through a publication).

C. Phase 3 – Building synergies and facilitating longer term capacity development of Governments and reform practitioners – promotion of importance of prevention by ensuring that the ‘continuum of services’ is included as an integral part of the reform design and co-operation in supporting M&E activities.
The Assessment that is subject of this ToR is one of the activities to be carried out during the Phase 1 of the project. It will be used to illustrate key elements for progress and current gaps in the reform processes in the target countries, in support for the preparation and work of the first sub-regional consultation, one in the SEE (covering Albania, Serbia, UNAP Kosovo, Montenegro, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey).

2. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE ASSESSMENT
The overall objectives of the Assessment include:
• an increase in understanding of the progress and shortcomings of the reform process in SEE, from the view of different stakeholders on county and regional level, which can serve as a ‘baseline’ for further reform support
• provide policy analysis that can serve as an input for further support for the reform process, among both local and regional/international actors

The specific objectives of the Assessment include:
2.1. identify benchmarks against which to assess and analyse the reform progress
2.2. assess and analyse (individually-per country and jointly – per region) progress of the child care system reform in the selected countries, in order to determine a baseline for further monitoring of the reform process
2.3. identify opportunities to accelerate the reform of the child care system
2.4. enable local ownership of the assessment process
2.5. enable a review and input for further UNICEF support for the reform
2.6. outline a “model planning (monitoring?) tool” to be used in subsequent sub-regional consultations (CARK, SC & RUB)

Format-wise, the focus is to be primarily on:
- the lessons learnt from the best practices, as identified by the involved stakeholders,
- relation of the child care reform with the wider social welfare reform efforts, and
- ensuring, as much as possible given the local circumstances and the assessment timeframe, the local ownership of the assessment process.

The assessment is also to feed into the preparation of the Conference. Hence, content-wise, the focus will be on 5 reform issues that are to be explored at the Conference:
4. policy environment for the reform,
5. service planning,
6. provision of a ‘service continuum’,
7. service gatekeeping at different level (national/regional/local),
8. costing, finances and budgeting.

This two focus sets shall be explored through:
- the assessment against the benchmarks for child care policy reform (content-issue)
- analysis of progress of the reform (format-issue)
- recommendations for next steps (format and content issues).
Each of these processes requires detailed tools that shall be developed in the early phases of the assessment process and presented to the local researchers during their preparatory meeting in Croatia.

3. **ASSESSMENT METHODS**
The overall assessment approach and methods are documented in a separate ToR.

4. **DETAILED TASKS OF THE CONSULTANT**

The commissioning of a skilled local researcher is essential to the assessment process. *Key tasks* are to include:

- Co-operation with the identified relevant local stakeholders (that would act in a steering/advisory capacity), the Head Researcher and the UNICEF throughout the Assessment process, through:
  - On-going e-mail supervision with the Head Researcher
  - On-going liaison with the UNICEF local office (to be agreed with the UNICEF local office)
  - Approx. 3 meetings with a steering body or individual meetings with the key stakeholders (in order to guide the entire assessment process)

- A comprehensive desk review of external and internal documents (prior studies, reviews, evaluations, descriptive documents), resulting in a country level overview of child care reform, per 5 reform issues (policy environment; planning; existing and reform-oriented services; gatekeeping; costing, finances and budgeting).
  
  Documents to be included in the review are to be collected and compiled in co-operation with other relevant local stakeholders from the statutory and voluntary sector.

- Creation of country files, with documentation upon which each of the country-level reviews is based.

- Creation of maps of governance and continuum of services in their country.

- Further desk research and fieldwork data gathering – for assessment questions not answered through the desk review (max of 5 days), including
  - Devising of additional data gathering methods, in co-operation with the local stakeholders and the Head Researcher,

- Stakeholder consultations and interviews

- Data analysis (under supervision of the Head Researcher),

- A discussion of the draft assessment report with the local stakeholders (leading to the generation of country-level recommendations for further reform efforts),

- A write up of a draft Country Assessment report (in a format to be agreed with the Head Researcher)

- A write-up of the country level compilation of useful (best) practices in child welfare,

5. **TIMEFRAME FOR THE MAJOR TASKS**

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<td>1. Complete country files, including documentation upon which each of the country-level reviews is based</td>
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<td>2. Graphic presentations (maps) of governance and continuum of services for each of the countries</td>
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<td>3. Country level reviews of the reform progress in order to identify shortcomings/obstacles and good practices</td>
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<td>4. Country level compilation of useful (best) practices in child welfare, identifying the lessons learnt from reform-supporting practices in the selected countries</td>
<td>Local researchers</td>
<td>20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; of May 2007 – draft 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; of May 2007 – final</td>
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**Annex 3: Assessment Tool**

**CEE Assessment, Child protection reform, UNICEF RO**

**Format-wise**, the **focus** is to be primarily on:
- the lessons learnt from the best practices, as identified by the involved stakeholders,
- relation of the child care reform with the wider social welfare reform efforts, and
- ensuring, as much as possible given the local circumstances and the assessment timeframe, the local ownership of the assessment process.

