

Terms of references

Final Evaluation of the Project

“TRANSFORMING RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES”

I. Background

The placement of disadvantaged children in large residential institutions has been for several decades a leading paradigm of the child care and protection system in Serbia. Following a growing acknowledgement that large-scale residential institutions cannot adequately meet needs of children, the process of de-institutionalisation has been initiated as a priority facet of the overall social system reform and set forth as one of the long-term priorities of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and more specifically one of the goals of the Social Welfare Development Strategy of the Government.

Reform processes in the area of social welfare started in early 2000s, supported with numerous projects that contributed to articulation of the Social Welfare Development Strategy that became the policy framework for all later interventions, including those related to child-care reform. In 2006 the external evaluation of the deinstitutionalization process was conducted by UNICEF in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The evaluation report provided a comprehensive roadmap of short, medium and long-term policy recommendations and actions and also provided important inputs in designing the project “Transforming residential institution for children and developing sustainable alternatives” which is now the subject of a final evaluation. The following year UNICEF conducted the Assessment of the Child Protection in Serbia, while in May 2008 UNICEF and MoLSP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which represented a framework for cooperation on the development of a comprehensive system of support for children in the community that would reduce the need for institutionalized placements. The national efforts in that field were also presented to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (State report submitted in May 2007 and further elaborated in the answers on additional questions and during the 48th Session of the Committee in May 2008). The Committee welcomed in the Concluding Observations the State party’s commitment to deinstitutionalise children.

Taking into account inputs provided through the above mentioned initiatives, the project “Transforming residential institution for children and developing sustainable alternatives” was developed in close cooperation among UNICEF and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia (MoLSP) with the overall objective to maximise the effects of the child care system in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable groups of children (in particular children with disability and children in formal care) in Serbia in line with the Social Welfare Development Strategy (2005-2009) and the National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2015). More specifically, the project shall assist MoLSP and the Ministry of Health (MoH) in:

- Transforming residential institutions into child-centred community based services which respond to local needs,
- Strengthening and expanding the existing foster care system and developing urgent and specialised fostering,
- Building professional capacities needed for transformed and decentralized system of child care.

The project to be evaluated is supported by the EU through CARDS funding modality and its total value is 1,399,132.00 EUR. The project was designed to be implemented over a 30 month period (22nd May 2008 – 22nd November 2010) but was officially extended in July 2010 for an additional 6 months (non-cost extension with end date 22nd May 2011).

The main purpose of the project was to reduce the number of children in residential institutions in Serbia for 25% by 2011 through the transformation of residential institutions and the development of local level institutional capacities for the provision of family support and family substitute services which was foreseen to be achieved through the following project activities:

1. Adoption of the individual operational plan of transformation of social protection institutions based on the analysis of the encountered situation and identified needs, finalization of the master plan for the transformation of institutions, articulation of regional reform plans.
2. Development of the curricula, training programme, and articulation of professional standards for community-based social services in 12 social protection institutions. Development of the programme to be carried out simultaneously with the adoption of individual operational plans of transformation that should give insight into the training needs as a basis for programme development.
3. Organisation of training for professional staff of social protection institutions on the delivery of new services, i.e. day care centre activities. The training should involve approx. 240 professionals (approx. 20 x12 institutions).
4. Development of the curricula, training programme, and articulation of professional standards for:
 - a. planning, assessment, preparation and recruitment of foster families, monitoring the child placement and provision of support to children and foster families;
 - b. development of urgent and specialized fostering.
5. Delivery of the training programme for professional staff on: a) planning, assessment, preparation and recruitment of foster families, monitoring child placement and provision of support to children and foster families b) development of specialized/urgent foster care. Training should include approx. 300 professionals from all major cities (22).
6. Assessment, preparation and recruitment of the families for urgent and specialized/ foster care. The training should include approx. 100 families in total.
7. Development of curricula, training programme, and articulation of professional standards for outreach family support services for the provision of the support to families with children with developmental disabilities.
8. Delivery of the training programme for outreach family support services. The training is planned for approx. 5 participants from 22 districts (110 participants).

