

Vulnerable Children in Ukraine

Sectoral Assessment

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NOTE: All statistical information used in this Assessment was provided by Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Disadvantaged children of Ukraine continue to suffer from improper care and neglect. The registered number of **97,590 social and biological orphans** in Ukraine (Jan.05), grows annually by 1 – 2%. 65,244 of orphans officially have guardians (usu. a relative), who frequently choose to place a child in an institution at least part time. Only 1,500 orphans of all ages are in foster care system (family type homes or foster families).

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CHILDREN

Social and biological orphans in Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) orphanages as of January 2005:

	Number of orphanages	Age of children	Number of children
<i>MOH orphanages</i>	50	0-3(some disabled till 4y.o.)	5,387
<i>MES orphanages</i>	106	3 to 7	6,690
<i>MLSP orphanages</i>	56	3 to 18	7,716
<i>Boarding schools</i>	401	7 to 16(or 18)	65,826(8,500 only come to study)
TOTAL	606	0-18	85,619

Break down by health status of social & biological orphans 7 – 16 (or18) who both live & study in specialized boarding schools as per January 2004:

Type of health condition	Number of institutions	Number of children
Mentally retarded	241	35,604
Poor sight	29	4,604
Psychologically retarded	30	4,430
Deaf	32	3,491
Poor hearing	25	3,389
Major speech impediments	15	3,062
Consequences of polio and cerebral palsy	20	2,317
Blind	6	839
TOTAL	401	57,736

Approximately 22,000 older orphans (16 y.o. till end of studies) receive education in technical boarding schools, colleges and other educational establishments for youth. About 90% of institutionalized children have one or both biological parents alive. Institutions are overcrowded, in bad shape, under-funded, all types of abuse is common there. Children are threatened, have no life or job skills when leaving institutions.

REASONS FOR INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Analysis of *MOH orphanages (orphans 0-3y.o.)* of the last 5 years:

- 35% – 40% are social orphans abandoned at birth;
- 15% - 16% are children who were found unattended with no notice and have not been requested afterwards;

- 4% - 5% are social orphans whose parents were stripped of parental rights;
- 1.1% are children whose parents were reported missing;

Age and health/disability status of these children, thus type of institutions they are sent is not statistically recorded.

ANALYSIS OF ORPHANAGES AND BOARDING SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN OVER 3 Y.O.

- Alcohol abuse and poverty puts families to crisis. About 7,000 children are removed from crisis families annually.
- About 5-6 million Ukrainians are pushed to earn their living abroad, leaving their children with relatives, or in institutions. Example: in Lviv oblast there are 22,000 children who have at least one parent earning a living abroad.
- Absence of housing for orphanage graduates is a major issue creating bums out of orphanage graduates. Only in 2004 Ukraine’s State Services for Minors have revealed over 1,700 violations of children housing and property rights (over 1,500 attempts to sell children’ apartments/houses were prevented). The majority of such problems have been detected in Kirovograd, Kharkiv, Mykolayiv oblasts and the city of Kyiv.
- Disability alone is no more a major reason for children institutionalization, as over 80% of disabled children remain in families.

CONSEQUENCES OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Children experts share the following *catastrophic* estimations as to orphanage graduates after they leave their institutions:

- 60% join some form of crime structures and frequently wind up in prisons
- 30% become homeless bums usually getting their food from garbage yards and through begging (some connected with crime)
- 50% of female graduates practice prostitution as a main or supplementary method of earning a living
- 20% commit suicides
- 10% become relatively functional adults
- 76% of children are afraid to leave their orphanages due to fear of what will happen to them after graduation.

These numbers were supported/confirmed by President Victor Yuschenko during a roundtable in June 2005. In his speech Mr. Yuschenko was extremely critical towards the system of institutionalization of orphans that still exists in Ukraine and stated that the government should do whatever possible to ensure at-risk children grow up only in family environment!

STREET CHILDREN IN UKRAINE INFO:

- Newly reformed and progressive Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) estimates there are about 100,000 homeless children in Ukraine. Ombudswoman of Ukraine Ms. Korpacheva estimated 200,000 street children in Ukraine (Nov 05). Police raids have detected 50,500 street children during 2004.
- No exact statistical data re street children is available nationally or regionally. In all regions the numbers are in thousands and fluctuate during the year.
- The cities most affected by street children (in numerical priority): Kyiv, Donetsk, Odessa, Crimea Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovs’k, Lugansk. Best possible estimations follow:

<i>Region</i>	Kyiv	Crimea	Donetsk	Odessa	Kharkiv	Lugansk	Dnipropetrovs’k
<i>Number</i>	20,000	15,000	10,000	10,000	8,000	7,000	7,000

- Age of street children on streets varies 3 to 18, with majority 9 to 14.

- There are 94 shelters in Ukraine with possibility to house 3,900 children at one time. About 30,000 children have “passed” through these shelters in 2004 of who about 5,000 are orphanage run aways. Over 10% are brought to shelters repeatedly.
- Core of street children problem in all regions: poverty of parents, alcohol and drug abuse by parents.

POOR HEALTH STATUS OF STREET CHILDREN (incl. orphanage run aways):

- Minor psychological disorders (overly aggressive or secluded) about 95%
- Pediculosis (lice infestation) about 90%
- Skin diseases over 50%
- STDs among girls aged 13 – 18 about 60%
- Other chronic or infectious diseases: diphtheria, chicken pox, measles, scabies, inner organs injuries (mostly among boys due to street fights)
- Glue sniffing addiction about 90% (starting even from 5 y.o.) leading to brain mal-development
- Victims of sexual violence and sexual exploitation estimated at min. 20%
- Doctors in children shelters report they are “yet to see one healthy child coming from the streets”

REASONS FOR BEING ON THE STREETS:

A: Abuse at home driven by economic problems. Over 50% of street children stated they come from crisis families where parents lead anti-social life, most have alcohol abuse problem;

- During 2001 – 2004, over 15,400 adults have been criminally prosecuted for illegal actions towards their children
- In 2004 alone, 8,700 parents were stripped of their parental rights nationwide
- 70% of questioned street children reported constant arguments at home; 56% - fights at home; 53% of children marked both arguments and fights as a daily routine at home;
- Nationally recorded are 86,000 crisis families where there is no proper care after about 170,000 children

B: Absence of affordable developmental leisure:

Only 20.6% of school age children attend various after school facilities. Most of are commercial nature, thus low income families cannot send their children to these facilities, which boosts the amount of children wandering about in the streets.

C: No national system of child-in-crisis rehabilitation.

D: No specialized system of juvenile justice: on the one hand to no rehabilitation or punishment of youth who would benefit from it; on the other the system makes criminals of youth who could be easily rehabilitated

By large, there are no major differences among regions of Ukraine as to reasons for institutionalization, street living, child neglect and abuse.

Importantly, actions to assist vulnerable children in today’s Ukraine are clear and doable, support from government is secured. Given the depth of issues and Ukraine’s budgetary constraints foreign assistance to help vulnerable children is much needed. **See list of recommendations at the end of assessment.**

END OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Brief Introduction

Stability and prosperity of any country, its economic development to a large extent depend upon physical and spiritual health of the family, its members and the attitude of the state to the family's needs and interests. Children, well raised in stable families are an important factor in the proper development of the state, its future stability.

Many changes have occurred in Ukraine (and Eastern Europe at large) since the times of Gorbachev's Perestroika (1985) and the ultimate break up of the Soviet Union (1991) and communist morale while exposing Ukraine to the rest of the world. These changes include but are not limited to societal values, patterns of behavior, level of knowledge and attitudes.

Description of the Status of Street Children

At the end of 1990s the problem of neglected and street children has acquired national significance. More and more officials and NGO leaders agree: the future of Ukraine is in danger. What can be expected from thousands of children, a future strata of populace, who are currently spending most of their time begging in the streets, washing cars and sleeping in heating ducts, basements and attics? Furthermore, it is scientifically proven that these children carry a "social infection" towards other children from regular families they come in contact with, sharing their perceived "taste of freedom and heroism", financial opportunities via begging, experience of using drugs and alcohol, etc.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports estimates that there are about 100,000 homeless/street children in Ukraine, however, during the November 2005 large roundtable on at-risk children issues with President Yuschenko, Ombudswoman of Ukraine Ms. Korpacheva stated there are about 200,000 homeless/street children in Ukraine. The author has made all possible efforts to find out exact numbers of street children in visited regions - - no child expert has assumed the responsibility to come up with any concrete data. Most regions agreed that the numbers are in thousands and fluctuates during the year. The age of street children is not recorded for statistical purposes, however, the visits to shelters and other evidence has shown that the age of street children is spread out more or less evenly between ages 5 to 14. Share of street children aged below 5 and 14 to 18 is smaller.

The cities most affected by street children (in numerical priority) remain: Kyiv, Donetsk, Odessa, Crimea Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovs'k, Lugansk. Best possible estimations follow:

<i>Region</i>	Kyiv	Crimea	Donetsk	Odessa	Kharkiv	Lugansk	Dnipropetrovs'k
<i>Number</i>	20,000	15,000	10,000	10,000	8,000	7,000	7,000

Amount of shelters for street children managed by the Departments of Services for Minors of local administrations has been increasing since 1997 and by middle of 2005 has reached 94 shelters with possibility to house 3,900 children at one time. About 30,000 children have "passed" through these shelters in 2004. The maximum stay in the shelter allowed by law is 90 days, however, some directors of shelters report of allowing few children to stay longer upon child's request. 11% of "temporary

residents” of such shelters are children below 10 y.o. About 10% of children are brought to shelters time and time again, the percentage of such children in selected regions is: Lviv oblast – 28%; Mykolayiv oblast – 26%, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast – 24%, Kirovograd oblast – 14%, Chernigiv oblast – 13%, Kharkiv oblast – 11%. Some regional Services for Minors report that they feel part of their task is to catch the same children over and over again, bring them to the shelters and watch them run away the next day.

Not all street children are aware of the opportunity to turn to these shelters for help simply not knowing about their existence. Authorities in some regions complain that children repeatedly run away as the shelters are not financed properly to provide assistance or be more “attractive” than street life to children. Of biggest concern is that even the best shelters are not set up to rehabilitate children or their parents. They provide only “emergency” assistance while not ensuring the child’s proper placement after departure from the shelter. Naturally, such approach is a temporary relief and does not resolve the problem by large. Frequently, the children who followed all the rules of the shelter and “peacefully” stayed their term are simply returned to abusive parents they had run away to the street from. These state shelters are not well funded, usually have one psychologist per shelter that may have up to 70 children, and have no social workers. 50% of shelters pedagogical staff has graduated from pedagogical colleges over 10 years ago, when no methodological materials on working with neglected and street children were even available in former Soviet Union and newly independent Ukraine.

Many street children frequently migrate between regions. According to the Ministry of Interior, in 2002 – 2003 police detected 5,800 migrating street children. The most popular regions for migration are: Zakarpattia region (740 street children-migrants), Donetsk region (544), Kyiv region (482), Crimea (342) Kirovograd region (340) children who came to these regions from other parts of Ukraine.

Quite a few officials in Ukraine, to include police staff, are frequently not educated to the reasons why children live on the streets and doubt whether or not they need any rehabilitation or help. For instance, certain officials believe that nothing wrong has happened to these children - - they merely love traveling, adventures and freedom, which is why they leave their homes, travel to Kyiv and other big cities and enjoy themselves giving police much headache to deal with them... I believe comments to such statements are needless.

According to a study of State Institute of Family & Youth Problems of 2002, only 20% of street children have seen good relations among their parents at home. 70% reported constants arguments at home, 56% - fights at home, 53% of children marked both arguments and fights as a daily routine at home! UNICEF/Ukraine in their former project “Children of the Street” having questioned 224 children received the following feedback: 38 children said they had left home because they were beaten (once or repeatedly), sexual abuse as the reason 14 children have left home, psychological abuse – 12 children.

The health status of children in the streets is naturally quite poor. Doctors in children shelters report that they are yet to see one healthy child coming from the street. Majority of children have skin diseases and pediculosis (lice infestation) that are immediately treated upon arrival to shelters. About 60% of girls aged 13 – 18 have (or have been treated from) sexually transmitted diseases. Many children suffer from either chronic or infectious diseases, namely diphtheria, chicken pox, measles, scabies, etc. Many boys of all ages have suffered serious street fights affecting their inner organs. All

shelters' experts agree that over 90% of street children (starting even from 5 y.o.) are addicted to sniffing glue. For instance, Kharkiv shelter reported that out of 1,080 children that have been registered as "children of the street" in 2004, about 1,000 children were sniffing glue, "the situation we all should be screaming about, as all these children will be near us as adults soon", said the Chairman of Services for Minors. This addiction significantly effects the brain development and prompts psychological conditions. Doctors in shelters state virtually all children are either aggressive or overly shy when they come to the shelter - - general estimation at 95%. Most street children can be rehabilitated, especially those with "street experience" of no more than 6 – 12 months.

Regional experts referred to a research indicating that in Ukraine, as elsewhere, homeless children and children who live and work on the street are at great risk of commercial sexual exploitation (this information was verified by Ecpat program - - see Ecpat section of this assessment). Research indicates that up to 20% of street children in Ukraine have been victims of sexual violence and sexual exploitation. Surveys show that of all prostitutes in Ukraine 11% is girls aged between 12 and 15, and 20% are aged 16 to 17. Girls who stay in motorcar roads and traffic car-road and service drivers, frequently receive as low as \$4 per sexual service. Boys aged 8 to 16 have also become involved in offering sex services in the recent years.

According to experts, street children get involved in sexual relations very early, on average at age 12 – 13, which is earlier than most regular children raised in families. Terrible living conditions (dirt of heating underground tubes and basements where children get warm during winter), knowledge or participation in provision of sex services for money definitely do not develop any sense of proper intersexual relations among children themselves.

Analysis of proportions of street children recently found by "Children of the Street" national raids indicates a larger percentage of orphanage run-aways. Only in the first six months of 2005 there were 2,387 run away from children state institutions officially registered in shelters of throughout the nation.

Almost no neglected children attend school (all children in Ukraine are required to study by law). These children sometimes do not attend school for half a year to a year, in some cases 5 - 7 years. The majority of older street children have hardly completed more than 3 or 4 years of study, thus having received no more than a primary education of questionable quality. Every fifth child surveyed cannot read; every fourth child does not know grammar or how to write.

Although former Ukrainian governments of President Kuchma's times (1994 - 2004) repeatedly stated they endeavored to eradicate the problem of street children in Ukraine, financially this political will could not be proved. In 2004 there were no funds identified to fund the state street children rehabilitation interventions in Crimea, Donetsk, Zakarpattia, Kyiv, Mykolayiv, Khmelnytski oblasts and in the city of Kyiv. As far as oblasts budgets - - no funds were made available to finance the street children programs of local State Services for Minors in Donetsk, Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Mykolayiv, Odessa and Sumy oblasts in 2004. Even though quite a few efforts have been taken since January 2005 to combat the street children population in Ukraine the situation remains difficult at best. Foreigners coming to Ukraine are struck by crowds of street children running around, washing cars, begging, wearing dirty and torn clothes, etc. Even though, the national program titled "Children of the Street" has removed thousands of children from the streets to orphanages in the recent months, this does not resolve the problem by large. Over 10% of children get to the same shelters over and over again; most frequently this happens in Lviv, Mykolayiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Khmelnytski, Kirovograd oblasts.

Interestingly, street children in their majority are quite friendly to strangers and easily make contact if something interests them in a stranger approaching them. Exceptions, of course, are people who children sense to be dangerous (like police). Just like regular children, they have an inner wish to learn new things and develop, not so obvious from the first sight.