The assessment is also to feed into the preparation of the Conference. Hence, **content-wise**, the **focus** will be on **5 reform issues**:
1. policy environment for the reform,
2. service planning,
3. provision of a ‘service continuum’,
4. service gatekeeping at different level (national/regional/local),
5. costing, finances and budgeting.

**Main assessment issues:**

**TARGET GROUPS OF THE REFORM EFFORTS**
The issue of target groups of children and families is a ‘cross-cutting issue’ for the entire assessment. The assessment addresses child protection reform, within the wider sphere of social protection reform. However, the reform efforts may have addressed particular target groups more so than others:
- children without parental care,
- children with physical disabilities,
- children with learning disabilities,
- children exposed to violence and/or neglect,
- trafficked children,
- children in conflict with the law,
- children living in poverty (in some countries, for example, households with three or more children have been identified as those at particular risk of living in poverty and identified as key target groups for social protection reform)
- Roma children,
- Children living in institutions or at risk of separation from their families (i.e. due to a lack of parental care or due to physical/learning disability),
- Children coming of age (reaching 18 years of age, making them ineligible for support within the child protection system).

In other countries in the region (i.e. Croatia, BiH), target groups would also include children of war veterans, displaced children/returnee children, etc. Each of the country may have specific, additional target groups of children and/or their families, depending on specific political, economic and/or social circumstances.

The assessment targets **children and families at risk**, identified primarily through:
- Family Law
- Social Protection Law
- Other documents/strategies (social inclusion memorandums, PRSP, Action Plans for Children, strategies focused on particular societal groups)

Do also note if particular age groups are more emphasised more so than other (i.e. more focus on younger vs. older children)

Evidence for each of the assessment questions may not be easily found under the umbrella term of children and families using/eligible for child protection services, but in documents which address the
needs of solely one or few of the identified target groups of children. Also, specific assessment issues such as, for example, family substitute services, primarily relate to children without parental care or children exposed to violence in their families. It is relevant to explore the evidence regarding the assessment questions (key documents, policies, legislation, examples of good practice) for as many of the noted target groups as possible.

It is also relevant to note if the reform targets not just children, but also other, adult service users (i.e. that the reorganisation of statutory services, with the introduction of care management procedures addresses the separation in regards to not only children but also adult service users).

There may be research or assessments available that highlight which children are left out and should be service users – i.e. in Albania there is a study available regarding children that stay in Albania and whose parents work abroad. Hence, try to identify (if such information is available) if there are children that should be considered as service users, but currently are not.

**WHAT IS ‘UNDER REFORM’?**

For the assessment purposes, it is relevant to identify certain aspects of child/social protection that are affected by the reform. These issues need to be addressed/explored through the assessment questions. Reform may affect only particular issues or all of them.

1.1. During the assessment, a mapping exercise should result in a map that outlines the decision making/accountability/reporting lines and the sources of funding. In parallel, it is relevant to establish whether parts of such a map were initiated during the reform. Certain **consultative, co-operation or decision making processes or processes that facilitate innovation** in service organisation and provision may have been put in place to facilitate the restructuring of the system at national, regional, local and/or facility/service level. Such structures may be temporary (to serve the purposes of assessment) or reflect permanent changes in the service system. Is there a body that was given a mandate to lead the reform? Is there a body that was given a mandate to lead the reform and service planning? If yes, which body and why? If yes, how are these organised within the governance system (local, regional or national level)? Which methodologies are deployed for service planning (who takes part, in what way and to what end/aim)?

1.2. **Child/social protection services** on the local level may undergo **reorganisation** to support the reform. Their role needs to be transformed from being both service purchasers and providers, to becoming mainly or exclusively service purchasers. These are usually introduced through **care management** on organisational and individual level. Service purchasing may be re-organised, introducing needs- rather than service-led assessments of needs, care planning, a review of a care plan, closure of care when and if it is required, etc. Such changes serve also as gatekeeping for services on the local level and for service planning based on individual needs on local level.

*This issue refers to changes in the case management (professional work) and the way it is supported/organised - work regarding assessments, care plans, reviews, monitoring, case closure (individual care management/case management), but also number of service users per professional, ‘positionality’ of budgets (devolved, centralised...) as well as collaboration with other relevant stakeholders (organisational level of care management).*

*Note also if these professionals also providing services (i.e. counselling, mediation, etc.) or acting solely as purchasers.*

*Describe briefly what is their legal mandate + the changes (if any exist).*

*Do they cover all the risks (adults + children, particular groups of children/adults)?*

*Is case management organised as outreach work or is it carried out solely within social welfare services? Are there any other innovations in how case management is implemented? How is the total demand for services in a geographical area (local, regional) established? How is individual demand*
for services established (individual case management)? How is care management organised in terms of institutional set up (role description, case loads, etc.)?
What are the main obstacles?
What are the main successes?