9. Development of the curricula, training programme, and articulation of standards for provision of guidance and support to parents running the risk of abandoning their children for the social and health care staff of maternity hospital.
10. Delivery of the training programme for social and health care staff of 10 maternity hospitals in Serbia. Training programme planned to be delivered to approx. 50 participants (5 participants per maternity hospitals).
11. Promotional activities for awareness rising throughout the project implementation (production of promotional material, media conferences, round table discussions, press-releases, video spots).

Within the inception phase, the implementation of the project and its activities have been organized through four components: 1. Transformation of residential institutions and inter-municipal and operational planning for children, 2. Strengthening accountability and monitoring mechanisms, 3. General and Specialized Fostering and 4. Health-care family support in maternity hospitals.

The management structure of the project was designed to ensure leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) and expertise and efficiency in the implementation of the project activities. Therefore, the project was led by the Steering Committee, chaired by the MoLSP and consisted of the representatives of the MoH, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-government, EC Delegation and UNICEF.

Project Implementation Unit was based in UNICEF and had a task to ensure efficiency and expertise in operational management of the project.

For each of the four project components the Working group chaired by the relevant ministry representative was established during the initial phases of the project in order to provide guidance and alignment with policy directions in the most crucial phases of the project.

In addition to partnership with the the MoLSP of the Republic of Serbia as the primary stakeholder and the MoH, other important partners include: Republic Institute for Social Protection, Belgrade Institute for Public Health, Association of nurses as well as Centre for Fostering Belgrade. During the project implementation several expert and civil society organisations were also engaged, such as Child Rights Centre, Centre for Liberal-democratic studies (social policy and research based organisation), Familia (with fostering expertise), League of experts LEX (association of lawyers). Close coordination with other relevant actors have been ensured (Social Innovation Fund – providing support to municipalities, NGOs and service providers in developing local social services; Cooperazione Italiana – providing support to the process of de-institutionalization with a particular focus on children with disability; Oxford Policy Management – supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in social welfare reforms and strengthening capacities of local municipalities for social policy planning). In order to maximise effects and ensure synchronisation of activities a particular attention was paid to provide operational coordination with the Save the Children UK who implemented the project focused on strengthening specialized fostering.

During the project implementation two Results-Oriented Monitoring Missions were completed (by the agency contracted by EC Delegation) with the purpose to determine the progress of the Project and its overall performance.

The project design is also imposing obligation of conducting the final evaluation of the project that is the subject of this ToR.

II. Purpose of the evaluation

The reform of the child care system evolved, especially through the last 5 years. This project was designed to be the main driver of changes in this area and has produced a number of deliverables throughout the period of 3 years of its duration. Therefore, this evaluation has immediate and the broader purpose.

The immediate purpose, defined by the project document itself, is to evaluate the final results and achievements of the project in relation to the project log frame.

The broader purpose is:

- To evaluate contribution of the project to the implementation of the Social Welfare Development Strategy, including contribution to the development of new policies and legislation in the area of child care;
- To identify approaches that were vital for the achievement of results as well as lessons learned and good practice examples that can be knowledge base for future programming;
- To provide insight into the current status of child care system and strategic recommendations for the next steps in the reform process relevant for all engaged stakeholders.

The main evaluation findings and recommendations will be presented at the Final conference of the Project in April 2011.

The evaluation findings will be an important source of information for the further policy work and programming within the MoLSP and further operationalization of the new law with specific focus on child-care and children with disability.

They will be very valuable for the further UNICEF work as well. The project is in line with the objectives of the UNICEF Country Programme for the period 2005-2009 and particularly with key recommendations coming from the Mid-Term programme evaluation in 2008 which highlight the importance of supporting child-care system reform. Furthermore, the new Country programme for the period 2011-2015 sets the overall goal around supporting national efforts towards social inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized families and children. More specifically, through system strengthening for social inclusion and enhancing social accountability for children's rights, priority will be given to transformation of centralized, institution-based services into family- and community-based services especially for children with disabilities.