Families with children in crisis/approaching crisis

The amount of crisis/dysfunctional families is growing catastrophically in Ukraine in the recent years. According to official statistics, as of January 1, 2005, Ukrainian authorities in the regions have registered 52,000 crisis families where there is no proper care after about 104,000 children. However, the Institute of Family and Youth Problems asserts there are about 86,000 of crisis families in Ukraine in dire need of social supervision. The government in collaboration with regional NGOs has asserted to provide some level of social supervision for 21,100 families (40.6% of all registered crisis families with children); however, the Institute of Family and Youth Problems statistics states that only about 14% of crisis families are monitored by social services for youth. Whatever statistics is more precise (if any), due to unquestionable lack of funding for state social services in the regions, there is very little they can do to help those few families they visit. Unofficially, experts in the regions affirm that up to 50% of all families with children in their regions, especially in rural areas, could use some level of social supervision and assistance.

Housing issues and material shortages common in Ukraine as well as alcohol and drug addiction entice stress, complications and sometimes serious conflicts in family relations, especially between generations of parents and children. The unfortunate tendency of today is lack of attention towards children by parents and absence of care. Such problems frequently lead to a child leaving his/her parents opting to spend most of his/her time in the streets and in many cases spending nights in the streets as well. Obviously, family problems are a lead to juvenile criminal delinquency. The connections between family problems and skipping school by youth, abusive and criminal patterns of behavior among youth are well studied and documented internationally. In Ukraine, sociological studies titled “Brutal Attitude Towards Children in Ukraine”, “Situational Analysis on Spreading Commercial Child Exploitation in Ukraine” prove, that vast majority of children who ended up in difficult life situations, experienced violence and abuse are the children of dysfunctional parents, who neglected their children, did not understand or practice the proper ways of child upbringing. The detailed reasons for a child to wind up without parental care are various, but the outcome is one: the child is left without his/her constitutional right for family upbringing and education, the right for childhood.

During 2004 police raids (most of them were part of the national program “Children of the Street”), 50,500 street children were detected, out of who 27% (13,635 children) were wandering around streets usually not returning home for the night, 13.2% (6,666 children) were found using narcotics and drinking alcohol, 16% (8,080 children) admitted they did not study or work. Over 50% of these children come from crisis families where parents lead anti-social life (most have alcohol abuse problem), every fourth child comes from a regular family; every sixth child is a biological orphan. This is governmental statistics, which although has recently become more reliable with regard to disadvantaged children issues, still does not exactly depict the situation, most experts would assert.

Every year Ukraine sees the escalation in number of parents who lose their parental rights due to severe neglect towards their children. In 2004 alone, 8,700 parents were stripped of their parental rights nationwide. About 7,000 children are removed from crisis families annually. About 2,000 children a year become orphans immediately after birth as their mothers leave them in maternity houses and children hospitals.

Taking few selected oblasts statistical data - - in Kherson there are 2,600 crisis families with 6,000 children residing there. In 2004 in Cherkassy oblast alone 554 children have become social orphans as parental rights have been removed from their parents. By comparison, in 2001 in Cherkassy this number was approximately 3 times less! City of Sevastopol reported considerable increase of families stripped of parental rights every month from the end of 2004. To compare, in 2003 - 66 families were deprived of parental rights, in 2004 – 76 families, by the end of June of 2005 – 48 families have already lost their parental rights, almost doubling the number for the same period of the year before.

In addition to economic difficulties in the country promoting social crisis in families, the courts in Ukraine have become more active and fast recently: when 5 years ago a legal action against parents could last for years, today, as reported by regional experts, this process usually takes no more than several months, thus increasing statistical data on removal of parental rights. In some cases the court makes the decision to merely “remove the child from parents” without permanently removing parental rights. In such cases rehabilitation of parents to re-unite them with children and save the family seems more feasible if appropriate action is taken.

Some positive results in rehabilitation of crisis families and return of parental functions to parents were reported in Donetsk, Odessa, Zhitomir oblast and in Sevastopol. The government has created specialized social-psychological services titled “Family home” to assist crisis families, however, the level of financing to these centers remains fairly low and the professional level of governmentally hired psychologists and social workers needs to be upgraded.

Since 2002, there is a national hotline of trust in Ukraine, which receives approximately 6,500 calls annually from children, their parents, other adults (like neighbors of crisis families), requesting help and information on various issues of social and legal protection of children, including matters of harsh attitude towards children.

There are 14 centers for social-psychological rehabilitation run on city and rayon budgets and about 40 that are funded by international non-profits, mostly religious organizations. Over 11,800 children pass through such centers every year. In Cherkassy, for instance, such center is funded by the city budget and is united with the city shelter for abused and run-away children – a good example for other regions to follow. However, even this center does not pay enough attention to proper rehabilitation of child’s parents to ensure the child has a well functional family to come back to. An example of a private shelter would be a Christian child rehabilitation center in Massandra currently located in well renovated facility near Massandra settlement school. In all religious rehabilitation centers the major way to help the child return to society is through the love of God.

As mentioned earlier, massive “tours” of Ukrainian adults abroad to earn their living while leaving their children with relatives or in institutions has become a problems of the national scale years ago. Especially western regions of Ukraine suffer from this phenomenon. For instance, in Lviv oblast alone

there are 22,000 children who have at least one parent abroad earning a living for the family; 4,000 children are left by both parents in such situation. Those children left with relatives (most frequently grandparents or other older relatives) naturally do not enjoy proper attention and care due to older relatives' state of health, preoccupation in rural household routine, remote relationship to the children, etc. Such children are frequently left to themselves with their problems and needs. Naturally, the distance between parents and children grows from physical to emotional. Such way of life changes the attitude of children towards parents and visa versa, making their relations of more "monetary-material" nature, where parents are unaware of the child's daily wants and needs, lose contact and any influence on the child.

More frequent have become cases of merely brutal attitude of parents towards children, even selling children to earn money on them by way of sexual exploitation, producing pornographic materials, pushing children to criminal activity, hard labor exploitation of children, organ transplantation. During 2001 – 2004, over 15,400 adults have been criminally prosecuted for illegal actions towards their children.

EveryChild/Ukraine has experience in supporting crisis families via local NGOs having completed a project in 2000 – 2002, which proved efficient in preventing social orphanhood in Ukraine. In December 2003 EveryChild/Ukraine initiated a similar activity which will extend through December 2005 (see section on EveryChild for more information).

Governmental Structure of Care for Social and Biological Orphans

Naturally, social and biological orphans are among the most vulnerable children of Ukraine. Social orphans are officially called in Ukraine "children deprived of parental care". Out of 9,503,315 children below 18 y.o. registered in Ukraine (2004), on January 1, 2005 there were **97,590 social and biological orphans in Ukraine** (96,112 on January 1, 2004) - - about 1%. The number of orphans has a sustainable tendency to grow annually in all state children institutions of all types. 65,244 orphans have official guardians, usually grandmothers or other relatives who are not professional parents. These "families" rarely receive much needed social supervision and children from these families account for a portion of street children and children "in transit status" as guardians sometimes still place children in institutions on both temporary and permanent basis due to financial or other reasons. Approximately 22,000 older orphans (over 16 y.o.) receive education in technical boarding schools, colleges and other educational establishments for older children and youth. About 1,500 orphans of all ages are in foster care system (FTHs, FFs).

According to Constitution, the state guarantees a number of privileges for orphans. Some are easy and affordable for the government (like free public transportation, for which orphans are given so called "united ticket"), while others are only declarative (provision of housing for orphanage graduates) as the state has no resources to carry out the provisions of the Constitution.

The Government of Ukraine (GOU) **system of caring for vulnerable children** is essentially inherited from the Soviet era and is very complicated. There is no unified governmental executive entity responsible for vulnerable children and youth at large. The only governmental unifying body responsible for disadvantaged children, which has no executive power, is a special "Commission on Homelessness and Carelessness" under the Cabinet of Ministers. Under the renewed government of

Yuri Yehanurov, this task is likely to be handled by Vice Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kyrylenko. However, the legal capacity and activeness of this Commission has been insignificant.

As far as the executive branch of the GOU is concerned, there are SIX Ministries whose mandate includes protection of vulnerable children and youth. The Ministry of Health (MOH) cares for biological and social orphans aged 0 to 3 (few disabled children stay under MOH jurisdiction until 4 y.o.), due to priority of proper medical care. As they are young, these children are the most desirable for adoptions, both domestically and internationally, which is partially responsible for relatively moderate increase in the number of children in MOH institutions (“houses of child”) in the recent 8 years. By Ukrainian standards, these institutions are usually in good shape, well staffed and equipped, and have the necessary supplies. For the most part, the fact that adoptions occur in these institutions is responsible for their relative advantages, as “new” parents (especially foreigners) usually wish to help and donate to the institution they came to and saw, where their child had been raised prior to adoption.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) is responsible for two types of children’s institutions: regular type of institutions for children aged 4 to 7 and “mixed” type of institutions for children aged 4 to 18 or 7 to 18 (sometimes the graduation age is below 18, mainly for children who start studying at technical colleges). By GOU standards, the children in MES institutions are classified as “teachable” and most of them study under regular school programs or auxiliary schools with a slightly modified/eased curriculum. Thus, MES is currently overseeing the vast majority of children institutions in the country. Also, as of today, the MES still runs a Center for Adoption of Ukrainian Children. Currently, as per Presidential ruling of July 2005, this Center is officially in the process of transfer to the Ministry on Youth and Sports (MYS).

The 56 Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) institutions house mentally and/or physically disadvantaged children aged 4 to 18. In addition, these institutions sometimes serve as a home for adults who, due to their severe mental and/or physical retardation and lack of space in boarding homes for adults, cannot be employed and have no alternative place to live. The number of children and adults also rose in MLSP institutions since the break up of the USSR.

The Ministry of Interior of Ukraine is responsible for running of 14 Colonies for Juveniles, which house young criminals aged 10 to 18. As discussed elsewhere, in order to adequately re-enter society these young people are in great need for rehabilitation currently not provided to them by the state.

Statistically, in the 50 Ministry of Health houses of child (48 in 2003) for children below 3 y.o., there are 5,387 social & biological orphans today. Due to increased interest to adopt small Ukrainian children, the number of MOH orphans has been showing only a moderate growth, in a way connected with the fluctuation in adoption statistics. For instance, the increase of MOH orphans in 2005 corresponds to unexpected decrease in international adoptions in 2004 – 2005 (due to reported lack of proper management in National Adoption Center of Ukraine). As of July 1, 2005 - - 14,535 children were adopted by foreigners since 1997 (of who 5,611 orphans adopted by U.S. citizens). 3,573 children in total were adopted in 2004, out of who 2,081 were adopted by foreigners and 1,492 by Ukrainians.

Among the children who were accepted to the MOH institutions in the last 5 years, approximately 35% – 40% are social orphans whose parent(s) openly refused keeping the child after birth; 15% - 16% are

children who were found unattended with no notice and have not been requested afterwards; 11% are children of lonely mothers; 4% - 5% are social orphans whose parents were stripped of parental rights; 1.1% are children whose parents were reported missing; 1.4% are social orphans whose parents are imprisoned. Importantly, only 1.4% of parent(s) stated they abandon their child due to physical or emotional problems of the child. Although this percentage may be factually higher (i.e. parents have stated an alternative reason for abandoning the child while the real reason is the child's disability) the vast majority of children abandoned at birth have no major health issues at the point of abandonment and gain them (like become "unteachable" due to lack of brain stimulation) during their forthcoming orphanage tenure!

In 106 orphanages (96 in 2003) for children below 7 y.o. subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Science, there are 6,690 orphans today. In 56 boarding houses and schools subordinate to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) there are currently 7,716 orphans.

The 401 boarding schools of all types (mostly subordinate to MES) house 65,826 children aged 7 to 16 (or 18) of who approximately 8,500 come only to study while spending the nights with guardians or parents at home.

Thus, in tabular form, the social and biological orphans in Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) orphanages as per January 2005:

	Number of orphanages	Age of children	Number of children
<i>MOH orphanages</i>	50	0-3(some disbl 4)	5,387
<i>MES orphanages</i>	106	3 to 7	6,690
<i>MLSP orphanages</i>	56	3 to 18	7,716
<i>Boarding schools</i>	401	7 to 16(or 18)	65,826(8,500 only come to study)
TOTAL	606	0-18	85,619

Break down by health status of social & biological orphans 7 – 16 (or18) who both live & study in specialized boarding schools as per 2004:

Type of health condition	Number of institutions	Number of children
Mentally retarded	241	35,604
Poor sight	29	4,604
Psychologically retarded	30	4,430
Deaf	32	3,491
Poor hearing	25	3,389
Major speech impediments	15	3,062
Consequences of polio and cerebral palsy	20	2,317
Blind	6	839
TOTAL	401	57,736

Below is the dynamics among biological orphans and children whose parents were stripped of parental rights housed in MOH, MES and MLSP orphanages (excluding all boarding schools):

<i>Beginning Year</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<u>2005 including children having legal parents, who put them in orphanages</u>
50 MOH orphanages for orphans 0 - 3	2353	3308	3150	3406	3457	3475	5,387
106 MES orphanages for orphans 3 - 7	2936	4764	4689	4764	5051	5282	6,690
56 MLSP orphanages for severely disabled orphans 3 - 18	2142	2989	3065	3128	3300	3257	7,716

Biological orphans and children whose parents were stripped of parental rights housed in MOH, MES and MLSP orphanages are statistically disbursed by Ukrainian oblasts in the following way as per January 2004:

	<i>MES orphanages for orphans aged 3 - 7</i>	<i>MOH orphanages for orphans aged 0 - 3</i>	<i>MLSP orphanages for severely disabled orphans aged 3 - 18</i>
Autonomous Rep. of Crimea	311	206	39
Vinnitsa oblast	70	81	219
Volyn oblast	47	28	27
Dnipropetrovs'k oblast	1222	374	295
Donetsk oblast	519	446	261
Zhitomir oblast	39	79	131
Zakarpattia oblast	155	34	312
Zaporizhzhya oblast	-	227	169
Ivano-Frankivsk oblast	87	39	110
Kyiv oblast	677	209	66
Kirovograd oblast	202	71	143
Lugansk oblast	52	167	130
Lviv oblast	188	76	42
Mykolayiv oblast	84	137	18
Odessa oblast	241	317	223
Poltava oblast	68	90	81
Rivne oblast	54	39	25
Sumy oblast	-	60	82
Ternopil oblast	19	30	93

Kharkiv oblast	196	304	282
Kherson oblast	100	76	152
Khmelnitski oblast	67	49	46
Cherkassy oblast	171	80	114
Chernivtsi oblast	70	19	23
Chernigiv oblast	93	70	114
Kyiv city	176	92	103
Sevastopol city	143	57	-
TOTAL:	5051	3457	3300

In orphanages for smaller children the situation has improved in the last years, particularly after 1996 when international adoption was allowed in Ukraine. All of a sudden, smaller children became very “requested” by foreign adoptive parents. Many of them would leave some sort of donation to the orphanage and those orphanage directors who actually care somewhat for the children (or at least for their workplace) would use these donations to make elementary building repairs, buy clothing or toys for children, hire additional caretakers for children, etc.

In January 2004 the Ministry of Culture and Arts of Ukraine has lobbied adopting a decree on creating an additional boarding school that would be subordinate to this Ministry (as it’s the only institution under this Ministry, it was not statistically considered as part of institutionalization scheme in Ukraine).

Ministry of Youth and Sports has become another major player in the children’s sector. Since Ukraine’s independence, there are two new types of institutions under the auspices of this relatively newly-formed Ministry: Foster Families (FFs) and Family Type Homes (FTHs). According to Ukrainian regulations, a FF can raise up to five children, while the FTH — up to 10. After the Orange Revolution of December 2004, this Ministry has been gaining more and more responsibility to qualitatively care for children and youth at-risk. For instance, on August 18, 2005, as per President’s guidance, the MYS has developed a concept of reform of the system of all institutions for social and biological orphans, aiming towards more family type care after orphans. The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) is obviously trying to improve the situation and implement the reforms in the disadvantaged children sector, however, it will take much time (estimated up to 10 years, provided funding is available) before this reform is completed.