1.3. What type of decentralisation is taking place (financially, organisationally)?

**Decentralisation** of services may be introduced, particularly in regards to, for example, budgeting of services, in order to ensure the principle that ‘money follows the client’/intergovernmental transfers. It also serves as a rationale for ‘decision making to follow the client’ - for the service planning to be (re)introduced as much as possible on the municipal level. Are the statutory services at local level entirely/partly in the domain of local self governance or are these services deconcentrated organs of national/regional government bodies? Are any of these services functioning as part of regional government structures and since when (i.e. Regional services for children with learning disabilities)? Which statutory services for children and families are provided on the local authority level? Is there evidence of planning activities with other sectors (cross-sectoral co-operation)? Did changes in the ‘positionality’ of funding/organisation lead to lack of funding available for developing community based services (intergovernmental transfers)? Are there regional differences that happened/which were reinforced due to decentralisation? Include mention of outsourcing to non-statutory providers – how it’s organised/commissioning?

1.4. Reorganisation of services also affects employees, and, hence, personnel issues are relevant and need to be explored. Do situational analyses, key reform documents or regulatory documents address the personnel issues? If yes, how and what personnel issues are addressed (deployment, compensation payments, re-training)?

1.5. Reform efforts also usually require for new forms of **gatekeeping at national level** to be established. These may be organised through the initiation/reorganisation of the inspection processes, licensing of service providers, establishment of guidelines for new accountabilities within the system, establishment of an appeal system. What evidence there is that such practices exist or are initiated? Include mention of outsourcing to non-statutory providers – licencing, standards, all other regulation of provision carried out by non-statutory providers.

1.6. Within the reorganisation of statutory services, **material (cash and in-kind) assistance** for children and/or families may be reorganised. The provision of cash assistance may be separated from other forms of social protection. Any such changes need to be described, based on relevant evidence. Identify main cash/in kind benefits. Payments related to i.e. Child Protection Acts are the most relevant since these are either payments for services (i.e. kinship and foster care payments) or measures facilitating access to services (i.e. “social investment in children”). Do provide commentary as to whether the amounts paid are adequate, whether administration of the material assistance is efficient or if access is equally guaranteed everywhere.

Regarding other cash benefits, emphasis should be placed on the ones which are targeted towards the poor and at risk. Are further refinements regarding means testing required? Is there a need to increase the amounts available through cash assistance? Is there a need to reform the access for people that are not in receipt of benefits but should be?

Universal benefits – regardless if they belong to Social Insurance or Social Assistance – should only be mentioned. Note if there are any correctives in favour of at risk groups.

1.7. Among service providers (statutory, non-governmental or private), different forms of **community-based services** may be introduced (locally available services, regardless of how these are funded). These should be guided by the principle that child should be, as much as possible, cared for within the family or within a family-type environment. Such services may include:

- family support services (i.e. for children at risk of being separated from their families due to poverty, children with disabilities whose families have difficulty coping)
- family substitute services (for children without parental care)

Include mention of outsourcing to non-statutory providers.
If numbers are available from reliable sources, it would be useful (number of services, number of beneficiaries).

Non-statutory includes non-governmental (donor-funded), religious, private services. Differences between them may be relevant in terms of their ‘visibility’ to/acknowledgement/control exercised by statutory, purchasing services.

1.8. Due to a need to support family-type environment for child protection services, there is an impetus for the introduction of deinstitutionalisation of services for different children at risk (i.e. children at conflict with law, children without parental care, children with disabilities). This may lead to the initiation of the reform, or be part of key reform documents or regulatory documents. The way a particular institution is transformed/closed down may serve as an example of good practice in child protection reform. Reform may be evidenced in the plans for stopping new entries into such institutions or accelerating exit from residential care. It is also a particularly sensitive issue among personnel managing or working in institutions for children; institutions may be criticised by some reform stakeholders (i.e. non-governmental agencies that initiate/partake in the reform) and personnel in institutions may see such criticism and the overall deinstitutionalisation efforts as criticism of all their work to date and/or a threat to their jobs in future.

All children separated from families and based in institutional care should be mentioned (i.e. special schools, juvenile delinquency placements, hospitals for children with disabilities) – in other words, include notes on health or education funded institutions or others that are funded from sources other than child/social protection.

If numbers are available from reliable sources, it would be useful to include these in the assessment (number of services, number of beneficiaries).

Include mention of outsourcing to non-statutory providers.

Additional reform issue
The CRC emphasises the relevance of child participation. Different aspects of representation and/or participation of children may be evident in different aspects of the reform process. For example, the forms used for individual care management may include sections which allow for child’s opinions to be included in their needs assessment and/or care plan. Separate services providing children information in appropriate formats or offering them independent representation may be developed/initiated. Any such examples should also be noted and evidenced as an additional ‘cross-cutting issue’.

Assessment questions:
1. WHO INITIATED THE OVERALL REFORM OR A PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THE REFORM?