The evaluation of the project coincides with the finalisation of the first year of implementation of the two other UNICEF projects aimed at supporting process of de-institutionalisation, development of community based services and enhancing social inclusion. It shall provide value added to the ongoing monitoring of these projects thus ensuring that all the initiatives are harmonized and build on each other achievements.

The evaluation results shall also specifically inform the process of finalisation of the Action plan for the institutionalisation of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Plus (mid of 2011) by the Ministry of Health with regards to the quality communication aspects in providing early gate-keeping and prevention of institutionalisation of children at risk / with disability.

III. Scope and focus

The scope and focus of the evaluation is articulated under 7 objectives, each accompanied with guiding questions for the evaluation. These are the following:.

Objective 1 - assessing relevance / To what extent is the Project responding to the priorities defined in the Social Welfare Development Strategy?

- To what extent the Project inputs were timely and relevant for development of new policies and legislation?
- To what extent does the Project respond to the needs of the target groups?
- To what extent and how the Project took into account existing institutional and human capacities and results of the previous efforts as a basis for planned interventions?
- Were the Project objectives set realistically to be achieved in a given period of time?

Objective 2 - assessing effectiveness / To what extent does the Project meet the outcomes as defined by the Project log-frame?

- Have the planned results been achieved to date (quantitative and qualitative)?
- To what extent and how did the Project respond to the changing external conditions and unplanned (both positive and negative) effects relevant to the planned results? What strategies have been used to take into account a changing environment? Were these strategies successful?
- To what extent did the project contribute to decreasing the number of children in residential institutions? Has the transformation of residential institutions started in line with the agreed targets and in a way which shall lead to their transformation into community-based services and/ or closing down? Are professional capacities of residential staff built to respond to the transformation needs?
- To what extent did the project contribute to increasing the number of children in foster care? Have the necessary standards / amendments to the relevant by-laws been developed as they relate to specialized and urgent fostering? Have the developed models / programmes for specialized fostering been integrated into the existing system mechanisms for professional development and supporting foster families? To what extent and how have foster families been trained for specialized / urgent fostering? To what extent have professional capacities been built to respond to the planning, assessment, supporting and monitoring of foster families?
- Have the training programmes for outreach support to families with children with disabilities been integrated into the existing system mechanisms for professional development? To what extent have professional capacities for outreach support

- been built to respond to the needs of families with children with disabilities? Does the composition of professionals trained ensure an integrative approach and foster inter-sectoral cooperation?
- To what extent have the standards related to improving professional practice in maternity hospitals contributed to gate-keeping to institutionalisation of children with disabilities? Have the developed training / education programmes been integrated into the system mechanisms for professional development? To what extent have health professionals been trained to support families with newborns at risk / with disability?
 - Has the project provided any other significant contribution to other processes as they relate / lead to cumulative results towards transformation of residential institutions and the development of alternatives at community level?

Objective 3 - assessing sustainability / To what extent are the project outcomes achieved, sustainable?

- What is the level of ownership within the MoLESP and MoH and what are the prospects for further development of related interventions after the end of external support? To what extent have relevant target groups (the ministries, professional association, unions, residential institutions, Institutes for social protection, professionals from centers for social work and institutions, experts, NGOs, beneficiary groups)_ been involved in the project planning, monitoring and implementation?
- To what level and how has the project provided links / contributions to the policy level (new Law on Social Welfare, by-laws regulating de-institutionalization process)?
- How well is the project contributing to institutional capacities of involved actors / stakeholders? Is the project embedded in system structures / mechanisms? To what extent have the national human (professional / expert) resources at both national and local level been empowered to continue transferring knowledge?
- What is the financial / economic viability for sustainability of project outcomes?

Objective 4 - assessing impact / To what extent has the Project increased system's capacities to continue with child-care reform?