Far from enough, 1,200 orphans live in 130 family type homes (FTHs) formed in all 24 oblasts of Ukraine, Autonomous republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol; 325 children are raised in 115 foster families (FFs). 11 FTHs and 50 FFs were created in Ukraine in 2004. Given the problems with housing and other issues complicating creation of more FTHs that will be discussed further in this assessment, of special importance is the activities of Hope and Homes for Children Organization (HHC) funded primarily by British sponsors. This non-profit finances construction of FTHs and has built 65 FTHs (over 50%) currently operating in Ukraine. For instance Kyiv oblast, which has the largest amount (18) of FTHs financed by HHC has managed to avoid creation of one more orphanage in Kyiv oblast, as these FTHs house 140 social and biological orphans identified in Kyiv region (see section on HHC below for more details). Conversely, the city of Kyiv has no FTHs at all! A relatively significant amount of FTHs, which has also affected the decision as to creation of more orphanages is also registered in Dnipropetrovs’k oblast (12), Crimea (11), Odessa (10). By contrast, during the last 5

years there was in work done to increase the number of FTHs in Sevastopol city, Chernigiv, Donetsk and Poltava regions.

Despite the declared priority to raise orphans in family settings, the number of children raised in orphanages enhances: during 2001 – 2004 their number has risen by 10%. Most significantly in Crimea, Kherson, Zhitomir, Zaporizzhya, Khmelnytsky and Volyn oblasts. On the national scale, 10,400 children were accepted to institutions of all types in 2004 alone. The reasons of why so many children end up in institutions today are clear: drug and alcohol abuse of the parent(s) and economic and social hardships that stem from this pattern of behavior account for about 80 to 90% of social orphans in today's institutions (having at least one living biological parent), according to orphanages senior staff. During the last 10 years Ukraine witnessed a 60%(!) increase of social and biological orphans. For instance, in Crimea in 1945 there were 2046 orphans, of whom only 1% was social orphans, and 99% were biological orphans. In 2005 there are 5759 orphans in Crimea, of whom 77% are officially social orphans. However, staff of orphanages argues that over 90% of their today's "inmates" have one or both biological parents alive.

Institutionalization of children

Brief Historical Overview

The history of worldwide children institutionalization stems back to ancient Constantinople of the 4th century and later in Italy in Middle Ages. On the territory of the former Soviet Union the first institutions appeared in tsarist Russia of 18th century. After the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, Lenin saw institutional way of upbringing children as more progressive and "professional" than family upbringing, as many of parents "do not understand" the true values of the Socialist/Communist Revolution, according to Lenin's thinking. Without a doubt, institutional care allowed the Bolsheviks/Communists to influence a portion of growing generation without any outside interventions ensuring the children learn the "true values" of Communism and become exemplary Soviet citizens. Such distrust for the family as an "imperfect, uneducated and hard to influence institution" that could never be relied upon to raise true Soviet patriots, lasted for decades, virtually until the break up of the Soviet Union. Keeping as many children as possible in institutions, where paid staff would teach them communist morale, was regarded as a much "proper & safer" way of children upbringing throughout the communist epoch.

As a side effect, orphanages did help hundreds of thousands of children to survive during the most difficult times of Soviet era. The World War 1, Great October Socialist Revolution aftermath and the Civil War in Russia (1918-1920) brought famine and numerous diseases. The amount of street children at the times (millions by all counts) could not even fit into the erected orphanages by early 1920s. The 'holodomor' [famine] on the Ukrainian territory in 1932 – 1933 has "supplied" the orphanages with many more children occupying the vacancies that started to appear in the late 1920s. Further, World War 2 (WW2), where Soviet Union lost about 40 million people¹, brought a new wave of children into the orphanages after 1941. A theory has the right to exist that satisfactory established orphanages by the 1940s have played an important role to help survive and educate hundreds of thousands of children in Ukraine and other countries of the former USSR, who would have died or

¹ The exact number of Soviets perished in WW2 is not known, estimations vary anywhere from 25 to 50 million

grown up illiterate otherwise. United in celebration over the great victory in WW2, the Soviet men and women worked hard to re-build and revive the country after the war (the task that was unimaginably completed within five years). Among other factors, keeping children in institutions allowed many single mothers (virtually all mothers having children with disabilities) to work equal hours to men, which also bolstered rapid revival of the Soviet State after WW2 as tasked by the Soviet government. The victory of the Soviet Union over Germany in WW2 was credited to the strength and rightness of Communist system and ideology which has created the unbeatable Soviet man, the ideology that “proved” unquestionably and naturally victorious over any other alien system or power to a common Soviet person. Consequently, all ideas and institutions of this ideology, including the promotion of institutional care for orphans, have been fixed in the minds of people as victorious and the only right ones, not only for the after war period, but for decades to follow. Certainly, the thought of spending more individual time with children, or taking biological war orphans into foster family care did not seem proper - - the State needed all the workforce available to revive and strengthen the “cradle of the future communist world” and received the corresponding response from its people.² In the after WW2 years great attention was paid to proper provision of food and other necessities to after war institutions ensuring relative equality to the nutrition and clothing opportunities existing outside of institutions of those times. A number of people who were raised in institutions of those times (mostly men) when grew up took positions of power on both local and national levels and remembered well the positive role the institutions played during their childhood. The desire of gratitude to the system and institutions that helped many to survive and be “normally” raised and educated as well as lack of understanding how the system of orphanages deteriorated over the years lasted for decades allowing financial and political protection the children institutions had been enjoying until Gorbachov’s reconstruction (perestroika) (1985).

In the 1990s, when the realities of institutional care, or, rather, the results of its natural functional decay (occurring parallel to the decay of the communist ideology and lifestyle at large) were first released to the general public (quite literally as children institutions were closed to outsiders, located behind high fences), first quality questions were posed and issues raised connected to the affects of children institutionalization. On the other hand, decay of communist morale that was not substituted by anything else, newborn sexual freedom, and economic hardships pushed more parents to send their children to institutions as they could not afford or simply chose not to take care of them (see earlier statistical references of this assessment). Year after year more and more progressive Ukrainian thinkers realized the consequences of institutionalization. However, until this end, the historical positive (as viewed by many) role children institutions played and lost opportunities to start de-institutionalization immediately following the perestroika is vastly responsible for the fact that majority of Ukrainian population, although feeling pitiful for Ukrainian orphans today, still supports institutions, believing it provides “professional raising of orphans”. Importantly, an average Ukrainian is not educated as to the contemporary findings related to children institutionalization and its consequences. Nor is s/he aware of the alternatives to institutionalization of orphans already initiated in Ukraine and so well developed in the western societies. Naturally, such lack of data makes it impossible for an average Ukrainian to compare the two. **Intensive work to fix this situation, in**

² One exception that comes to mind is Halychyna, an area of western Ukraine that just joined the Soviet Union in 1940 - - some women from that locality, not yet so influenced by the Communist ideology, were able to occasionally take orphans into their families. Interestingly, the orphanages in western Ukraine are still conventionally smaller than in the rest of the country and children are better cared for

parallel to preparing the proper ground for institutionalization alternatives, would go a long way to help Ukraine build better future.

Children institutionalization today and its adverse consequences

The negative effects of institutionalization of children worldwide, especially at early age are well documented internationally, and it seems these straightforward findings are not challenged by scholars in the field of child psychology and sociology any more. Just to name a few, W. Goldfarb in 1945, in his article “Effects of psychological deprivation in infancy and subsequent stimulation” described his comparison of institutionalized children versus those raised outside of residential care and concluded that institutionalized children were far more backward in all respects of their development as compared to their peers raised in families. John Bowlby, who had considerable influence on lessening the practices of institutionalization in the west also proved adverse influence of separation from families among children, in his articles titled “Maternal care and mental health” (1951) and “Attachment and Loss” (1969). Worse health status, lack of proper life skills after the institution tenure, underdeveloped intellectual abilities, drawbacks in psychological and social development, poorer motor development, lower weight and height dimensions and other physical drawbacks are among the negative results of institutionalization, empirically proved as compared with children raised outside of institutional environment in these and other studies.

There are a number of studies that have been implemented in the recent years to prove the negative effects of institutionalization in today’s Ukraine. One fact speaks for itself: 75% of children in orphanages would much prefer to live in their own families. A Ukrainian child psychologist Ms. Natalia Maximova evaluated the development of children in public institutions (boarding schools, orphanages and shelters) and compared these findings with children raised in family-type facilities in various regions of Ukraine. The results of this indigenous study confirmed that the development of children in governmental institutions is far below the norm for their age. Orphanaged children, who are under 24-hour supervision of adults, are found to get extremely addicted to “asking” instead of “thinking” and can be characterized as “underdeveloped”. It was proved again that the personal attention to a child and the love the child needs to receive is not just an emotional wish - - these are needs are essential to child’s proper intellectual, physical and psychological development. Once these needs are not met - - the society is almost sure to receive an dysfunctional and unhealthy adult, who is likely to need some level of support from the state for his/her entire life.

The author of this assessment has visited most of existing institutions in various regions of Ukraine. While the lifestyle and conditions differ somewhat from one institution to another, mostly depending on the managerial capabilities of the institution leadership, the general pattern of life institutionalized children “enjoy” and their economic hardships allow for a general description of the state of affairs.

With the political, social and economic transformation of Ukrainian society since independence, the situation in children in institutions has aggravated markedly. Firstly, a large budget deficit has left the state allocating less than sufficient resources for the maintenance of all state institutions. Some orphanage directors have admitted that their overall needs are funded at about 30% level and they are pushed to fundraise and rely on humanitarian and other donors’ assistance, in a way similar to indigenous social service non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The amount of children in institutions differs from as few as 30 in a couple of orphanages (esp. in western Ukraine) to as many as 450 - - throughout the country. According to the State Statistics Committee (Aug. 17, 2005) the average number of orphans per institution is 247 children (excluding oblast/city level orphanages of mixed type and houses of child for orphans below 3 y.o.). Disabled children are counted separately and average out to 140 children per institution. The highest orphans population per orphanage is in Kirovograd Oblast (369 children/institution), Crimea (314); Vinnitsa Oblast (314), Poltava Oblast (311).

Children' lives in institutions

Children in institutions always sleep in large rooms with 8 to 40 beds in one room. Boys and girls have separate bedrooms from 7 y.o. Very rarely children have their own bedside cabinets, but may have some closet space outside of their common bedroom. Most of the time the children spend together, in class during lessons (for children over 6 or 7), outside near the orphanage facilities walking or running around as there are almost no educational games or quality sports opportunities in most orphanages. Children eat together in large canteens and are almost never allowed to participate in cooking. Exception to that is tedious, uneducational work like peeling potatoes and doing all sorts of cleaning that children are asked to do throughout the day. Sometimes, there is one caretaker/teacher for 30 children or more, while the amount of all orphanage staff may reach to one staffer per two children. Children do not know what they deserve or have rights for (let alone general rights of children adopted by the UN). More than frequently, the same teachers indoctrinate children on many subjects, like math, literature, physics, music, etc. due to the lack of qualified staff in any given institution. Children abide by strict rules, stand in line to get their food or receive their bedding after fairly rare linen/clothing washing days. Most institutions don't even aim to prepare children for future life – very rarely outside of institutions life skills or job skills are taught to children. Showers or baths (if available) are allowed in groups (boys and girls separately) as rarely as once a week or even more rare than that. Frequently, there would be no hot water so special arrangements have to be made to heat the water during the cold season. In summer, most times arrangements to heat the water would not be made and children are “encouraged” to use cool water available in the shower.

Majority of orphanage staff are elderly women, some of who have been raised in institutions themselves and have not gone through any training on how to work with at-risk children. In fact there are no university educational programs in the nation that train students to become orphanage teachers or orphanage social workers! Furthermore, there are no educational programs preventing professional burn out for orphanage staff, most of who work with children with special needs just by virtue of their institutional status.

Most facilities would greatly benefit from repairs that have not been funded for years or decades. Frequently, the roof would be leaking in this or that part of the facility(ies). The same applies to institutions' equipment and supplies. According to the statement of Republican Department of Family and Youth of Crimea, the vast majority of children institutions of all types in Crimea require repairs of both living and auxiliary buildings. Institutions' material base is described as “extremely poor”. In particular, the Belogorski orphanage subordinate to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for children with psychological and physical retardation is in critical condition and fails to perform even its basic functions. The level of repairs urgently needed for this particular orphanage is estimated at 920,000.00 Hrn!

As diet in orphanages can be characterized as “meager” at best, many children develop or further deepen chronic diseases, which could be easily cured in the out-of-institution world. One good example is an 8-year old Tanya, a very nice Tatar girl living in Crimea, who has been sent to a special orphanage for children with stomach problems. Upon return from the orphanage after one year Tanya had more severe stomach condition than the condition she had had before entering the orphanage. Additionally, the child came back aggressive, inattentive and angry, which among other things does not help to cure stomach conditions.

Strict behavioral regulations in the institutions discourage children to attain assertive behavioral skills. Only the children that fully obey the rules, regardless of how illogical or uneducational they could be, are left in peace by orphanage staff. Children are pushed to understand: exposing your emotions is dangerous, keeping them to yourself is safe. Children who portray leadership skills, ask “too many questions”, try to defend what they think their rights are - - usually run into some type of punishment. This results in child’s protest with consequent action, for instance aggressiveness or running away. Institution community life leads to complete lack of sense of ownership among institutionalized children - - another major issue repeatedly raised by children experts. Children grow as pure consumers used to asking for things instead of making any effort to get them. Finally, many orphanage graduates do not have passports upon graduation - - given Ukrainian bureaucracy and lack of life skills among orphans, some graduates (of those who try) can’t get their passports for years, or never.

Physical and sexual abuse

Abuse in orphanages is common. The fact that every 4th street child is an orphanage run away speaks for itself. Unofficial survey in orphanages proved that an average age for an orphanage girl to start sexual life is 8 – 9 years old!! Abuse occurs by older children towards smaller ones, by irritated staff members towards children with mental retardation or simply those “not behaving well”. The children from current FTHs that used to live in orphanages remember well that in any and all minor misunderstandings with orphanage staff, any staff member, including a cook or a janitor of the orphanage could use the humiliation method to set the child back, by saying something like “remember who you are... you’re nothing... an orphanage kid with nobody to stand up for you - - so, behave yourself...”. It is astonishing that when a child does not “behave him/herself”, s/he is sent to a psychiatric clinic for an tranquilizing injection of a set of injections (“ psychiatric treatment course”).

Brave Ukrainian NGOs start to speak out as to the hard-to-prove widespread sexual and labor abuse of institutionalized children. Especially in rural orphanages children are frequently “hired” to do the most difficult rural work. “There is nobody who would better and faster dig out the potatoes in the village than we, the fools, as they call us” said one boy who used to live in one of the orphanages for mentally retarded children.

Reported are cases when elementary child’s desire to be hugged, held and touched is taken advantage of by way of sexual abuse. Sometimes, children are merely not educated enough to understand the division line. Child experts in many regions assert that sexual abuse problem has gone to the level where these threatened and misled children living in closed communities, dependent upon adults surrounding them, with limited information about outside world themselves “believe” that since they

are “different” from children raised in families, sexual and labor services is “their way” to earn better living, supplement their meager orphanage diet and clothing supply, while some orphanage officials and/or their friends have started whole industries taking advantage of this “orphans’ belief”. Such “belief” is especially easy to push on mentally retarded children, which many children grow to become given the lack of proper developmental opportunities and brain stimulation in orphanages. The involvement/ permission/ coverage of the higher rayon or oblast government in orphans abuse industry is alleged by some regional child experts, but is very difficult to prove. As an example, in one of the visited oblasts where a couple of progressive officials have come to power, two orphanage directors have been immediately accused and are being investigated for signs of practicing virtually open child slavery (this information was shared confidentially, however, more details may be provided upon additional request after the court hearing).