Reform of child protection or social protection may be initiated by the government (i.e. as part of the EU accession preparation) or by non-governmental or supra-governmental actors (such as the NGOs advocating the needs and rights of a particular group of children or the overall children at risk). It is relevant to note who is the main driver of the reform process, and who is ‘on board’ during the reform initiation and the remaining reform process.

Evidence for the reform initiation can be found in documents such as situation analysis. These may refer to particular target groups of children, the overall child protection or the entire social protection.

Sub-questions include:
1.1. Which documents supported the initiation of the reform (i.e. the situation analysis, key research)?
1.2. Who commissioned these documents and why?
1.3. Who wrote them and why? (an “insider” or an “outsider”)
1.4. What information do these documents include and for which topic?
1.5. What were the following steps/practices/documents after the reform was initiated (i.e. information guided the development of the key reform documents or the changes in legislation)? Do they make references to the documents that supported the initiation of the reform? If yes, how?
1.6. How does this information influence (future) key changes?

2. WHAT ARE THE KEY REFORM DOCUMENTS?
Many countries in the region treat the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP) as a key reform document. There may be a mid-term Action Plan for Children in existence, too. Such documents usually outline quantitative key targets for the reform (in the action plan contained within such documents). Sub-questions on this issue include:
- Which key reform documents exist?
- Who developed these documents?
- What do these documents state regarding child protection (again, noting particular target groups of children)?
- What are the child protection sections of these documents based on (i.e. key research, situational analyses, other)?
- If there are more than one key document – do these overlap and, if yes, in what respect?
- Who is responsible for the implementation of these documents?
- Who is responsible for monitoring of these documents? Was monitoring already conducted? If yes, what do these monitoring documents state regarding child protection?
- What kind of M&E indicators are stated in the key reform documents and/or utilised for monitoring?
- What is their level of implementation (to be established through the analysis of their action plans)?
- What are the achievements of these documents?
- What were the obstacles in the implementation of these documents?

3. WHAT LEGISLATION, STANDARDS, INTER-SECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS OR OTHER DOCUMENTS REGULATES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM?
Key reform documents usually point to the relevant changes in the ‘regulatory documents’ such as key legislation, standards for particular aspects of social/child protection, inter-sectoral arrangements, etc. It is relevant to analyse:
- Which regulatory documents were changed/introduced, based on the key reform documents?
- Which changes were introduced this way and why?
- On which level were these introduced (national/regional/local)?
- Who are the key stakeholders for these regulatory documents?
- Is there evidence available on the implementation of these documents (‘paper-based reform’ or ‘practice-based reform’)?
4. **Which changes were introduced regarding the costing of services, finances and budgets for services?**

Reform efforts usually require for additional funding to be provided, for services to be costed in a different way (or even for the unit cost of particular services to be established) and for budgets to be reorganised (i.e. jointly merged from social, health care and/or education). Hence, evidence needs to be collected that indicates the changes in the:

- costing of services
- funding of services
- budgets for services.

Evidence should also reflect who initiated the reorganisation of these issues and which body is eligible for the changes in the costing, funding or budgeting. A questionnaire is available in the appendix. It outlines the information that should guide the information gathering for this question. In regards to the questionnaire, it is important to note:

- each country may not have all the data (which is also an important piece of information);
- for each question - but particularly so for the question for which you will be unable to provide answers - please note how you tried to obtain the information;
- you should add comments explaining the data presented - for some questions you may only have partial info (for example the service is provided at local level and you cannot track it on the national level, or the service does not exist).

5. **What are the examples of good practice initiated during the reform?**

It is relevant for the countries in the CEE to be able to learn from each other, based on the examples of good practice. These can relate to any or all of the noted reform issues. Examples of good practice need to be written up in a separate document. Each example should be summarised on 1-3 pages, including the following information:

1. Name of the identified good practice
2. Contact persons
3. Brief description of the good practice, including:
   a. Who initiated it (statutory authority, NGOs, private)?
   b. When was it initiated?
   c. Why was it initiated?
   d. Where was it initiated (i.e. only some municipalities/regions or nation-wide)?
   e. How is it organised?
   f. Aims of the programme?
   g. Objectives of the programme?
   h. Places where it is implemented (localities, regions, nation-wide)?
   i. Inputs into the programme development?
   j. Outputs/expected results of the programme?
4. Budgets
5. Advantages
6. Restraints and shortcomings
Matrix of the assessment tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key reform issues</th>
<th>Who initiated the reform?</th>
<th>What are the key reform strategy documents?</th>
<th>Legislation, standards, inter-sectoral arrangements</th>
<th>Costing, finances and budgets</th>
<th>Good practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service planning and decision making regarding the reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reorganisation of statutory services (service purchasers – care management; gatekeeping on local level)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decentralisation</td>
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<td>Personnel issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gatekeeping at national level (inspection, licensing, accountabilities, appeal systems)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Material</strong> assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community based services (reorganisation of statutory services, service providers; including: family support services, family substitute services)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deinstitutionalisation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Cross cutting issues:
- target groups of children
- child representation and participation
**STRUCTURE OF DATA GATHERING, CEE ASSESSMENT**