- To what extent has the project contributed to the realization of the child's right to live in a family environment? Has an increase been registered of the family care prevalence ratio versus institutional care? Is there an increase of the number and variety of family support and family substitute services that have been developed and mainstreamed into the system?
- To what extent the project managed to increase capacity of the child care system in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable groups of children in Serbia? To what extent has the project contributed to creating reform momentum, increasing acceptance of the need and willingness to transform residential institutions for children among the critical mass of the key stakeholders?

Objective 5 - assessing efficiency / To what extent did the management of the project ensure timelines and defined were kept to?

- How well have the implementation of activities been managed? To what extent are activities implemented as scheduled, how flexible was the project in adapting to changing needs (decreased public expenditure as an impact of economic crisis) ? What management and monitoring tools have been used?

- How well have the financial resources been used / were funds managed in a cost-effective manner / what is the correlation between funds utilized and outputs / results achieved?
- Did the project ensure co-ordination with other similar interventions to encourage synergy and avoid overlaps?

Objective 6 – assessing human rights-based approach and relevant cross-cutting issues / To what extent do the project outcomes contribute to achievement of children’s rights and to what extent have they contributed to addressing key cross-cutting issues?

- Does the project actively contribute to the promotion of child rights?
- To what extent and how the project ensures an equity focus?
- Does the project reflect gender mainstreaming issues?
- Was the design of the Project ethical? How was the balance of cost and benefits to participants (including possible negative impact) considered during the Project implementation?

Objective 7 – assessing potential application of lessons learned / Identify at least three good practice examples and at least five lessons learnt:

- What are the main good practice examples that could be identified? How / where could these examples be used / what are the potentials for replication?
- What are the main lessons learned? What is their relevance for further planning and programming in the field of child-care / how can they be linked/taken account of in planning and implementation of other relevant projects, programmes and initiatives?
- At least one good practice example and at least one lesson learnt needs to be linked to gender mainstreaming.

IV. Existing information sources

The documents bellow are listed according to relevance and priority. Please note that this is a selection of key documents that contain the most reliable data.

- Social Welfare Development Strategy
- National Action Plan for Children
- Initial State Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2007)
- Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2008)
- The Report to UNICEF and the Government of Serbia on deinstitutionalising and transforming services for children in Serbia (2006)
- UNICEF Assessment of the Child Protection in Serbia (2007)
- UNICEF Country Programme Document (2005-2209) and Mid-Term evaluation (2008),
- UNICEF Country Programme and Action Plan (2011-2015)
- UNICEF Annual Reports (2008, 2009, 2010)
- Memorandum of Understanding (UNICEF and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy)
- Project documents (Description of Action, LogFrame, Action Plan)
- Project Reports (Inception, Year One, Year Two) including project outputs

- Result Oriented Monitoring Reports, conducted by EU Delegation (2009, 2010)
- Draft Social Welfare Law, 2010
- Decision on the Network or Residential Institutions, 2010
- Other relevant national reports (in Serbian – Republican Institute for Social Protection Year reports on residential institutions for 2008 and 2009)

V. Evaluation process and methods

The evaluation methodology will be guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)¹. The evaluation methodology will be further defined with support from the consultants. A brief overview of the process and the methods to be used is presented in the following matrix:

Description	Responsible	Timeline
Preparatory phase:		
Development of ToR	UNICEF	End of January 2011
Selection of external evaluators	UNICEF	End February 2011
Evaluation:		
Desk review of the existing documents	Consultants	Mid of March 2011
Development of the evaluation work plan with evaluation instruments / methodology	Consultants	Mid of March 2011
Logistics (arranging meetings / interviews)	UNICEF	Third week of March 2011
Field visit to Serbia (meeting / interviews with UNICEF, MoLSP, EU Delegation, key partners and stakeholders)	Consultants with the support of UNICEF	Last week of March 2011
De-briefing meeting with UNICEF and MoLSP	Consultants	Last week of March 2011
Reporting:		
Preparing inception report (methodology and work plan)	Consultants	Mid of March 2011
Preparation of the draft report (including draft presentation for the Final project conference)	Consultants	First week of April 2011
Integration of feed-back into the presentation and final report, Final Report submission	Consultants	End of April
Use of evaluation findings:		