Threatened, children in such institutions who were abused feel unsafe to give testimonies. Most children don’t trust anybody and are likely to deny the facts of sexual abuse. Also, there is well grounded fear of being punished after the investigation is over, as there is really no system to protect them afterwards (there is no law of system to protect the witnesses in Ukraine). Few older orphans adopted by foreigners feeling better protected are more likely to speak, but are afraid for their peers, who remained in the orphanages; also, from the psychological standpoint it is not recommended to ask the child to remember passed abuse, more so talk about it over and over again.

The orphanage director, as the official ultimately responsible for the children in his/her orphanage, has the right not to allow anybody on the territory of the orphanage unless instructed in advance by his superiors on the oblast level, making any orphanage virtually inaccessible to the general public and press. It looks different from the situation in Romania, when orphanages became open to the public and press, which shook the world with status of children in Romanian orphanages.

As an example, the author of the assessment was contacted by a U.S. adoptive parent, who had adopted Alex at age 3 from one of the orphanages in northern Ukraine. The name of the parent is not released to the general reader, however, may be provided to those specifically interested in this particular case, upon request. Below are citations of recent letters received from the parent:

“From the beginning, the boy told us of being whipped on his privates (penis) with a house shoe when he wet the bed. He also spoke of being hit by a man, in the night, because he and two others snuck in

to get "sweet tea". These two incidents were shared as soon as we could understand his English. The following are incidents he shared during therapy sessions over the last several months:

- His hair was pulled
- he was tickled until he wet himself
- he was thrown in the bed with such force that he hit the back of his head on the railing of the crib and bounced forward hitting the front of his head
- he was kicked in the stomach and the buttocks
- a woman and a man sexually abused him, touching his genitals and putting things up his rectum such as a spoon
- he was hit with a fist on his head and face

Several times, he said these incidents occurred primarily at night but some abuse happened during the day (except for the sexual abuse). His birth sister was adopted by a French family and she told her mom that her best friend had bruises all over, that she was always being hit. I get the impression that

certain children were targeted for repeated abuse. I do not feel that the director was aware of what was going on.”... “ I had Alex draw what happened to him as a form of therapy [to later the destroy the drawings with the child, a therapeutic way to show the child this will never repeat]. I then took copies of drawings to his therapist who presented them at a conference in New Mexico. All ten doctors agreed that he absolutely had to have been abused in the ways he said he had been. One of the doctors who practices in New York said her practice is mostly with families who have adopted from Russia [usu. Russia implies all countries of former Soviet Union] and she was very familiar with these kinds of drawings representing his abuse.”

Can someone blame such a child for wanting to run away and live on the streets rather than endure this? I have initiated an urgent investigation on this particular case. However, how many cases are revealed like this? How many children are brave to speak out about their sad experiences in orphanages after they are safe away from their orphanages? Obviously, no statistics are available on child abuse, however, most of the people well familiar with institutional life of children would admit that if not abused, children feel unprotected, especially at night. They don't know who their friend is and who they should stay away from. This creates elementary human distrust and more sophisticated emotional disturbances that may or may not be cured (if tried).

Another example includes a child who ran away from an institution and sought shelter with a woman who, as the child was told on the street, cares for orphans. One night he just came up to her door and knocked. When asked for reasons of running away, this slightly mentally retarded child explained that he “could not perform oral sexual services along with others”. After 5 years living in the family of that woman, he learned how to draw and express himself and partially overcame his fears.

Realities for children graduating from institutions

Discussions with children experts well familiar with children institutions have ushered the following statistics as to orphanage graduates:

60% join some form of crime structures

30% become homeless bums usually getting their food from garbage yards and through begging (some connected with crime)

50% of female graduates practice prostitution as a main or supplementary method of earning a living

20% commit suicides

10% become relatively functional adults

During the June 2005 large roundtable on at-risk children issues with President Victor Yushenko, the following data was voiced by the President of Ukraine. Within the first 5 years after a young man or woman graduates from an orphanage:

- 20% become homeless bums
- 50% commit crimes and wind up in prisons
- 15% make efforts to commit suicide
- 10% are able to socialize and become functional adults

The two estimations from absolutely separate sources give solid grounds to argue that the information listed above is true. This data shows catastrophic consequences of institutionalization in Ukraine for orphanage graduates!

Furthermore, analysis of recent sociological research of institutionalized children immediately prior to graduation shows that 76% of children are **afraid to leave the orphanage** as they realize (in priority order indicated by orphans): 1. they will not be able to study and receive the elementary profession they dream to receive (70%); 2. they won't have sufficient money for food, transportation, medicine, etc. (54%); 3. they won't have any place to live (54%); 4. they are frightened by the need to change their habits, behavior, way of life (19%). The fear of not having a place to live is especially justified. Despite the fact that about 60% of orphanage graduates officially have some housing that either belongs to them or they have inherited, such graduates can't always use it in practice. Due to the incredibly high prices for housing in Ukraine especially in large cities, "stealing" housing from orphanage graduates, who do not understand legislation and can be easily manipulated has become a criminal industry, implemented by crime groups frequently supported by corrupt local bureaucrats and private notaries. The MYS is studying the perspectives and financial realities of creation of social hotels (dormitories) for temporary settlement of orphanage graduates, however, when and how financial resources will be identified for this project is still not clear.

When questioned, most orphanage directors could not tell about the destiny of their graduates in one year after graduation (let alone 5 years away). The only information available is where the child "has been sent" from the institution (to his/her home town, technical school, boarding school for adults, etc.), however, the future of orphanage graduates is not tracked by anybody.

Older children in orphanages are not being provided with the skills needed for life competence behind institution gates. It is obvious that orphanage staff feel primarily responsible to ensure children do not starve, have something to wear and study school subjects. At the same time, orphanage officials in their overwhelming majority do not believe it's one of their responsibilities to help children become functional adults after the institution tenure. There are no educational programs of any sort that are specific to institutions. The imminent graduates of the orphanages, when asked, have very vague ideas regarding their future, or prefer not to speak about it at all. Frequently, they have no idea where they might live or what work they would do. They do not know where to turn for any help after graduation from the orphanage. Children are never taught about their rights and responsibilities, major health issues including HIV/AIDS and ways of its transmission. The results of the psychological surveys performed by child psychologists describe children as aggressive, emotionally unstable, impulsive, egocentric, showing low level of self-esteem, dependent on others for even elementary decisions, being unable to organize their actions. Children from FTHs who now feel secure and continue to keep in touch with their old friends in orphanages they came from confirm, that most girls they knew upon graduation go to prostitution as the way they know for sure will bring them money; boys often turn to crime. Regardless of conversations or correspondence with their FTH peers now in families, orphanage graduates usually fail to create their own families, just don't comprehend the family model. Some girls later get pregnant trying to at least get their own children (very few wind up getting married), but they don't really know how to care for the child in the family - - ultimately many loose parental rights and return their kids back to orphanages.

Although some individuals in the GOU are progressive thinkers, who truly represent the interests of the biological and social orphans and understand the ineffectiveness of Soviet-type children's institutions, they constantly clash with "alternative thinking" government officials, who although may understand the advantages of family upbringing of children, are not willing to promote the conditions

necessary to transfer children from government facilities into FFs and FTHs or other family settings. Some authorities may fear losing power and/or budgets allocated for the institutions that they control.

Another serious drawback of the current orphanage system is frequent moving of children from one institution to another based on their age. As already mentioned, children aged 0 - 3 years are located in baby homes (always under MOH), 3 – 7 under school orphanage type, 8 - 16 (some though 18) school age orphanages/boarding schools. This confusing system in effect make the children social orphans 3-4 times during their life, since they are constantly having to adapt to new institutions, friends and care takers. Another adverse aspect is that brothers and sisters are frequently separated, regardless of their wish to live together, based on different in age, mental/physical health, availability of vacancies in orphanages and region children come from. Although it is obvious the children of different age in some ways need different types of care, again, family raising resolves this problems once and for all.

Finally, an element of deviant institutional behavior is inclination towards crime. The number of institutionalized minors with criminal behavior officially registered by criminal departments for minors of Ministry of Interior has been growing catastrophically: 883 minors accused of crime registered for the end of 2002 and 1,683 for the end of 2004! Allowing such growth with no action while merely releasing such youth into general populace is simply criminal in itself. Furthermore, this is only official statistics, the real number of orphanage residents and graduates who have “chosen” criminal behavior and have not been caught or registered is not known. Another obvious factor that cannot be measured is the level of influence of such youth on other orphanage residents.

Restructuring of orphanages system

The developed world has restructured their orphanage system decades ago and vast majority of orphans are cared for in the professional family settings or are adopted. In Great Britain, for instance, less than 2% of orphans are raised in institutions. Understanding the drawbacks of institutionalization Ukrainian President Victor Yushenko has pushed the government to boost the efforts to move children away from orphanages. However, this process has already proved extremely difficult. Governmental officials, NGO leaders, FFs and FTHs experts in regions also confirm that restructuring of orphanages is a VERY painful process in the regions and will take quite some time. Local officials and general public must understand the institutionalization consequences and the necessity of restructuring process to allow compromises from all parties.

One major reason local bureaucrats do not want to promote FTHs is because FTH parents become strong advocates of their children demanding housing and other **rights** for FTH graduates. While in orphanages nobody really cares after the child after the s/he leaves the premises (virtually all orphanage directors do not know about the destiny of the child several months after graduation), FTH parents appear to continue the relationship with their graduates for years to come. The most an orphanage director would do to help a graduate is write a letter to the Chief of Rayon Administration the child is from (and theoretically comes back to) warning about the child's return asking to provide at least temporary housing and job placement. However, experience shows that such letters are easily ignored as majority of graduates do not return to the towns and villages they are registered in/had come from. And even those that do either do not know about their rights or can't enforce them.

An important component that should bolster moving children from orphanages to families is the economic efficacy of FTHs and FFs. In 2002 the Ukrainian Institute of Social Research has released a calculation proving such efficiency - - the funds allocated to keep a child in a foster family/FHT depend on the age of the child and were then calculated as follows: the child under 3 y.o. - 317 Hrn., child from 3 to 7 y.o. - 265 Hrn, child from 7 to 16 y.o. - 297 Hrn. In 2005 allocation per child has been raised to about 450 – 500 Hrn/month. Nobody questions the fact that keeping an orphan in FTH or FF is economically more efficient for the government. The estimations as to keeping a child in an institution have varied due to difficulty to calculate orphanages' expenses for utilities, building repairs and other expenses that come from different budget line items. The "all inclusive" estimation of Ukrainian Institute of Social Research of 2002 was at approximately 720 Hrn./month (including expenses for up keeping the buildings, utilities, etc.,). Regardless of any estimations and dry statistical data, orphanage directors in the field report that since Ukraine's independence they never receive all the funding they are entitled to by the state, having to rely on humanitarian assistance, donations from Christian groups, etc. On the other hand, the oblast level of financing (the source of funding for most state institutions) still provides better "guarantees" for funding than the city/rayon level, where FFs and FTHs receive their funds. The government as represented by MYS understands this problems and works on establishing the system where all funding for all orphans comes from one source regardless of where any orphan is located to avoid confusion and ensure better. This mechanism has been titled "money follows the child" and is currently being introduced to regional experts and officials for studying and feedback.

One idea repeatedly mentioned in the regions is that at the first stage the compromise could be not to target orphanages for severely disabled children - - such institutions should remain at this stage (similarly to the western model), as it will be rather difficult to find professional families for disabled children at this starting point of deinstitutionalization. Certainly, once there are families willing to raise seriously disabled children - - wonderful, and efforts should be made to find such families. However, in the manageable interests of today, in order to move de-institutionalization process, make is public and educational for the entire nation, deinstitutionalization process should start from moving thousands of non-disabled children to family upbringing. In parallel, special efforts should be made to ensure *biological* parents of disabled are rehabilitated and supported whenever possible to take their children back home.

As to orphanages staffing - - those orphanage workers who are really committed to helping children - - should be encouraged to take for professional upbringing (or adopt) those orphans they are attached to, while receiving financial support from the state just like any citizen of Ukraine who is psychologically and pedagogically fit and trained to raise children in small groups.

Creation and strengthening of foster families (FFs) and family type homes (FTHs)

Advantages of family upbringing of social and biological orphans were understood by progressive thinkers even during the Soviet times. After commencement of Gorbachev's perestroika in 1985, the Soviet government issued a Temporary Decree on Family Children Homes, authored by Albert Lehanov, who managed to push adoption of this decree in December 1988. By the end of 1989 there were about 90 Family Children Homes in the entire USSR and Lehanov even managed to gather all

FTH parents everybody for a conference in Moscow in 1989. An existing FTH of Elena & Victor Garelkiny (Simferopol, Crimea) who raised 23 children in 16 years, as an example, were the delegates to that conference. Even though after the break up of USSR the FTH idea became dormant on the national levels in Russia and Ukraine - - on local level some families (including the Garelkinys) managed to push the adoption City Council decrees allowing to continue to support FTHs then and receive some sort of support (varied during the years) from their respective local governments.

As mentioned, there are approximately 1,200 orphans living in 130 family type homes and 325 children are raised in 115 foster families. Comparing this data to the 10,400 children who were accepted to state orphanages of all types ONLY in 2004 speaks for itself.

To take a case study, in the whole oblast of Cherkassy there are nine foster families as of this writing and two FTHs. Ten children only have already graduated from FTHs in the last 8 years. Both FTHs are located in apartments that have been given by the state about 10 years ago. Each apartment has eight rooms. Although the rooms are quite small they are cozy and usually two children sleep in one room. Both FTHs have been asking the local government for land and at least some financial support to build houses outside of the city, however, until now this request remained unanswered. Similarly, none of the regions surveyed by the author have shown availability of funds to buy new houses for FTHs, making **housing the major roadblock on the way of FTH development in Ukraine, much more difficult to overcome than financial support for children in FTH**. Some regional authorities said that if the housing issue for FTHs would be resolved, they are committed to identify and reserve funds to financially support the potential FTHs in the future. Thus, the majority of prospective professional parents must wait until the Ukrainian government amends the situation on the national scale (in the works) and helps identify resources for FTH housing. A number of FFs and FTHs in Ukraine are supported by religious communities, where housing issue is resolved by the sponsor.

Some officials responsible for organizing FTHs and FFs mentioned that there are people come with questions like “if we form FTH, who will own the house?” Once they learn the house will be owned by the government they leave and never come back, which means there are people who may be trying to take advantage of the situation. This only confirms that selection mechanism of prospective parents must be tough and future monitoring of FTH is obligatory.

A study on protection of human rights in state supported institutions of all types was solicited by the local government of Kharkiv oblast, supported by the U.S. Embassy to Ukraine and carried out in Kharkiv oblast in 2002. Its results were unambiguous: although the current status of FTHs and FFs in Ukraine is not perfect yet, the family form of caring for orphans is “much more progressive and has significant potential”.

According to Law of Ukraine “On Social-Legal Protection of Children Deprived of Parental Care” of January 2005 and President’s Decree 1086/2005 of July 2005 it is the prerogative of the State to identify and train professional parents to take care of orphans. MYS is tasked by the President to create a holistic system of preparation and training of professional workers who would provide social supervision to FTH and FF parents. Although there are not enough high quality trainers in Ukraine yet, this work is on-going. Several professionals have been identified in Canada and other countries who agreed to provide technical assistance in the area of promoting FTHs and FFs, however, funds need to be identified to invite such specialists to Ukraine to quickly help Ukrainian experts further

improve the system of selection and training of foster parents. There are brochures (preliminary attempts for technical advice) prepared by Kyiv based social workers. Efforts undertaken thus far by Christian Children's Fund (CCF) program in Ukraine, Holt International/Ukraine, Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) have given a good start in providing technical advice and training, however, these efforts are not sufficient on the national scale.