1st meeting of the steering group
- review the assessment tool
- collect information re. documents and other sources of information that evidence different assessment issues/questions and how/from whom to obtain evidence for them
- identify potential examples of good practice
- schedule individual meetings with key members of the steering group (those that have information on good practices, but - after sufficient time for documents review)
- schedule the following meeting (after sufficient time for documents review) and individual meetings

**Individual meetings with key members of the steering group**
- good practice and significant changes in the reform

**Review documents re.**
- benchmarks

**Develop maps re:**
- governance
- service continuum

**Send out to steering group members:**
- draft answers re. the assessment tool
- draft reviews re. good practice (with intro, comprised of the analysis of individual interviews)

2nd meeting of the steering group
- Brief presentations of the draft answers for the assessment & draft reviews re. good practice
- Discuss the draft documents, identifying where information is missing and could be collated (including information where and from whom this information can be collected)

**Options, depending on whether there is information missing or not**
- Review further documents (re. data missing)
- Collect other data from individual sources
- Send out new drafts to steering group

2nd meeting of the steering group (cont’d)
Facilitate the discussion on the final assessment issues (see guide)

3rd meeting of the steering group
Present the new drafts
Facilitate discussion on the final assessment issues (see guide)
Interview guide – individual interviews with key members of the steering group (re. good practices):
1. What are the most significant achievements of the child care reform to date?
   a. What makes them the most significant?
   b. What evidence there is for these changes?
2. What are the good examples of the child care reform?
   a. What makes them good examples?
   b. Which actors (from which level and from which sectors) were involved in the initiation and development of these examples?
   c. Why was it initiated and when?
   d. Where is it implemented?
   e. Check if they also know aims, objectives, inputs, outputs/expected results and budgets for these practices (information relevant for the template for description of good practices)
   f. Which obstacles these practices faced (particularly re. 5 key issues)?
   g. How did they overcome them?
   h. Do you have any other additional information on these practices (i.e. documents, other relevant contacts)?

Issues for discussion for the last meeting of the Steering group
3. Based on the good practices to date and the overall assessment against benchmarks - what is the potential that will help aid further reform efforts?
4. What should be the next issues that should support the reform process at the country level?
   a. Why are these issues relevant for the reform?
   b. How should these issues be addressed?
   c. By whom?
   d. For whom?

Annex 4: List of Steering Group members

List of Assessment Steering Committee Members

1. Ljubomir Pejakovic, Assistant minister, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MOLSP)
2. Dragica Vlaovic, Head of Strategy implementation unit, MOLSP
3. Aleksandra Jovic, Head of PRS Implementation Focal Point, Government of Serbia
4. Zarko Sunderic, PRSP Implementation Focal Point, Government of Serbia
5. Prof. Ivo Ivic, Member of Council for Child Rights of the Government of Serbia, university professor
6. Olivera Zecevic, Assistant minister, Ministry of Interior
7. Danilo Vukovic, Head of Management Unit, Social Innovation Fund
8. Vladan Jovanovic, Advisor, Social Innovation Fund
9. Ivana Stevanovic, Researcher, Child Rights Center
10. Vesna Stanojevic, Director, Counseling Against Family Violence
Annex 5: Experts consulted and interviewed

List of independent experts consulted on the Draft Assessment

1. Gordana Matkovic, Director of Social Policy Studies, Center for Liberal Democratic Studies (CLDS)
2. Milica Stranjakovic, Social policy consultant, Center for Liberal Democratic Studies (CLDS)
3. Zeljko Plavsic, Director, Education Center, Leskovac

List of persons interviewed

1. Dragica Vlaovic, Head of Strategy implementation unit, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
2. Vladan Jovanovic, Advisor, Social Innovation Fund
3. Olivera Zecevic, Assistant minister, Ministry of Interior
Annex 6: The System map
Annex 7: Good Practice Portfolio

Good Practice 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/description of the good initiative:</th>
<th>Social Innovation Fund</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</td>
<td>Ministry of Labor and Social Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Danilo Vukovic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title/Function:</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Danilo.sif@minrzs.sr.gov.yu">Danilo.sif@minrzs.sr.gov.yu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation level</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional (county)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Local (city, municipality, district)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:…………………………………………….</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Type of reform effort

- Consultative process
- Planning and financing
- X Re-organization/creation of services

Area of application

- Cash benefits
- Statutory services
- Family substitute services
- Family and child support services
- Gate-keeping
- Outreach
- Targeting and forecasting
- Costing and financial flows
- Other:…………………………………………….