¹ UNEG Norms:

<http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1491>

UNEG Standards:

<http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1496>

Dissemination of the final report to all partners and stakeholders	UNICEF	April 2011
Presentation of the key findings at the Final project conference	Consultants	14-15 April 2011
Agreement reached with MoLSP on how to translate key finding into activities and integrate them into a) future implementation of IPA project, b) design of new project and c) regular work plan of the Ministry.	UNICEF	

The selected consultants will in the inception phase develop a detailed methodology and a plan of evaluation. They will base their proposal of the following key requirements.

The consultants will use the desk review to get familiar with the policy basis, relevant project documents and deliverables of the Project. Existing information sources are listed in this ToR and will be made available to the consultants.

The plan of evaluation should be composed to ensure adequate insight into the 4 main project components.

In addition to interviews with the Steering Board, UNICEF Project implementation unit and EU Delegation, interviews and/or focus groups should be conducted within each project component with, at a minimum:

- representative of the Working group that was steering the implementation of this components,
- key implementation partner,
- key consultants,
- representatives of target beneficiaries (residential institutions, institutes, professionals, members of steering committees of residential institution, foster families).

Please not that this will require travel outside Belgrade for two days. The selection of institutions to be visited will be decided based on the desk study, whilst taking into consideration the following criteria: the evaluators has to visit three types of institutions: a) fully in process of transformation, b) institutions to be closed down c) institutions where transformation is “on-hold” or “blocked”.

The main data collection instruments are in-depth, structured interviews and focus groups. The data gathered will be analysed by the evaluation team and cross-tabulated and compared with different sources.

Special measures will be put in place to ensure that the evaluation process is ethical and that they can openly express their opinion. The sources of information will be protected, and known just to the interviewers.

Key intermediate tasks that evaluators are responsible for carrying out are:

- Develop more detailed evaluation methodology and work plan – draft to be submitted to UNICEF for approval, including key instruments / interview questions

- Desk review of relevant documents and reports
- To conduct field visits to Serbia and realize interviews with selected partners and stakeholders De-briefing meeting with UNICEF and MoLSP
- Prepare the draft report, including draft of the presentation for the Final project conference, with key findings, recommendations and lessons learned based on all sources of information used
- Based on feed-back provided by UNICEF prepare the presentation and final report with all key findings, recommendations and lessons learned following the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards
- Deliver presentation of the main evaluation findings and recommendations at the Final project conference.

VI. Accountabilities

The evaluation will be managed by the UNICEF Country Office, by the Child Protection Officer. The management of the evaluation will include development of the terms of reference, assignment of the evaluation team, liaison between the evaluation team and partners / stakeholders involved (organising meetings / interviews and field visits), as well as quality assurance of the report.

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy will be involved in designing the evaluation and participate in the definition of recommendations through active contribution during debriefing meeting. The evaluation team will have two members - one international and one national. The two evaluators are requested because of the complexity of the tasks.

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

- The development of methodology and evaluation plan and ensuring that inputs provided by the the national consultant and feed-back provided by UNICEF are integrated into final evaluation work plan to be submitted to UNICEF;
- conducting desk review of selected documents / reports in close cooperation with the technical assistant;
- conducting field-visit and interviewing key stakeholders / informants in close cooperation with the national consultant, including taking the key role in preparing for and realizing debriefing with UNICEF and MoLSP;
- compling the inception and draft report with inputs provided by the national consultant;
- integration of comments / feed-back given by UNICEF into the final evaluation report.;

The National consultant will be tasked to provide support to the international consultant through:

- providing overview / summary in English of selected documents and reports available only in Serbian as an input to the desk review;

- providing inputs to the evaluation methodology and work plan;
- accompanying and / or conducting in-depth interviews (based on the detailed work plan agreed with the international consultant) with selected stakeholders and ensuring that the main findings are delivered to the team leader;
- active participation in the debriefing meeting with UNICEF and MoLSP;
- providing inputs to the inception, draft and final report, including substantial contribution in preparing presentation of the main findings needed for the Final project conference;
- delivering the presentation at the Final project conference..