Many bureaucrats, who professional parents dealt with during FTH and FF registration ask "why do you need all this, aren't your own children enough?" Officials and public must be better educated as to advantages of family upbringing of children and understand there is no alternative to atmosphere of loving family for a child to become a functional adult. All of the FTH parents I have met assert that there is great potential to find parents to form FTHs and FFs to raise orphans in families, but financial support for this work is crucial at this stage. Some FTH parents asserted that lack of positive public opinion is among the major difficulties in FTH development.

During the Orphanhood Prophylactics conference of March 2003 supported by Assistance to Russian Orphans (ARO) program pointed out that one of the major problems in foster care in Russia is burn out of professional parents who have not been trained properly or did not understand the importance of their work and the level of commitment expected from them. Thus, the importance of proper selection, training and other preparation of professional families is emphasized throughout the region. Examples of unsuccessful trainings of professional are available in Ukraine. For instance, one FHT/FF training program in Donetsk in 2002 included 10 prospective families. But, only one family completed the course successfully, while others either failed or dropped out. The family which was successful in passing the course said that the course was far from perfect, delivered by government officials who themselves did not understand what was involved in taking up to 10 children to their home, some of whom may have different levels of mental or physical retardation, history of abuse, life on the streets, etc. This is just one example how local officials, who were considered experts in de-institutionalization reform, tried to "tick off" the training requirement posed onto them by the MYS, obviously being less than committed to move this process qualitatively. Such examples have been reported in several regions. As mentioned, today several professional organizations provide trainings for potential and current professional parents with much more success, but international experience would help. Importantly, some prospective parents have refused to take children into professional upbringing during and after such quality trainings, thus prospective professional parents' trainings are very useful and can be viewed as "selection mechanisms" in addition to straight forward preparation courses for future FTH parents. These trainings have already allowed to create preliminary databases of parents who are waiting to take children in case the housing issue will be resolved and financial support secured.

Also, there is research being conducted in Ukraine as to adaptation of orphans to professional parents and visa versa, led by one of FTH parents, Master of Arts in Pedagogies (Candidate Nauk) from Kirovograd region. Surveys of children performed in Foster Families and Family Type Homes by Professor Natalia Maximova and questioning I have performed with these children prove that they are in much better state of emotional health and are getting better prepared for future life. The children have concrete plans for their future lives. They have an idea of where they will live and can name people who can help them in their life. They have good knowledge of their rights, responsibilities, state allowances and facilities provided for orphans.

Readiness of adults to take children from institutions and street: Given frequent questions from the public in Ukraine and other countries as to “questionable” availability of professional parents willing to take children to joint living, one should not confuse the general trend among Ukrainian families to having fewer biological children (although in the last several years the birth rate has increased compared to the year before) with readiness among adults to take children from institutions and street. Institute on Family and Youth (IFY) conducted a research that shows that people under 35 who want to have children are more likely to have own biological children, while readiness to initiate FFs/FTBs applies to people of older age - - approximately between 35 and 55, who frequently have a different understanding and approach towards children and their problems. By large, people over 35 are more socially pro-active and are more prepared to undergo the necessary training and take children into professional upbringing or adoption. Finally, the level of infertility has been growing in Ukraine in the last years and many people over 35 without children have already tried to have biological children with no success and are now more prepared to take orphans into professional raising.

Problems with Juvenile Justice in Ukraine

In 1995 Ukraine has adopted a Law “on Departments & Services for Minors and Special Institutions for Minors”. Unfortunately, since 1995 Ukrainian government has not had time and commitment to focus on this issue by creating sub-laws and decrees to start factually implementing this Law. One of the provisions of this Law is that a special educational department in the Justice System of Ukraine should be created in order to educate and train juvenile judges and juvenile care takers (special social workers) given the peculiarities of juvenile delinquency as compared to adult criminal behavior. In addition, important decrees must be adopted which would allow special measures of influence towards children with deviant behavior to combat juvenile delinquency.

As a background note, the real responsibility for criminal actions in Ukraine effects only individuals who have reached the age of 16. Only for especially brutal criminal acts (like murder, violent robbery, rape, etc.) criminal responsibility comes at the age of 14. However, some children from crisis families and social/biological orphans tend to initiate in criminal activity at much earlier age, starting from 10 and sometimes even earlier. For instance, if children under age of 16 are caught with thefts, street attacks (even with ultimate body injuries on the victim of attack), extortion (“vymagatelstvo”), hooligan acts, etc. - - nothing can be done to punish and rehabilitate such juvenile criminals today. In reality this means that when police finds out about criminal actions of individuals below the age of 16, rarely any criminal investigation is initiated because the victim, possible witnesses and police realize criminals under 16 y.o. cannot be persecuted. Finally, the abuser him/herself realizes that acts like this go unpunished. Peers of schoolchildren under 16 frequently come to understand this, which allows the potential to follow this “example” considering no punishment will be enforced.

This created serious consequences in Ukraine and a whole subculture in schools where more criminally inclined teenagers terrorize their peers and smaller children on a range of instances, like vigorously taking away other children cell phones (which are sold easily on local cell phone markets), humiliating their peers in any possible way, threatening them, making them bring/steal items from their homes, etc. According to State Institute of Family and Youth Problems 26% of younger school children (boys/girls, rural/urban almost equally) have experienced violence from older children from their school. Another serious consequence is that utilizing this breach in legislation and practices, criminally behaved adults take advantaged of youth below the age of 16 in planned criminal activism. 4,145

crimes were recorded in 2003 when minors were pushed to criminal activism. Examples of this include drug trafficking (every 5th schoolchild has tried drugs, unimaginable situation as compared to USSR times), organized crime where children under 16 y.o. perform the actual crime actions. Furthermore, during investigation and at court hearings of group criminal activities teenagers under 16 y.o. are asked/pushed to say that **they** were the ones who performed the criminal act, when it's not the case, while ensuring no prosecution is initiated and those who are actually to blame are set free. This is one side of the problem.

The other side of the problem is that children aged 16 – 18 fall in the same laws and prosecution practices as adults. This means that if a child aged 16 stole any item costing more than 50 Hrn. (\$10), s/he can be sued to 3 years in prison, just like adult criminal practices. Up to 80% of small thefts done by minors are attempted to get money for food. Recent example: in Kharkiv, a 16-year old from a poor family recently stole an old bicycle to get money for food, was caught and received a 3-year sentence. Practical experience shows that 16 year old getting into prison loses his/her social ties, enters a new “social development”. Essentially, the system is currently making a criminal individual out of somebody who might be easily helped and rehabilitated. Alternative methods of punishment theoretically exist in the law, but they are not used for that same reason - - there are very few specialists in Ukraine in the area of juvenile justice and virtually no juvenile care takers. Thus it's easier for a judge in the court hearing to just punish a 16 y.o. as an adult and isolate him/her from the society, as no realistic mechanism and human resources are in place to rehabilitate him/her. Importantly, prisons in Ukraine are not rehabilitative institutions with a set of major internal problems, further imposing criminal patterns of behavior for youth who were sent to prisons. Finally, after returning from prison, there is no institution or plan that would take care of the person who went to prison at age 16.

About 20,000 minors total are convicted in Ukraine annually. The highest growth of criminal behavior among minors nationwide is recorded in Kirovograd, Kyiv, Zhitomir and Poltava oblasts. Out of these 20,000, approximately 3,000 minors aged 16 – 18 are imprisoned annually. Out of 2,882 who statistically were sent to prisons in 2004, 55% had been “convicted conditionally” before. About 9,000 are found guilty and sentenced to certain amount of penalty without actually going to prison unless found guilty again (which means “convicted conditionally”). Since there is no system of follow up justice or rehabilitation (as there are no juvenile justice care takers/youth social workers trained to follow up on such instances), these 9,000 youth: 1. feel no actual punishment has resulted after their crime prompting many to pursue criminal activity, 2. no social workers rehabilitate them - - such youth are left to themselves in the same surroundings/settings and thus, are very likely to commit a crime again - - as stated above, in 2004 - - 55% of them did! The most “popular” (in about 80% of cases) provision of the judge after the court hearing is “return the child to strict supervision of parents”, while it is the problems in the minor's family, or at least improper family upbringing are most likely the reason the minor committed the crime in the first place. Such decisions can be explained by lack of specific education among judges as to juvenile justice, absence of court juvenile care takers, and lack of rehabilitative institutions - - in Ukraine there are 11 schools of social rehabilitation for juvenile delinquents aged 11 to 14 that house only 575 youth in the nation. There are only three professional technical schools of social rehabilitation for youth aged 14 to 18 (two for boys and one for girls), which currently house 435 juvenile criminals in the whole country! The rest of sentenced youth stay in colonies for juveniles - - regular prisons for minors.

The number of children who have committed serious crimes (killings, group robberies, rapes) among these youth has been growing in the last 3 years, a new development in Ukraine. Naturally, children from dysfunctional families are the most frequent “guests” in these facilities. The level of literacy/education among such youth almost never corresponds with the educational norms for their biological age. The living conditions in most colonies for juveniles significantly below the norm. The funding levels are not sufficient; there are no appropriate conditions for studies and gaining professional skills. Medical care is also below the required standards.

Services for minors, part of local executive branch responsible for monitoring deviant behavior among youth are staffed at 50.9% of the level of need. The worst situation is reported in Chernivtsi, Rivne, Ivano-Frankivsk and Zakarpattia oblasts. Similarly, social services for youth and families are staffed at 49% of their need. Here the issue is most acute in Kirovograd, Kherson, Kyiv, Volyn, Zakarpattia and Sumy oblasts.

Legislative changes affecting children-at-risk

On September 27, 1991 Ukraine has adopted the November 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This and other international pieces of legislation define child neglect, begging and street life in general as negative social realities that must be eradicated. Affirmation that raising children in families as the only natural setting for child’s proper development and wellbeing - - child’s fundamental need - - dominates also throughout the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The major national document that protects the rights of children is Ukrainian Constitution adopted in June 1996.

The Law of Ukraine on Protection of Childhood adopted in April 2001 states (article 11) that “Family is the natural environment for physical, spiritual, intellectual, cultural, social development of a child and his/her financial security... Every child has a right to live in a family w/ both or one parent and for guardianship of parents”. This latter phrase implies that guardianship by parents should take priority over any other guardianship, including guardianship by a children institution.

The first variant of FF Decree was first issued in 1996, a number of families accepted children from state institutions. When these foster parents tried to obtain support from the state, the state refused saying that the Decree had no budget. As a result, some FF parents returned the orphans to their orphanages, making them orphans yet again! It was reported that two children committed suicide after being returned to their orphanages.

Decrees of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine # 565 and 564 of April 2002 are the current pieces of legislation that confirmed and detailed out the legal base for the establishment of FFs, and FTHs respectively. However, there are some issues with the way these decrees are stated. In particular, Decree # 565 on Foster Families needs to be modified include the description of the financial support of the child’s daily costs, foster parents salaries, and provision of pensions for the foster parents. As annual training updates have been suggested for professional parents by child specialists statewide, alteration to Decree # 565 should include more frequent training for professional parents (currently Decree indicates the requirement for training once in five years). Full translations of Decrees #565 and 564 are provided in Appendixes to this assessment.

For more holistic protection of vulnerable children and youth, the Supreme Parliament of Ukraine has adopted a Law of Ukraine “On Social-Legal Protection of Children Deprived of Parental Care” of January 13, 2005 (frequently referred to as “Feldman Law” due to the name of the People’s Deputy who was one of the authors and lobbied passage of this Law). The Law introduces state social standards and guarantees for social and biological orphans as per their material and financial security despite their location or forms of care. Importantly, the Law guarantees housing standards for orphans, which are no lower than nationwide standards, and guarantees to provide orphans with the first employment.

President Yushenko in his Decree # 1086/2005 of July 11, 2005 “On Priority Measures as to Protection of Children’s Rights” challenged the system of financing of Family Type Homes and Foster Families. Before the Decree articles gain full implementation force, after amending other related legislative pieces (which will realistically occur only after Parliamentary elections of March 2006) the funds for supporting Family-Type Homes (FTH) and Foster Families (FF) are theoretically made available on the local level, within the Rayon or overall education budget (just like any other decisions pertaining to orphans, which are made by Guardianship Committees every orphan is attached to). The composition of the committee in essence includes:

1. Chairman of the Committee, whose main job is Deputy Head of Rayon State Administration on Humanitarian Affairs
2. Secretary of the Committee, the inspector of Department of Education (DOE), who is responsible for collecting all documents and materials related to the individual case before the Committee, thus having large powers to influence the decision of the Committee
3. Service for Minors Local Representative.

If the Guardianship Committee so chooses, its Chairman has the right to authorize funds from rayon education budgets to support family type homes under Cabinet Ministers Decree #564 (initiating and describing alternative methods of caring for orphans). However, they are not obliged to do so having the final word over where the child is destined to go. Since the Rayon State Administrations presently do not have specific line item for this purpose in their budgets, Heads of local Rayon State Administration and their deputies tend to be “economical” towards their own local budgets by making decisions to send social and biological orphans to state orphanages instead of identifying funds to support a FTH or FF. Their logic is simple: state orphanages are funded by oblast and state level ANYWAY, the funding level is usually not based on the exact number of children in each orphanage. Thus, local authorities making the decision of where to send a social or biological orphan do not “lose” financially ONLY if the child is sent to the state orphanage instead of FF or FTH. Given financial constraints of today’s Ukraine, even the progressive thinking officials (let alone those who can’t care less about “somebody’s” children or do not understand institutionalization consequences) will decide to choose the orphanage.

All parties - - NGOs, governmental experts, professional parents of FTHs/FFs both in Kyiv and regions agree that **the major problem of the legislative system pertaining to social and biological orphans today is approach to funding. The nationally established system currently finances institutions/orphanages as opposed to funding children the state has the responsibility to take care of.** Given social and biological orphans move frequently in their lives and to bolster creation and support of FTHs and FFs, the necessity to reform funding practices and establish a mechanism to provide funding for the education and support on a per child basis, not of an establishment in general

(“money follows the child” principle) is of paramount importance. Thus, efforts from the public and NGO sector should be made to help MYS promote the financial side of de-institutionalization reform by educating regional officials of the advantages of family upbringing of orphans.

Analysis of general info relating to at-risk children

Decay of the family as an institution in today’s Ukraine

One of the differences in the Ukrainian young populace is **postponing or never entering into marital relations**. The amount of registered marriages has been declining since 1989. For instance, in 2004 Ukraine has recorded the lowest among of registered marriages since independence - - approximately 278,000 (even in 2003 this number reached 371,000). By contrast, according to Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS), over 90% of young citizens consider family as the most significant value in life. More than half of young people want to have two children, about 30% want to have one child and about 10% - - three children or more. Realization of these intentions young people connect with reaching the economic well being of the family, which is guaranteed by the state. However, since the state failed to allow proper developmental conditions and support families with children at the appropriate level, the amount of births in 1991 – 2001 have been declining and only in 2002 the number of recorded births has increased the amount of the previous year for the first time. Still, the amount of births of today is not sufficient for the natural revival (replenishment) of the population. 657,200 births have been recorded in 1990 while only 408,600 in 2003. The declining curve of births has not been so acute on the territory of Ukraine even during the times of World War 2!

The amount of children born outside of families continues to grow in today’s Ukraine. The portion of out of family births today reaches 20%, an unimaginable figure for USSR times. In Autonomous Republic of Crimea (which has special juridical status within Ukraine), Mykolayiv, Kirovograd oblasts the percentage of out of family births is the highest in the nation (note: oblast is a region within Ukraine surrounding the city - - oblast’s capital; there are 24 oblasts forming Ukraine; rayon is the smallest territorial formation within both in cities and oblasts, similar to a county in the U.S., for instance, 10 rayons form the city of Kyiv, capital of Ukraine). Today the once well-rooted traditions of having more than one child per family have been lost and needs to be revived. Only one-third of young Ukrainian families have two children. The amount of large families with 3 children and more is about 400,000, which is only 5.7% of the total amount of families with children. Interestingly, in the cities of Kyiv and Sevastopol (these 2 cities only have a special juridical status and are not part of any oblast), the proportion of such large families does not exceed 3%. This only means that while young Ukrainians want to have stable families with children the conditions of their lives do not allow for realization of these plans.