Internet link where further information can be found: www.sif.minrzs.sr.gov.yu

Attached document: …………………………………………………………………………

Elaboration:

Social Innovation Fund

1. Who initiated this practice?
The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) Program was initiated by the Ministry for Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

2. When was it initiated?
2002

3. Why was it initiated?
The program was designed as a joint fund of budgetary and donors’ funding set up to finance the development of the community based services and to cover the transitional costs for the establishment of these services. The SIF was designed as a mechanism of change in the area of social welfare services at local level, mechanism for decentralization and deinstitutionalization, as well as tool for developing partnerships between the government, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders at local level and their capacity building. The SIF model as a mechanism for reforms and innovation in developing social welfare services at local level was nominated as a best practice model/example in the annual CARDS report for 2005.80

4. How is it organized?
The SIF was designed as a mechanism of change in the area of social welfare services at local level, mechanism for decentralization and deinstitutionalization, as

well as tool for developing partnerships between government, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders at local level and their capacity building.

Prior to launching the Program, a Program Implementation Unit was established with the task of managing the calls for proposals and project implementation. An Operational Manual was produced, where all the administrative and organizational procedures were set up, followed by development of web-site, all instructions and guidelines necessary for its functioning. The launching of the SIF was at the end of 2002 and the first call for proposals was published in the first half of the year 2003. The calls of proposals are organized annually, published in the main daily newspapers and on the SIF web-site with the complete application forms, instructions, other required documents including appraisal criteria and process; each call for proposal offered the “topics” in accordance with requirements of the ongoing reform processes.

In the period from 2003 to 2006 inclusive (3 calls for proposals) total of 130 projects (innovative services) were approved.

5. What are the aims of this program?
The aims of the program are founded on the following principles a) bridging the gap between short-term needs and long-term reform objectives by supporting reform oriented alternative forms of social care at local level, thus indirectly supplementing the transitional costs of social system reform, b) creating value for social investment by fostering innovation, quality and civil-society partnership, c) strengthening coordination of inputs and outputs of all relevant sectors involved in social system reform, d) ensuring coherence among the types and quality of services in order to avoid the introduction of incompatible and unsustainable models, and e) facilitating inclusion of the private sector (non-profit and profit, as appropriate) in social services.

6. What are the objectives of this program?
The main objectives (as defined in the SIF Operational Manual) of the SIF are:
1) Upgrading of the existing services,
2) Fostering inclusion and deinstitutionalization through alternative services, and
3) Providing access to larger number of beneficiaries to social services.

An important argument supporting the SIF accomplishments to date is the high level of beneficiaries’ satisfaction (over 90%), as a result of two Beneficiary Assessments (BAs), conducted in 2005 and 2006 (information from www.sif.minrzs.sr.gov.yu).

7. What were the inputs and outputs/expected results?
The SIF specific outputs are (as defined in the SIF Operational Manual):
1) Increased institutional and organizational capacity of all social welfare services and institutions participating in SIF and social workers acting as agents of change,
2) Increased number of children taken care of in foster families
3) Developed foster care for children with disabilities and support to families that have children with disabilities
4) Increased number of elderly people and persons/children with disabilities provided with day-care, respite care and other alternatives to institutional care
5) Increased number of innovative services provided together by CSWs and NGOs addressing the issues of violence against women and children, children and youth in conflict with the law, families at risk, responsible

parenthood, etc.
6) Developed partnership between social welfare institutions, NGOs and local administrations (including other relevant stakeholders).

9. What are the main advantages?
The main advantage of SIF is its applied and sustainable strategy – it is created as a nucleus where the policy, donor support, social welfare institutions and NGOs all meet. In practice it means that a) SIF incorporates good practice to address the needs for social welfare support, b) SIF promotes the models that can be replicated, and d) SIF promotes plurality of social welfare service providers.

8. What is the budget for this program?
In the period 2003-2007 the total SIF project budget was 5.2 million euros; the share of budgetary funds varied from 30 to 40% (with donor funds participating with 60 to 70%). The main donors are the Government of Norway, EAR (through UNDP) and DFID.

10. What are the restraints and shortcomings?
The main challenge for SIF in the area of social welfare services represents mobilization of social service-providers and ensuring their full understanding/acceptance of their changed roles, standard practices and accountability (in relation to their clients and the society in general). All social welfare services need to be brought in line with the relevant International Conventions and to European standards of practice. One of the serious shortcomings reflecting on SIF is the lack of standards, licensing and accreditation as the main preconditions for fully applied plurality of service providers and quality control of provided services. A second shortcoming is the lack of a mechanism to ensure that local governments take on the financing of service developed through the SIF. Thirdly, the NGO sector in terms of social service provision is underdeveloped: NGOs are concentrated in larger cities, so there is an uneven geographical spread and the capacity for service provision is also limited. This was clearly visible during the most recent call for proposals organized by SIF where there was a lack of quality NGOs that applied for projects related to de-institutionalization of services and the provision of alternatives for social and child care.
Good Practice 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/description of the good initiative:</th>
<th>Sustainable Rett Day Care Center</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</td>
<td>Rett Association of Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Dejan Djordjevic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title/Function:</td>
<td>President of the Rett Association of Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rett@jbi.bg.ac.yu">rett@jbi.bg.ac.yu</a></td>
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<td>Type of reform effort</td>
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<td>Targeting and forecasting</td>
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<td>Costing and financial flows</td>
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Elaboration:
Sustainable Rett Day Care Center in Belgrade

1. Who initiated this practice?
The practice was initiated by the Rett Association of Serbia – an Association of Parents of Girls with Rett Syndrome.