VII. Evaluation team composition

The evaluation team will consist of two external experts (international and national) who will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Technical expertise on child-care;
- Experience of conducting project and programme evaluations;
- Knowledge of the region;
- Communication skills.

The qualifications and skill areas required include:

International consultant:

- Expertise in the area of child-care (transformation of institutions, community based services development, alternative family placements, gate-keeping)
- Extensive evaluation expertise and experience
- Proven knowledge on the region
- Team leadership competencies
- Excellent report writing skills
- Excellent written and spoken English
- MA in related field (PhD is an asset)

National consultant:

- Knowledge in the area of child care / knowledge of technical aspects of similar programmes
- Demonstrated experience in similar evaluations, including working in teams
- Proven knowledge on child-care / social welfare system in Serbia; knowledge on the region is an asset
- Excellent written and spoken Serbian and English
- Advanced University degree in related field

Both members of the team:

- Good communication and presentation skills / ability to express concisely and clearly ideas and concepts in written and oral form
- Knowledge on child rights and social inclusion concept

- Experience in working with UN / UNICEF (desired)
- Knowledgeable of UN evaluation policy
- Ability to keep with strict deadlines

Evaluators should be sensitive to beliefs and act with integrity and respect to all stakeholders. In the report evaluators may not refer to individual children. Evaluators may not share findings with media in Serbia or abroad concerning individual children or individual institutions.

VIII. Procedures and logistics

Timeframe for this work assignment is from beginning of March until the end of April 2011. During that period each consultant will be engaged for total number of 20 days.

In the preparatory phase it is expected that both consultants invest 5 working days each. Field visit to Serbia is envisaged for one week (5 working days), where serial of meetings, discussion and field trips will be organized, with the de-briefing meeting at the end of the visit. Final report should be produced in 10 working days. The days allocated includes participation of the national consultant at the final meeting with the key stakeholders for the purpose of presentation of evaluation results.

Meetings and field visits will be organized by UNICEF and in close cooperation / with the support of MoLSP.

UNICEF premises will be available during the time spend in Serbia if needed. Printers, photocopying services, and other similar services will be provided by UNICEF. It is expected that consultants will bring their own laptops.

Final payment will be done upon submission of the final report. All the original invoices related to the contract (e.g. transportation costs, airport taxes, visa...) should be kept and submitted to UNICEF for reimbursement.

IX. Products

Deliverables:

- Inception report (including evaluation work plan, presentation of methodological approach, instruments to be used, annotated outline of final report²), to be presented and approved by UNICEF – 16th March 2011.
- Interim evaluation report (draft findings, conclusions and recommendations), (from all data sources used in the evaluation) to be presented after field visit to Serbia and approved by UNICEF and MoLSP – 8th April 2011.
- Presentation of the key evaluation findings and recommendations at the Final project conference (14-15 April 2011).

² See „UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards“.

- Final evaluation report, subject of approval by the UNICEF and MoLSP – 29th April 2011.

Final products (evaluation report, including summary and PPP) shall be submitted in English. UNICEF will ensure translation in Serbian.

X. REFERENCE TO THE UNICEF EVALUATION REPORT STANDARDS

The final evaluation report should follow UNICEF Evaluation report standards (see the reference No2). The report template to be used includes:

- Title page and Opening pages
- Executive summary
- Project description (including the logic of the project design and/or expected results chain)
- The role UNICEF, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and other stakeholders involved
- Purpose of the Evaluation
- Evaluation criteria
- Evaluation Scope and Objectives
- The evaluation design
- Description of Methodology
- The stakeholders participation
- Ethical issues
- Findings
- Analysis of results
- Constraints
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Lessons learned
- Annexes

Annexes

Annex 1 - The overview of the project achievements / cumulative progress towards specific expected results as defined by the Description of Action:

1. Number of children in institutions 25% lower by 2011. (Cumulative results of activities 1-11).

The Master plan for transformation of residential institutions for children has been developed and endorsed by the Government in December 2010 to cover a five-year period. It is followed by individual operational plans for institutions and two regional analysis / plans. The Master Plan envisages up to 50% decrease of residential capacities by 2013. However, even at this moment number of children in institutions is around 30% lower than at the beginning of project implementation which may lead to exceeding of targets set by the Master plan for 2013.