Number of children born outside of wedlock in 2004

(According to data of State Statistics Committee)

Mother’s age	Number of children born total	Of them:	
		<i>Urban areas</i>	<i>Rural areas</i>
12	2	1	1

13	11	9	2
14	97	43	54
Subtotal before 15	110	53	57
15	597	281	316
16	2032	1049	983
17	3576	1936	1640
18	4802	2733	2069
19	5751	3398	2353
Subtotal 15–19	16 758	9397	7361
20	6383	3946	2437
21	6224	3980	2244
22	5701	3703	1998
23	5394	3579	1815
24	5012	3351	1661
Subtotal 20–24	28 714	18 559	10 155
25	4934	3351	1583
26	4593	3202	1391
27	4202	2955	1247
28	3810	2690	1120
29	3508	2501	1007
Subtotal 25–29	21 047	14 699	6348
30	3231	2350	881
31	2796	2003	793
32	2563	1841	722
33	2220	1592	628
34	1851	1346	505
Subtotal 30–34	12 661	9132	3529
35	1623	1172	451
36	1281	935	346
37	1034	704	330
38	804	562	242
39	638	435	203
Subtotal 35–39	5380	3808	1572
40	493	334	159
41	330	208	122
42	213	147	66
43	122	83	39
44	70	45	25

Subtotal 40–44	1228	817	411
45	34	28	6
46	11	9	2
47	4	3	1
48	3	0	3
49	0	0	0
Subtotal 45–49	52	40	12
50	1	1	0
51 and older	0	0	0
Age not known	1314	1143	171
Ukraine TOTAL	87 265	57 649	29 616
Average age of mother	24,9	25,4	24,1

Most certainly, economic dire straits the country is going through are largely responsible for the alarming facts described above. Low standards of salaries do not encourage people to have more children, as sometimes the salary is only enough to cover the needs of the earner. The biggest concern is the socio-economic problems in rural areas, particularly the highest and increasing level of unemployment, lower level of salaries as compared to urban areas, lack of proper level of medical care. The social infrastructure in rural areas is of special concern for proper development of children: the amount of schools is only 51% of need, cultural facilities amount to 60% of need, functional local hospitals – 3 %(!) of need. Such unattractive conditions of life in rural areas push its young inhabitants to search for a better life in cities or abroad. According to unofficial data reported by former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko in 2004, about 5-6 million Ukrainians work abroad, having to leave their children with relatives, guardians or in institutions.

On a more positive note, Ukraine has radically changed its attitude towards disadvantaged children after the Orange Revolution of December 2004. The new government and President Victor Yushchenko try to pay more significant attention to the much needed reforms in the disadvantaged children sector. The governmental program “Towards people” provides historical opportunity to make the issues of vulnerable children one of the top agenda items and finally ensure the well being of all Ukrainian children. Having ratified the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, Ukraine has assumed the commitment to carry out the necessary legal, administrative, educational measures to ensure the rights and interests of Ukrainian children are protected. However, assistance from the rest of the world is of crucial importance to fast-forward this work while ensuring its proper quality.

Government’s social guarantees and assistance

About 3 million Ukrainians from low income families with children receive some level of social assistance from the state. The Supreme Parliament (Rada) of Ukraine has adopted the changes to the Law of Ukraine “On State Budget of Ukraine for 2005” and some other pieces of legislation, which include increasing state assistance to disabled children, large families with children, and low income families. The amount of assistance to disabled from birth having risen by about 2.5 times and equals:

Disabled from birth/level 1 (most severe) – 543.5 Hryvna (Hrn)/month. Before Jan. 1, 2005 this assistance amounted to 225 Hrn/month. Note: \$1 = 5 Hrn.

Disabled from birth/level 2 – 232.4 Hrn; disabled from birth/level 3 – 166 Hrn; disabled children aged below 6 – 420.4 Hrn; disabled childbed aged 6 to 18 – 466.4 Hrn.

Every woman giving birth now receives 8,000 Hrn per child of state assistance. Many field experts maintain that this abrupt increase may have a counter effect of more women having children just to receive this financial support, while later leaving the child(ren) in an institution. However, it seems the State is so adamant to have more children that it's willing to compromise on this premise.

For realization of social assistance increases the government has augmented its social allocation for 2005 by 1,370,100,000.00 Hrn. Although still far from enough, this increasing level of support is very justified as statistically about 80% of children in Ukraine are born in young families with low level of income, job insecurity and little perspective as to improving material and housing conditions. As every second family in Ukraine is dissatisfied with their housing conditions, the lack of housing remains the most acute problem: fewer and fewer young families with children are provided with housing by the state (usual practice of USSR times) while not being able to afford any housing without the state's support. While in 2000 over 4.4% of young applicants in line for state housing have become lucky to receive new housing, in 2004 – four times less. Orphanage graduates and other youth deprived of parental care have also been receiving less and less apartments and houses from state reserves. While the state has recently declared that efforts will be made to create social housing for orphanage graduates, many experts doubt that funding will be identified for this initiative.

The issue of protection of existing housing and property rights of children remains acute as well. Only in 2004 Ukraine's State Services for Minors have revealed over 1,700 violations of children housing and property rights. Over 1,500 attempts to sell children's apartments/houses were prevented. The majority of such problems have been detected in Kirovograd, Kharkiv, Mykolayiv oblasts and the city of Kyiv.

Every fourth large family (defined as families with 3 and more children) and incomplete family (where children have only one parent), totaling about 100,000 families that require additional social support, as estimated by MYS. State privileges and subsidies bear more significance for large families than for other types of families: while share of state support for a regular family with children is 5.8% of their family income, this share reaches 10% among large families. For some large families state support is the ONLY source of finance.

Children's health protection is guaranteed by Ukraine's Constitution, Law of Ukraine "On Protection of Children" and some other laws. In 2003 – 2004 the dynamics of child mortality in Ukraine (babies before 1 y.o.) has improved to less than 10.0 deaths per 1,000 births, which is in line with World Health Organization for countries of Eastern Europe. Mortality rate for children under 5 y.o. and 15 – 17 y.o. has also been decreasing as follows:

The level of women mortality during birth labor, although slightly reduced recently, remains high, especially in Chernigiv (45.6 per 100,000 births), Kirovograd (32.8/100,000), Sevastopol (30.7/100,000), Crimea (23.1/100,000). The highest mortality of children below 1 y.o. is in

Zaporizzhya oblast (12.75) and the lowest in Vinnitsa oblast (6.98%). Among the high child mortality regions are also Kirovograd, Odessa, Kherson, Cherkassy, Donetsk oblasts.

Education

Despite the declared efforts of government to keep promotion of education as a priority, the amount of educational pre-school facilities is continuously decreasing. During the 2004 alone 281 kindergartens were closed (169 in cities and 112 in rural areas). The practice of “suspending” the activities of remaining kindergartens for unknown term continues as well due to lack of state funds to support them, heating problems, electricity and water supply shortages; amount of children per one kindergarten lessens due to lack of funds among parents to cover the required fees, etc. The majority of closed kindergartens are in Crimea, Chernigiv, Poltava, Lugansk, Odessa and Kyiv oblasts. It must be said that closed state kindergartens are being partially replaced by private day care centers, however, due to their high cost only a small fraction of families with children can afford them. Due to the amplified data as regards children’s morbidity and invalidity, the government is increasing the sphere of pre-school facilities of “auxiliary type” for children with special physical and psychological needs. 2,100 of such facilities are attended by 98,500 - - about 10% of children with special needs who live within families. For many of these children such specialized kindergartens are the only realistic place to receive qualified pedagogical and medico-social assistance and integration.

The government is making efforts to put more computer classes in regular schools. In 2004 there were 1,500 computer classes installed in regular schools increasing the number of such schools to about 11,000, which, however, enhances the percentage of schools having computers to only 53% nationwide, keeping the strong “digital divide” among schools in any given city.

Importantly, the organization of leisure time of children is of special concern as it boosts the amount of children wandering about in the streets. Only 20.6% of school age children attend various after school facilities. While the amount of various teenage clubs has risen in the period 2001 – 2004 by 28.4%, the amount of children attending these clubs has risen only by 11.3%. This comes to prove the commercialization of both new and already existing teenage clubs and facilities of all types. Essentially, this means that the ratio of children from low income families, who in author’s perspective need them most, can afford such places less and less. As of today Ukraine has about 4,000 children computer clubs, which activity is regulated by the Law of Ukraine “On Entrepreneurship”. These clubs are pure commercial units whose owners in their majority can’t care less about children proper development. The programs installed on computers in these clubs promote aggressiveness and violence. There are numerous registered cases of children staying in these clubs after 11 PM, alcohol abuse and dissemination of drugs. In order to change the situation, amendments to the legislation has been introduced in early 2005 making local authorities responsible for monitoring the situation in computer clubs usually attended by children and youth, discos and simply out in the streets at night time. However, there is no indication yet this new law is being enforced in the regions.

Analysis of International and Leading Ukrainian Children-at-Risk Programs.

(Experience and operations of major players in Ukraine supporting vulnerable children is viewed as important by the author as most large and well established programs described below have been well planned and analyzed. All the below programs have appeared successful and transparent, recommended by experts for analysis. Their activities deserve attention for proper development of further activism in the disadvantaged children area. Information is collected during meetings with at organizations' headquarters as well as with regional decision makers who know and/or participate in their programs, and beneficiaries. Description is intentionally brief, more information is available upon request).

UNICEF/UKRAINE

The UNICEF/Ukraine is one of the major donors in the child protection area. Its annual program budget is around \$750,000.00. From January 1, 2006 UNICEF will be launching a modified country program and all current efforts of staff in Ukraine are aimed to prepare for it. It will constructed in accordance with UNICEF standards worldwide for the first time in Ukraine and will have a 5-year cycle. As of this writing, the new program is not fully approved yet, but 95% of the work and priorities have been finalized.

The new program will have 4 major directions:

1. Social policy development
2. Early childhood development
3. HIV/AIDS prevention
4. Child protection

The 1st direction - - Social policy development - - is fairly new to Ukraine program. It will evolve around assisting the UNICEF Representative in Ukraine to qualitatively collaborate with the top officials of Ukraine, to include the President and his secretariat, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and Supreme Parliament (Rada). The rest of the directions (2, 3 and 4) are in essence the continuation of the work done by UNICEF/Ukraine thus far.

The 2nd direction - - Early childhood development - - will aim at proper physical and mental development of young children (aged 0 to 3). The initiatives under this program will continue to include breast feeding promotion, iodine deficiency initiative, and baby friendly hospital initiative. This 2nd direction touches upon policies, methodologies that effect children in general, not specifically focusing on vulnerable children.

The 3rd direction - - HIV/AIDS prevention - - has two major components: prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS (PMTCT), prevention of getting HIV/AIDS among young people by promoting healthy life styles and youth friendly clinics services. This initiative focuses on HIV/AIDS information campaigns, support of specially trained youth psychologists and social workers providing assistance to clinics performing HIV testing and treatment, psychological rehabilitation to include before and after HIV testing.

The 4th direction - - Child protection, is the hands-on part of UNICEF/Ukraine program and it has changed focus a bit recently. Currently, the foci are prevention of trafficking of children and young women from Ukraine, juvenile justice, promotion of national adoption and de-institutionalization. As part of this direction of work UNICEF has good experience in Kyiv on starting a juvenile court. This important initiative includes developing a model of a specific juvenile court as a training model of what such court should look like and the ways it should function. The initiative also includes

developing the collaboration system of all official governmental departments that would work with children in conflict with law. Partners include Supreme Court, department on penal implementation, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Youth and Sports and its branches, and other state departments. UNICEF feels it's important to create a model of juvenile justice on the national level first and then integrate it into local juvenile practices as funding becomes available.

On the regional level of juvenile justice initiative UNICEF works in Kharkiv aiming to train juvenile judges and other officials involved with juvenile criminals. In Kharkiv UNICEF lucked out as the local department on minors has spun this initiative themselves several years ago. In Kharkiv, UNICEF supported the creating of a model of a juvenile judge, a specifically trained judge who would only work with children/youth in conflict with law. In UNICEF's view the juvenile justice must be a holistic system that aims firstly at prophylactics of a young person getting in conflict with law, working with youth in prisons, preparation for independent life, rehabilitation after the prison sentence.

Deinstitutionalization is an important part of UNICEF/Ukraine work under child protection direction. Luckily, after the Orange Revolution UNICEF enjoys great support from new national government, whose members now better understand and supports the family raising of orphans and neglected children. UNICEF developed a full theoretical cycle of mechanisms of creation, supporting foster families and family type homes, what's needed on every step. Now, the task is to utilize these theoretical models into practice by those organizations who actually work on promoting raising of social and biological orphans in family environment. All interested organizations are welcome to utilize this initial knowledge in their future work on augmenting and strengthening the network of FTHs and FFs.

Promotion of national adoption is last but not least portion of child protection part of UNICEF/Ukraine program. Focus in this initiative is on information campaigns in Kyiv and regions, work with government of Ukraine on what is realistically possible to do while developing a system of indicators for success. By the end of the year 2005 all the indicators framework of success will be finalized and approved in collaboration with MYS and step by step work will be launched.

Ecpat program

Ecpat International was launched in 1991 in Bangkok, Thailand and by 1996 became truly internationally active with offices across the world. Major focus of program is combating sexual exploitation of children worldwide. The only CIS office is small, essentially run by one person, (CIS Representative), and is based in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Ecpat's work in Ukraine has been effective since April 2004 fighting child sexual exploitation. The program is funded by various sources in the west. In a way Ecpat operates as an intermediary between western donors and Ukrainian NGOs by receiving financial support from western providers and offering grants locally. One of the larger recipient of Ecpat assistance is a famous Ukrainian NGO named La Strada. Ecpat in collaboration with La Strada helped to unite a network of 24 Ukrainian NGOs working against sex exploitation all over Ukraine. About 10 network members are based in Kyiv, others are active in Kharkiv, Kherson, Crimea (Yalta), Donetsk, Lugansk and some other cities. Other Ecpat services in Ukraine include:

- Trainings for police workers involved in street work (the way police sometimes treats street children raises concerns thus this type of training is truly needed)
- Trainings of social workers both with and without NGO affiliation
- Small grants of about 1,000 – 3,000\$ for children NGOs' activities, to include publishing of literature against child sexual exploitation and organization of summer camps for disadvantaged children.
- Fundraising to support large programs for bigger Ukrainian NGOs, similar to La Strada.
- Participating in legislative change work

The reason Ecpat initially decided to extend their services to Ukraine is explained by the fact that in the last 5-10 years Ukraine has become one of the world's centers of child sexual exploitation. Ukrainian children have become 'famous' in both child pornography business and factual sexual abuse. Trafficking of Ukrainian children and young women operates through networks organized in key border cities, port cities and large metropolitan areas in Ukraine such as Kyiv, Donetsk, Odessa, Sevastopol, Dnipropetrovs'k and Yalta. "Partners" of Ukrainian "providers" are located mostly in Turkey, Yugoslavia, Russian Federation, Poland, Italy, Israel and Germany. The purpose of trafficking in and out of Ukraine is generally to supply local and foreign sex industries.

Ecpat reports that an alarming 7,000 to 8,000 cases of sexual abuse and exploitation of children are officially reported in Ukraine annually. As high as this figure is, it may not reveal the full extent of sexual abuse and exploitation against children and young people, as many cases remain unreported. A retrospective inquiry of adults reveals that 20% of women and 10% of men had experienced some form of sexual abuse by the time they were 18. Every third girl aged 13 to 16 had experienced sexual harassment; every fifth girl had been subjected to unwanted sexual touching; and one in 10 girls was a victim of rape before the age of 18.