2. When was it initiated?
2002

3. Why was it initiated?
In Serbia and in Belgrade there were no Day Care Center services organized for girls with Rett syndrome and these girls were not part of the social welfare and child protection system. The parents of girls with Rett syndrome in Belgrade founded their own Association in 1995. For years the children and parents were without any type of state support. With the start of the reform process, the Rett Association applied for support in organizing a service for their children.

4. How is it organized?
In 2002, when the Ministry of Social Affairs started the reform in the social welfare system, the Rett Association approached the Ministry with a request for financing a pilot Weekend Day Care Center in the premises of one of the residential institutions in Belgrade. Funds were awarded for the project in 2002 from the just established Fund for Associations of Persons with Disability (FOPD)82.

82 FOPD is financed from budgetary funds, from proceeds from the lottery, as per the Law on Lottery (1992) and new Law on Lottery (2004).
Following a successful completion of this first pilot project, the Association applied to the FOPD in 2003 for new funding to organize a Day Care Center three days a week in different premises of the same residential home in Belgrade. The time spent at the Day Care Center was the first time these girls socialized, received care that responded to their specific needs and left the isolation of their homes. Towards the end of the FOPD funding for the second year of activities (2003), the City of Belgrade took over the regular financing of the Day Care Center, according to its mandate to fund day care center services on its territory.

5. What are the aims of this program?
The aim of the program is twofold:

a) To develop sustainable alternative services to support children and their families;
b) To promote good practice in terms of piloting, development and sustainability of this program, to be replicated in other types of service development.

6. What are the objectives of this program?

a) Provide a sustainable service for preventive support to families with children who have Rett syndrome so that the child could stay in the family environment and socialize with peers and participate in tailored individual programs for developing the capacity of every girl in the Center.
b) Develop lessons from this good practice model for developing family support services in Serbia.

7. What were the inputs and outputs/expected results?

- Improved condition of girls with Rett syndrome (physical therapy, cognitive exercises, peer socializing, etc.)
- Quality of family life of families with children with Rett syndrome will improve
- Parents will have more time, including the possibility to work
- Education for families with similar problems throughout Serbia

8. What is the budget for this program?
The total approximate budget for the two (2002 and 2003) projects funded by the FOPD is 15,000 Euro

9. What are the main advantages?

- A service has been established that is tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries;
- The parents are working as volunteers together with the professionals and this ensures that the best interest of the child is respected;
- The service has become sustainable and the local government (in this case the City of Belgrade) has recognized and accepted its responsibility for providing the service.

10. What are the restraints and shortcomings?
A potential shortcoming is that there are no standards for these types of services, so there can be no “independent” quality assurance of the implemented programs in the Day Care Center. This shortcoming has been addressed by the Rett Association by inviting professionals who are not engaged in the work of the Center to provide their opinions and recommendations on the work of the Day Care Center.
**Good Practice 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/description of the good initiative:</th>
<th>Joint program implementation in the area of social welfare strategic planning at local level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency/Service/NGO responsible:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact person:</td>
<td>Dragica Vlaovic Vasiljevic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title/Function:</td>
<td>Head of Social Welfare Development Strategy Implementation Unit, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dragicaw@minrzs.sr.gov.yu">dragicaw@minrzs.sr.gov.yu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation level</td>
<td>National</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Regional (county)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Local (city, municipality, district)</td>
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<td>Attached document: ..........................................................</td>
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</table>

**Elaboration:**

**Joint program implementation in the area of social welfare strategic planning at local level**

1. **Who initiated this practice?**
   The Ministry for Labor and Social Policy (MOLSP)

2. **When was it initiated?**
   March 2007

3. **Why was it initiated?**
   During the past several years in Serbia, many (mostly donor funded) projects have been implemented in the area of strategic planning at local level. Although many projects aimed at assisting municipalities to produce (and to some extent implement) comprehensive local development strategies, the majority did not include the component of social protection and child protection. Recognizing the need to address this gap, some donors (UNICEF, DFID, Government of Norway) started providing assistance to local governments in developing social welfare and child protection strategic plans and action plans, through the form of pilot projects. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in its Social Welfare Development Strategy states the need for assisting local governments in planning and commissioning social welfare services that are in their mandate. Since donors expressed interest to continue providing assistance in this area (DFID, Government of Norway and UNDP) and upscale their interventions, the Ministry invited the donors to join efforts and provide assistance to local governments in a coordinated manner, with clear leadership from the Ministry.
4. How is it organized?
For the purpose of coordinating the ongoing programs and harmonizing the methodologies in the area of social welfare strategic planning at municipal level, the MOLSP established a Joint Committee for the selection of municipalities that will be participating in the following donor funded programs:

1) Support to the implementation of the Social Welfare Reform Strategy, supported by the DfID and the Government of Norway in 24 municipalities in Serbia. The project includes the component of local strategic planning and implementation;

2) UNDP/EAR supported program that will provide assistance in drafting strategic social welfare plans in 80 municipalities in Serbia;

3) Tools and mechanisms for local development in 10 small and under-capacitated municipalities, supported by the Government of Norway and implemented by the Center for Liberal Democratic Studies (CLDS) and Standing Conference for Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) for developing local strategic social welfare plans.