2. Number of children in foster families increased 20% by 2011. (Cumulative results of activities 4-6).

The number of children placed in foster families increased more than 30% from the start of Project implementation, and an additional 15% increase is projected by the Master plan for the next 5 year period.

3. Models of foster care and urgent placement in foster families developed – about 300 professionals trained for planning, preparation and recruitment of foster families, children placement monitoring and providing support to children in foster families; 100 foster families trained to take care of children under “Special circumstances” within the framework of urgent placement in foster families and specialized foster care (cumulative result of activities 4 -6).

Together with developing specialized fostering standards in the form of the amendment to the Rulebook on fostering, two groups of capacity building activities have been completed. The first relates to introducing a new mechanism of assessing the child’s and family needs (assessment tool designed, one training package accredited), while the other relates to increasing professional competencies needed to support specialized and urgent fostering (4 new training programs developed and accredited). The total number of trained professionals from 116 cities for planning, preparation and recruitment of foster families is 501. Also, so far 156 foster families were trained to take care of children under ‘special circumstances’.

4. 25 social care institutions transformed as follows:

a) 50% (12) will be transformed into community social services based on local priorities

b) one quarter will be closed

c) one quarter will retain their placement capacities for urgent and short-term placements (cumulative results of activities 1-3).

The five-year Master plan on the reform of residential institutions for children provides a clear operational plan for the transformation of institutions as well as the closure of the child departments of particular residential institutions. Regular children’s homes (residential institutions for children without parental care) shall be transformed into small residential capacities averaging 20 children. Particular institutions shall have a maximum capacity of 40 children and this is where management capacity and physical infrastructure allow for two independent units of 20 children to be organized. All residential institutions shall, given the “freed” capacities, develop community services including day-care, outreach and respite care (depending on the institution in question) and a number of them shall provide staff for the regional fostering units. By now, for 9 institutions it can be stated that the process of transformation has already started in terms of development of community based services. In addition, 6 new regional fostering units will considerably rely on residential institutions’ human resources. Total of 261 professionals has been trained in line with the transformation objectives. It was additionally followed by capacity building of all the institutions’ governing board members.

5. The needs for staff providing assistance and support services to families hosting children with disabilities are met (110 professionals of the social and health care systems trained). (Cumulative result of activities 7-8.)

Training package for community visiting nurses developed and accredited. Total of 486

professionals trained (317 nurses from primary health care centres and 169 professionals from centres for social work and other local actors) from 70 municipalities.

6. Professionals (social and health workers) of 10 maternity hospitals trained for providing support to parents aimed at prevention of child abandoning (cumulative results of activities 9-10).

New standards of professional practice for maternity hospitals developed and integrated into the Methodological Guidance for health workers. Two training packages accredited (initial and advanced course). Total of 153 health and social workers from 21 maternity hospitals and 28 specialized child hospitals attended initial course, while 50 of them went through advanced course.

7. Raised awareness of professionals in child protection area and that of the general public about the need to promote integration and offer equal possibilities to vulnerable groups of children of population in Serbia (activity 11).

The project put a strong emphasis on awareness raising among professionals from the system which was achieved not only through extensive use of regular communication means (such as professional newsletter, conferences) but predominantly by ensuring their active participation in activities (from developing transformation plans to designing / piloting education programs). Through related project UNICEF implemented awareness raising campaign on social inclusion which will be followed by a large EC campaign (as a part of IPA Social Inclusion).