In January – July 2005, approximately 1,500 girls aged 8 – 16 in three cities of Ukraine (Kyiv, Kharkiv and Simferopol) were involved in child pornography production in open photo studios (part of one recorded criminal case). Criminal investigation on this case was launched in April 2005 and is still in progress. Police reports to Ecpat affirm of another similar case involving child pornography, which police is currently investigating, thus no further information is available at this point. Ecpat is expecting an information release on this second case towards the end of 2005. Interpol from Israel, U.S. and Germany have been in contact with Ukrainian police informing them that sexually abusive child images on internet and hard paper have been released in their respective countries and investigation of these cases tracks to photo studios in Ukraine with images of Caucasian children.

Crimean partner of Ecpat and La Strada NGO has provided information on increasing amount of mothers selling their children for sexual exploitation in Crimea especially in summer (vacation) season. Details show that mothers condescend to walking around with their children in certain beaches in southern Crimea openly offering their children for sex.

These are samples of *only recorded* statistics, the real state of affairs is impossible to find out for obvious reasons. Consequently, assistance in prevention of child sexual abuse and rehabilitation of sexually abused children deserves immediate time and resources. Work in this area is especially time sensitive due to the growth of child sexual exploitation in Ukraine and the depth of psychological trauma inflicted upon children who have experienced sexual abuse (see Recommendations section for more details).

Christian Children's Fund (CCF)

CCF is one of the major U.S. based children support groups currently involved in a number of projects in Ukraine. CCF operates in several regions of Ukraine with special focus on Cherkassy, Kirovograd, Khmel'nitski, Crimea implementing the following activities:

1. Humanitarian Project. Its goal is to assist children in institutions to realize their full potential, to support the staff's willingness to promote children's ability to achieve self-fulfillment by creating adequate living conditions at residential institutions and to help children acquire social skills and responsible behavior in independent life. The project includes two components: humanitarian (charitable) aid to children in state residential institutions and educational support program for staff and children in these institutions. Objective of the charitable aid part of the Project is to improve the living conditions of children. Objective of the educational (training) component of the Project is to develop and carry out social and psychological training for children and adolescents in difficult situations, to encourage them to make independent, conscious choices in life and to find ways of positive socialization.

As an example, in the framework of this project in Crimea CCF has completed:

- A training for trainers on "Methodology of conducting training sessions", held in December 2004 in Simferopol;
- 2 two-day seminars held at "Yolochka" orphanage on innovative techniques for the teachers of children's homes in Crimea;
- 46 training sessions held for 56 children in *shelter for juveniles and Stroganovsky Children's Home*;
- 11 training sessions were held for 26 children at *Sokolinskaya* General Education Boarding School;
- 1 humanitarian aid was provided to eight Crimean institutions for the total amount of 108 261.66 Hrn;

2. Since April 2004 CCF Ukraine is been implementing „Enhancing Community Social Service Delivery in Ukraine” project (supported by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation). Sevastopol is one of the project regions. The project aims to enhance community social workers' capacities to provide improved child, youth, and family social services in Ukraine by:

- conducting of seminars/trainings for social care specialists, NGO representatives, community volunteers who then work with crisis families and provide social supervision of FTHs and FFs;
- production and publication of methodological materials;
- upgrading courses for practicing social workers and social pedagogues;
- arrangement of the community-based operations of resource and information-consultation centers;
- establishment and operations of mobile advisory panels at resource and information-consultation centers;
- designing and testing the models of community social service delivery to children and families;

- workshops to establish partnerships between governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Within the project the Consultation Center for social work\social pedagogy specialists was created on the basis of *Sevastopol* Center of Social Services for Youth and Families. The functions of the consultation center are defined as following:

- *Consultation* (providing child social work consultation in the community);
- *Coordination* through the development of a database of governmental and non-governmental organizations working in regional communities; facilitating interaction among social work actors in the community; seeking partners to implement social services in the community;

3. Finally, the third project of the Christian Children's Fund/Ukraine, funded by MATRA program of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (December 2003 – December 2006) is titled "Reform of Child Care system in Ukraine through developing a system of Family Foster Care".

Prospective results:

1. Developing a system for recruitment, training and assessment of parents of FTHs.
2. Design and test training courses for social workers in support of foster carers and members of FTHs.
3. Implementation of foster family social support mechanisms locally approved and supported by various governmental and non-governmental agencies.
4. Development of system for placement of prospective foster children with FFs and FTHs.
5. Raising public awareness of advantages of family upbringing of children by involving mass media representatives and supporting at the same time the recruitment of citizens to become foster carers.

Target Groups: children needing support and crisis families, social service providers; Ukrainian Social Services for Youth; FTHs/FFs; youth and families support NGOs; governmental authorities (including local ones); youth welfare organisations and residential institutions; media.

Activities:

- development and implementation of training program to train the team of trainers;
- arrangement of seminar-trainings for journalists;
- workshops/round-table talks for representatives of governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations and mass media;
- trainings for potential professional parents;
- long-term trainings to prepare the orphan children for placement in foster families;
- publication of manual for foster carers and "Book of Life" for foster children;
- setting up of 4 mobile information/consultation centres for foster carers and parents-educators of family-type children's homes;

Location: 4 regions of Ukraine: Cherkassy, Kirovograd, Khmel'nitski oblasts, Crimea

What has already been achieved?

1. Over 100 potential and current professional parents went through the training and got certificates

2. 100 social workers went through the training for social supervision of foster families.
3. 134 children from Foster Families participated in the training program on Life Skills Education
4. 30 journalists from national and local mass-media participated in the specialized training
5. National seminar for high-level state employees and the representatives of the Ministry for family, children and youth affairs
6. 125 public servants participated in training on development of foster family system on local level
7. Publications developed:
 - Life Book for foster children
 - Training module for trainers
 - Practice book for foster parents
8. Regional Information and Consultation Centers were opened in all four targeted regions

Hope and Homes for Children (HHC)

"Hope and Homes for Children" (HHC) is a British charitable organization (headquartered near London), which was founded by Mark and Caroline Cook in 1994. The main goal of HHC activities in Ukraine is closing down children institutions by establishing alternative family childcare services.

In 1998, upon the invitation of the Government of Ukraine (Ministry of Family and Youth), HHC started to work in Ukraine to reduce the number of institutionalized children by building and financing FTHs. The HHC representative office was officially registered in 2001. In seven years, HHC has expanded its operations to 15 oblasts across Ukraine having created 65 family type homes providing families for over 500 orphans living with 200 biological children of the same parents. Each FTH houses about 10 children (both biological children of parents and orphans taken from institutions). As discussed elsewhere in this assessment, actual construction (or financing of construction) of the home where children removed from an institution would live with professional parents in a family setting is the most difficult problem on the way of raising more children outside of institutions. The Government of Ukraine simply cannot identify funds to build these homes and reformation of the system will take many years to complete.

The objectives of HHC work in Ukraine are:

- Put into practice the reforming process of the state system of care in Ukraine;
- Influence national policy to de-institutionalize state institutions for orphans and children deprived of parental care, to family based upbringing;
- Give necessary support to vulnerable children;
- Prevent early social orphanhood;

The regions of the activities of HHC in Ukraine:

1. Autonomous Republic of Crimea
2. Chernivtsi region
3. Kherson region
4. Khmelnytskyi region

5. Kirovohrad region
6. Kyiv region
7. Lviv region
8. Mykolayiv region
9. Odessa region
10. Rivne region
11. Sumy region
12. Ternopil' region
13. Zakarpattia region
14. Poltava region
15. Volyn region

In addition to creation FTHs, HHC works on selection and preparation of professional parents to raise children in FTHs. Experience shows the importance of this work cannot be emphasized enough as it's crucial to ensure the parents understand what it means to take and raise children from institutions and are psychologically and pedagogically prepared for this work. HHC has also conducted training sessions for institution staff and government officials on closing institutions. Furthermore, HHC help FTHs in farming, provides workshops for FTH families as well social workers who supervise these FTHs, assists most talented children from their FTHs in acquiring additional education, training, etc., educates FTH parents and state officials in different aspects of FTH development, protection of children's rights, and promotes the concept of the family type upbringing to the general public.

Hope and Homes for Children opened the first Mother and Baby Unit in Ukraine (in Kherson) and is currently working on opening the second one in Fastov (Kyiv region). Working with hospitals and maternity wards HHC/Ukraine assists vulnerable families to prevent child abandonment, thereby breaking the cycle of institutionalization. In two years 85 mothers have agreed not to give their children to institutions as they had planned to do immediately after the child's birth. The Unit gives vulnerable mothers and their newly-born babies the chance to stay in a secure and safe place for the first few months after birth. This allows them to form a strong bond, preventing the child from being abandoned and gives us time to help them plan their future. The Unit also offers counseling and practical advice on accessing benefits, registering newborns and establishing property rights.

HHC raises its funds from a wide spectrum of donors and citizens in the United Kingdom through 34 support groups throughout the country.

EveryChild

The merge of Christian Children's Fund/UK and European Children Charitable Organization in 2002 formed one of the strongest children charities in Europe - - "EveryChild". The organization pursues protection of the right of every child to live in family, works on children poverty alleviation and quality health services, and proper education. Headquartered in London and working in 18 countries worldwide, EveryChild opened its Ukraine office in 1998 with programs in Lviv, Kyiv, Chernigiv, and Crimea (including Sevastopol). The main aim of EveryChild/Ukraine's program is of ensure the rights of every Ukrainian child to live in a family.

EveryChild/Ukraine works on 3 levels: community level (rayon and village communities), oblast (oblast state administration and its branches that touch upon children issues) and national (MYS, State Social Services for Family Children and Youth). The work on the national level is only to ensure sustainability of all programs in the future. In essence, EveryChild/Ukraine fosters the government of Ukraine and local NGOs active in supporting vulnerable children (trainings and grants) in their commitment to move away from institutional care for children into family type solutions/environment. To reach that, first step of EveryChild programs is preventative services which stop children getting to institutions in the first place. For example, EveryChild/Ukraine is setting up family support services in all target regions in collaboration with state services for children and youth. EveryChild/Ukraine finances the pilot stage of this initiative. For instance, EveryChild would pay salaries for social workers, provide methodologies, training programs and provide some additional “flexible” money so that their governmental counterparts on the local level, including to support individual crisis families with children to ignite their plans for family sustainability which removes social stress in the family and keeps it together. There are many reasons why children wind up in institutions, poverty is not the only one. Another common reason EveryChild/Ukraine regional offices report is social exclusion, i.e. lack of support from the community to the family in crisis and/or children that need help. Regional social workers supported by EveryChild/Ukraine visit their crisis families, establish close relations with them. Such steps usually follow a referral social workers receive from neighbors or school informing them that the family is in difficult situation and the state services for minors could be coming in to initiate the process of removal parental rights and ultimate transfer of a child(ren) to an institution. The EveryChild/Ukraine gets involved to find out what the problem is. Some reported problems include the child not having a birth certificate thus not receiving state benefits for low income family, or living conditions are very poor due to heavy debt for electricity and gas, etc. In this case EveryChild/Ukraine supported social workers will advocate for this family, approach the administration and help them in any way they legally can. Importantly, regional workers report that once the family sees somebody is out helping them - it emotionally strengthens the family significantly, shows a light at the end of the tunnel for both parents and children and removes the stress enticing parents to act with more responsibility and the child(ren) not to exchange home for street.

Such family support services currently operate in 13 rayons of the Kyiv oblast, in 3 rayons of Lviv oblast, in Sevastopol and in 2 rayons of republic of Crimea (Bahchisarai, Massandra). Visits to EveryChild activities in Crimea have proved the high professional standing of trainers and social workers, attention to detail when working with crisis families (several were visited).

Similar EveryChild/Ukraine’s work occurs with low income (usually very young) mothers with babies who are about to turn their child to an institution. All leverages are used to support such mothers in any way possible to ensure the child stays with her and not turned to institutional care. An element of family break up prevention process EveryChild/Ukraine has is “family and baby units”, residential premises where the mother has a temporary place to live (some young mothers have housing problems they can’t resolve independently). This allows especially teen age mothers to continue education at school or university, gain necessary parental skills (such training is provided), receive any necessary support in order to find a job. Important function of such mother and baby units is that the child is taken care of by professional care takers when the mother is away (similar to the function of a kindergarten). Some of these projects are done independently and some in partnership with Hope and Homes for Children (HHC).

Since 2002 EveryChild/Ukraine has been supporting foster care services aimed at assessment, selection, training recruitment and social supervision of foster families (latter includes both support to parents and children). One of the major reasons of lack of growth of number of quality foster families and FTHs is the absence of the structure of the organizations that would be responsible for the process of assessment, selection, training recruitment and social supervision of foster families. Now EveryChild/Ukraine works with MYS under the European TACIS project “Development of integrated social services for vulnerable children” to develop this mechanism, which is in the works as of this writing.

In support to vulnerable families with children, EveryChild funds social work specialists, who work for the Centers for Social Services for Youth and for the Ukrainian League of Social Workers of Ukraine. There are three regional training centers set up on the basis of regional units of The Ukrainian League of Social Workers. This project is implemented through training courses and internship programs for the NGOs managers, who work in the area of child welfare. Training courses are devoted to a good practice of support provision to families in crisis. Project anticipates conducting of round tables for the representatives of local and oblast level authorities aimed at adjustment of cooperation with project participants in order to consolidate inter-departmental cooperation between NGOs and local officials.

Holt International

Holt International operates three-year Families for Children Program in Ukraine (FCP) initially funded by Disadvantaged Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) currently supported via the Kyiv’s office of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The main strategy of Holt/Kyiv is to help the selected regions understand and do what is important on the path of assisting at risk children in this day and age and prepare them for this work. The goal of the Program is to build a sustainable family-based care services for children, which includes four service areas: family preservation, support to FFs, FTHs as well as promoting domestic adoption. In each site the program struggles to meet the needs of the local community. Holt appears to be a pure grants and training program that works via local implementers to achieve their objectives. Holt’s current level of financing in Ukraine is \$1,7 mln. for a 3-year program.

Holt/Ukraine works in five selected sites of three Ukrainian oblasts: Dnipropetrovs’k oblast (Dnipropetrovs’k city and Novomoskovsky rayon), Kyiv Oblast (Brovarskiy rayon) and Cherkassy (Uman city and Uman rayon).

FCP funds and organizes community workshops. Participants include representatives of local governments, state child welfare departments, indigenous NGOs, mass media and community at large. Participants are tasked to identify their needs, indicate what resources are needed and develop a detailed action plan to create a continuum of child welfare services in their area. On September 30, 2005 Holt/Kyiv received action plans for each site with concrete training needs, services and programs on all directions, thus after September 30 via the grant program Holt started to support the actions plans of these sites.

Training programs aim to create proper attitude and understanding towards family type raising of social and biological orphans, bolster the skills of service providers, primarily social workers. Training topics include: children’s developmental levels and needs, practical understanding of family systems

and assessment tools, and crisis counseling. Holt also funds publishing of training text books on topics related to foster families (what it is and how to do it).

Holt/Ukraine implements a grants program targeting to strengthen and sustain the family-based care, in particular family preservation, foster care, FTHs and domestic adoption models. Grants are awarded to both local NGOs in selected sites and children/youth state services. Being a grant giving program and not only direct service provider, Holt invites large int. programs like Every Child and HHC to participate in their grant application process.