The Joint Committee consists of the following institutions/organizations: MOLSP, MPALG (Ministry of Public administration and Local Governments), Ministry of Finance, Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point (PRS IFP), Social Innovation Fund (SIF), Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Civic Initiatives, Center for Liberal Democratic Studies (CLDS), DfID and UNDP.

5. What are the aims of this program?
The aim of the program is to provide coordinated support to the local level in strategic social welfare and child protection planning, so as to build their capacity for the development, commissioning and financing of social services that are in the mandate of local governments, and consequently provide adequate care for social welfare beneficiaries, including children in need.

6. What are the objectives of this program?
The established Joint Committee at central level has been tasked with a) selection of municipalities to avoid geographical overlapping between three programs and therefore the confusion in these municipalities and b) coordination of programs with extracting lessons learned and good practice and sharing them. Therefore, the objectives are to:

- Social welfare strategic planning programs at local level are produced in the majority of municipalities in Serbia;
- Plans are in line with National Social Welfare Development Strategy;
- Planning methodology is harmonized and in line with national level reforms;
- Lessons learned are compiled by the MOLSP and will be used for policy changes.

7. What were the inputs and outputs/expected results?
The three programs will jointly have a geographical coverage of 75% of the total number of municipalities in Serbia, i.e. 120 out of 150 municipalities will be included in local social welfare planning exercises.

8. What is the budget for this program?
The joint budget of the three donor programs is approximately:

9. What are the main advantages?
- MOLSP is leading the process and coordinating donor assistance;
- MOLSP will become more involved in the reform process at local level and will be in the position to “react” in a timely manner with policy and if necessary
legislative changes;
- Local governments and other stakeholders will receive systematized support in the area of social welfare and child protection;

**10. What are the restraints and shortcomings?**
A potential restraint is the lack of capacity of the MOLSP and Joint Committee members to be fully involved in the implementation of the donor funded programs due to the dynamics of project implementation that often require time-consuming engagement of key civil servants leading reforms and who as a rule, have a heavy workload. There will be a need for close cooperation between the management units of the programs, the Joint Committee and MOLSP leadership in order to take full advantage of the synergy effect.

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1. Which child social protection services exist and which level are they financed from?
   For each service indicate the level from which it is financed: N (national level), R (regional level), M (municipal level), D (donor funded). For services that are financed from multiple sources, indicate all the sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of service</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statutory services</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family substitute services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential institutions</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term protected shelter</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship care</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family care services</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Day care</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home based care</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-social support</td>
<td>N and M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal aid</td>
<td>N and M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (specify)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. What is the cost per child in an average institution, a typical daycare center for children with disability and remuneration for foster families?

---

83 Questionnaire was filled out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (June 2007)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of service</th>
<th>The number of children</th>
<th>Cost per child (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential home for children without parental care</td>
<td>1488</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential home for children with disability</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daycare center for children with disability (Belgrade)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care</td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>290 gross (150 € foster care fees + 140 € child costs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: if some of the mentioned services do not exist, provide data for some other corresponding service from the same group (family substitute or family care).

3. How are costs of services calculated (mark with an X)
   A. Running costs + staff
   B. Per beneficiary (child)
   C. Other (specify)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of service</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential home for children without parental care</td>
<td>X in part</td>
<td>X, including part of the staff costs and running costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential home for children with disability</td>
<td>X in part</td>
<td>X, including part of the staff costs and running costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daycare center for children with disability</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>, includes gross foster care fees and child costs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. Is there some specific mechanism for financing alternative child protection services. If yes, describe in a few sentences how this works and indicate the total amount of funds spent in 2006.

Two special funds were established in 2002 and 2003 with the principle aim to support the development of community based services: the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and the Fund for Organizations of Persons with Disability (FOPD). The two funds have the following main characteristics:

- Decentralization
- Covering transition costs
- Transformation of residential institutions/deinstitutionalization
- Good practice transmission
- Supporting reform at local level

The difference between the two funds is in their management and in their mode of financing. The SIF is a programme managed by a separate Management Unit, while the FOPD operates within the Ministry Department for Improving the Position of Persons with Disability. In terms of financing, the SIF is funded by both donor and government funds, while the FOPD is funded solely from government funds, from lottery proceeds.

The total amount of funds spent by SIF in 2006 was approx. 1.7 million Euros (900.000 donor funds and 800.000 government funds)

The total amount of funds spent by FOPD in 2006 was approx. 3.5 million Euros.