As far as international cooperation is concerned, Holt/Ukraine already introduced its Ukrainian partners to practices existing in Romania (training of both Romanian specialists in Ukraine and Ukrainian NGO leaders and local decision makers in Romania have already taken place. Also, experienced children social service professionals and local decision makers from Russia came to Ukraine to conduct trainings for their Ukrainian counterparts. As a result of these trainings, the changes that occurred in mentality and attitude among Ukrainian children service specialists is one of the main recorded success of Holt's program in Ukraine thus far. Local decision makers understand much better now that family forms of raising of children are much more efficient than those of orphanages. In one year of work local decision makers have come to desire to undertake concrete actions from not understanding what foster family is at the beginning of Holt's intervention in the selected sites.

Another achievement is that sectoral collaboration among NGOs and state services for youth in selected sites has been reached.

UKRAINA 3000

“UKRAINA 3000” is an international charitable organization registered in 2001 and headed by the First Lady of Ukraine – Mrs. Kateryna Yuschenko. The main purpose of this NGO is to help Ukrainian people see the perspective in life, implementation of humanitarian activities, help the revival of Ukrainian culture, increasing the level of journalist ethics and some other social activities.

Assistance to needy children is done under the “Today” (as titled) direction of Fund's program. One activity under this direction is construction of a new hematological department as part of the National children's hospital “Ohmadet”.

The other major planned activity is combating the street children problem in Ukraine utilizing a holistic approach as follows. Once a street child is identified and the contact with that child is established, the Fund staff would take the child to their future social rehabilitation center (plan to be completed in 1996). In this specially equipped center highly qualified staff will work on child medical, psychological and social rehabilitation by meeting all needs of the child. Such stay in the Center is only temporary – the most important work that occurs separately is that Center's social workers identify the location and status of the child's biological parents (if available) or guardian or the orphanage the child is from. Since the most common reason the child lives in the street is some problem with adults the child is supposed to be with - - all efforts are made to fix the problematic situation that caused the child to live on the street. This may include rehabilitative work with biological parents (if available and possible), finding ways to resolve economic crisis in the family (if

that was the reason for child's escape), search for proper foster family to take the child in (if needed), etc. These two directions of working with the child and adults (to be) responsible for the child leads to a desired result in approximately 1 - 3 months time: the child is partially rehabilitated and ready to return to a family which was prepared for him/her. Social patronage of such family would be mandatory until the time the family is viewed completely functional by a social worker responsible for the family. Additionally, a free of charge hotline will be set up allowing the child to call in and talk to a psychologist about the pending issues, after which the child will be connected with a responsible social worker and a meeting will be set up. The NGO is confident that the mechanism of the Center's work would be very transparent.

Today, Ukraina 3000 does not have an identified center; however, agreement with Kyiv Administration has been reached that a building that requires repairs will be provided to the NGO for free. Funds will be needed to repair this future center, properly equip it, fund rehabilitation specialists, staff and its additional training and expenses. The NGO will be able to cover most of these expenses; however, additional funds will be needed to ensure such center is really modern and fully functional to its purpose. During the summer of 2005, Ukraina 3000 organized a temporary camp for street children in cooperation with another leading child NGO called Otchiy Dom ("Father's House").

ChildRescue

ChildRescue charitable organization has worked with street children in Kyiv since 2001 and has gained significant respect in the community, local and national government as well as private sector. **The main goal** of "ChildRescue" is to remove children from streets, rehabilitate and reintegrate them back into biological or professionally trained families and help older children lead independent socially acceptable living. ChildRescue argues against giving street children food and money on the streets as this is not a way to truly help them, in fact - - it teaches street children to grow up as beggars and homeless adults. ChildRescue is experienced and passionate about removing such "band-aid" types of help focuses on underlying issues of professional rehabilitation.

ChildRescue model of operation is very holistic and includes the following segments:

1. Day Center for Street Children assists street children in urgent need of food, clothing, medical attention, shower & social/moral support. Up to 25 children are entertained in the Center at any given day. Children come themselves having learned about the Center through other children, are invited during our street outreach work, referred by other groups and people or referred by police.

During the Day Center's daily in-take sessions, children are assisted by psychologists, care givers, medical nurse and legal advisor. The main goal of the Center's intervention is to stimulate street children to change their lives (some of them have lived on streets for more than 5 years!), undergo necessary medical checks and treatment and take the next step of entering ChildRescue's full-time Rehabilitation Center. During their stay in the Day Center children draw, do hand crafts, sing and express their individuality in other ways. In August – December of 2005, over 300 children have passed through the Day Center having received food, clothing, psychological and legal help, which served as an incentive to change their lives. Over 100 children have decided to change their lives and have been accepted to ChildRescue's Rehabilitation Center. 19 children with little experience of life on

the streets were returned to their biological families after intensive work with the Day Center's psychologist in the period October 2005 – January 2006.

2. *Medical Center for Street Children.* Realistically, no other hospital in Kyiv will accept a street child for any medical tests or treatment. As children MUST be cured from all contagious diseases, this Center is a priceless site, especially when moving a child from our Day Center to Rehabilitation Center. Importantly, the Medical Center provides not only medical care, but psychological and legal support as well. Over 70 children have passed through the Medical Center having received necessary tests and treatment.

3. *Rehabilitation Center for Street Children* prepares street children to live again with biological or professionally trained families and prepares older children for independent living. The Rehab Center houses 20 street children aged 3 to 18 y.o. In order to live in the Rehab Center, children must express their desire to change their lives and agree with the rules of the Center. They live with care givers round the clock and receive a full cycle of rehabilitative services which include: in-depth psychological rehabilitation, social workers' supervision, legal assistance, and medical care. Children also undergo individual education courses, participate in singing lessons, practice sports, do hand crafts, draw and express their individuality in other ways.

Psychologists and care givers daily monitor the progress of each street child. Children receives 3 daily meals & snacks, enjoy their warm, clean bed & bathrooms. For older children, ChildRescue provides whatever training and assistance possible to identify job opportunities, including attendance of technical schools.

Finally, in collaboration with the Center of Family Care, our psychologists reach out to biological families of children (if available) endeavoring to reunite the family as soon as possible. Alternatively, professionally trained parents are sought to place the rehabilitated child with a foster family or family type home.

83 children have passed through the Rehab Center's full rehabilitation course and were returned to their biological families; 7 children were placed with foster families with previously prepared guardians; 20 children currently in the Rehab Center - - some will soon be ready for graduation to rehabilitated biological and/or professionally prepared families

4. *Center of Family Care* just started to work on prevention of children "falling out" of their families by proactively reaching out to help crisis families with children, who are in conflict with their parents and either spend most of their time on the streets or are on the verge of doing so.

This Center identifies professionally trained families ready to accept children who have been prepared in our Rehabilitation Center.

Importantly, an individual child sponsorship program is run from ChildRescue's Center of Family Care. The type and level of individual sponsorship for each child differ.

ChildRescue plans to also launch *Center of Emergency Help* which would have a telephone hotline for children in crisis situations and a mobile team responding quickly to dangerous, life-threatening, and

abusive situations. *Independent Living for Street Youth (Half-Way House type)* will start to resolve housing realities for orphans and street children and provide continued social supervision and education/employment support. ChildRescue also plans to create the first FTH in Ukraine for HIV-positive street children - - a very challenging and needed project.

Aspern

Supported from donors in Austria, Aspern started its work in Ukraine in 1997 as an initiative group and established strong collaborative relations with Kyiv center of social services for youth. The project's task has been the provision of support not only to street children, but also children from crisis families and children with difficult social background. The main idea behind all Aspern's work as of today is the return of children to families - - "a difficult but doable task", says Aspern/Ukraine director.

During their work Aspern found out, that there are nearly no children living on the streets who live without protection of gangs, led by adults. From them the kids get exploited by begging and pilfering. Aspern confirms the idea that passer-bys, who pity the children and give them money in thinking to do something good, just fix the life on the street allowing the child to live the same life longer. Interestingly, Aspern's research confirms that the profit of the little beggars is often higher than the salary of normal working people in Kiev. Additionally, children have a big will for their freedom, once tasted it some will not trade it for anything easily.

The leaders of the beneficial fund Aspern applied to its Austrian Partners to ask about a financing for a centre for social, pedagogical and prophylactic work for children and their guardians. Such center, or rather a shelter for street children was founded and renovation was completed in 2001 and is now fully functional and operational servicing about 50 children at a time.

Under the "mama i dytyna" (Mother and Child) program Aspern works with 120 crisis families. This work is mainly the prophylactics intervention with crisis families. Information about crisis families with children Aspern receives from juvenile militia/state services on minors. Then, once the contact with such families is established Aspern finds out what the problem is and tries to do whatever is possible before the child actually falls out into the street, similar to the approach planned by Ukraina 3000 and already practiced by Open Heart NGO. The author of this assessment volunteered for the latter NGO and can confirm as to effectiveness of crisis families intervention.

Volunteers program is active in Aspern. Currently, there are 37 volunteers of different social groups in Aspern: 9 students, 8 children, 3 teachers, 15 grandmothers, 1 German volunteer of the European Voluntary Service. The main point of volunteer's work is concentrated in the "centre of social pedagogical and prophylactic work with children". Volunteers help children with such elementary skills like learning how to cook, how to keep a household and even how to survive in the nature (scouts' camp).

Aspern also enjoys assistance and cooperation from numerous international and local partners making Aspern's activities more transparent and viable. Due to support coming from Austria, about 60 Ukrainian children go through recreational courses in Austria.

Interestingly, Ms. Khozhil, Aspern's founder and director is currently involved in the work of the orphanages liquidation committee as a result of the recent legislative changes promoting ultimate closure of orphanages. There are significant problems associated with this work as it's extremely tedious process to strategize complete closure of the whole infrastructure that has been created decades ago and operated under no criticism. One thing that is more or less undisputable at this point of deinstitutionalization theoretical discussion is that some sort of social institutions for children would be created on the basis of orphanages, much smaller in size and of family type. However, there is a fight around this issue because, as Ms. Khozhil confirms, not all Ukrainian officials understand today that children should not be raised outside of family under any circumstances.

Help Us Help The Children

Help Us Help The Children (HUHTC) is a voluntary, non profit charitable initiative dedicated to improving the quality of life for children living in orphanages in Ukraine. The purpose and mission of Help Us Help The Children centers on providing immediate aid to those most vulnerable in Ukrainian children institutions. The main partner of HUHTC is a Canadian NGO with the same name based in Toronto.

HUHTC practices a grass roots approach to the delivery of humanitarian aid. Outreach teams of HUHTC have traveled a combined distance of over 145,000 km throughout all twenty five oblasts of Ukraine. Over 30,000 children in more than 135 orphanages and 15 hospitals, rehabilitation centers and clinics, have benefited from supplies of medication, food, clothing, as well as educational toys and materials. Members of Help Us Help The Children have personally distributed over 270 tons of purchased and/or donated goods with a retail value of close to 4 million Canadian dollars.

Help Us Help The Children consists of a dedicated core of volunteers who have committed significant time and energy towards the endeavor. HUHTC is supported by private, institutional, corporate, and government donors/sponsors. Help Us Help The Children is affiliated with the Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund, which is a registered charitable organization. A broad base of national and international support has enabled our group to continue providing humanitarian aid to developing state in a time of great need.

HUHTC-organized winter and summer camps give the children opportunities to change the orphanage environment, enjoy nature along with physical and spiritual activities while learning to understand self-esteem, hygiene and the dangers they may face when they leave the orphanages. Many difficult topics are addressed by our Anti-Trafficking Chapter which strives to help children steer clear of prostitution and crime. Meanwhile, HUHTC's Scholarship Chapter gives a number of children the opportunity to further their education at a university. To date, 19 orphanage graduates have received scholarships to pursue post-secondary education. More than 160 North American volunteers from HUHTC worked with Ukrainian educators to run concurrent summer camps in the Carpathian Mountains for over 2,100 orphans. Computer skills training are also being provided to the children at camps. The camp computers are then installed in orphanages to enhance their communication capability.

Otchiy Dim (“Father’s House”)

There are about 50 private charitable children shelters, centers and other facilities helping children - - sounds like many, but far from enough. Most are Christian and are supported by western churches and sponsors. Among the prominent ones is Otchiy Dim ("Father's House"), a respected Ukrainian Christian organization headed by a former doctor. Its activities started in January 1999 as an international charity aiming to assist street children of Ukraine. Initially, apartments were rented where children had an opportunity to stay for the night. In the same year the first facility to accept street children of Kyiv oblast was erected in the village of Petrivka, right outside of Kyiv. Today, this rehabilitation center has grown to accept 67 children aged 3 to 18. This center consists of two main parts: rehabilitation part and family upbringing part, both of which practice Christian teaching in their program.

The other departments are operational in Otchiy Dim:

Service to street children. The main task is to deliver to street children the news of love of Jesus and do whatever is possible to help the child leave the street living. Social workers of Otchiy Dim endeavor to establish contact with the child in the street by providing the child with food, clothing and medical assistance. Once that is done, information is obtained as to the status of child's family and reasons for street living. Further, an individual project is designed to help the child and rehabilitate him/her.

One of the longer rehabilitation mechanisms is organizing the summer camp to win time and return the child to a family or child institution. The camp titled "Treasury Island" is actually located on an island, well-supported, has quality tents and all necessary provisions for children to live in relative comfort in the nature. The main rehabilitation principle used is teaching children the love of Christ and ensuring their spiritual growth and possible return to biological or professional families. The other purpose of locating street children on an island is to separate them from their old street friends and the influence of the street by large.

The parents who are being trained and prepared to accept a child into joint living are tasked by Otchiy Dim to create an atmosphere of love in the family. Show the child in practice how a Christian family should live, take responsibility for decisions and actions, learn how to manage finances on an elementary level, and other skills.

ILO/IPEC

Statistically, there are approximately 350,000 economically active children in Ukraine. The International Labor Organization's (ILO) International Program on Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) commenced its work in Ukraine in July 2001, after ratification by Ukraine the ILO convention 182 on "Immediate elimination of worst forms of child Labor". ILO works in collaboration and is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

The ultimate goal of the IPEC/Ukraine initial 2001 year project was to withdraw and rehabilitate 1,200 working children from the worst forms of child labor. The focus group of Ukraine's intervention is children aged 14 – 18. The priority regions selected were Donetsk (targeting 500 working street kids), Kherson (targeting 100 children involved in prostitution/sexually abused kids), Kyiv (no concrete number of children was identified) and Vinnitsa (targeting 600 children working in agriculture). These annual projects were implemented in collaboration with local authorities and NGOs in the respective regions. Mechanism of work included first securing support from Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

of Ukraine (main governmental counterpart for ILO program) and Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS). Letters of support were addressed to governors of appropriate oblasts to help launch the pilot projects in their respective oblasts, which allowed the project to proceed successfully (projects of this type are hard to implement without support from Oblast Governor, especially before the Orange Revolution). Local government delegated the ground work to local departments of juvenile affairs (“Services for Minors”), local departments of education, departments of health and some other local governmental departments. To ensure proper implementation IPEC/Ukraine created local action committees comprised of representatives of these departments. During this intervention many children have been found abused, working for other older children/adults (“taxation” mechanism). Deviant behavior was common among targeted children. Psychologists who worked for the project had frequently defined the targeted children as “total outsiders” before the rehabilitation work began. ILO/IPEC reports that this part of the program was completed successfully: the targeted children were reached and rehabilitated.

The second part of the program supports the first one aiming to support the existing community based youth centers in the pilot regions to reduce vulnerability to trafficking by identifying potential victims and facilitating of social inclusion of returnees. This program, financed by ILO, is implemented by Center Rozvytok Demokratii (Center for Democracy Development (CDD)). This project is a link between ILO and regional coordinators in Kherson and Donetsk. There are 6 sites in each oblast, where local NGOs and their volunteers track down children who are involved in the worst forms of labor, identify what their problems are, provide them with small financial support to resolve their problems (usually by covering certain bills rather than paying cash). The second part of the project seeks children from difficult families who are on the verge of starting seeking low paid illegal jobs. It is done via peer to peer mechanism, where “smart” volunteers who work for the program get in contact with children, initiate friendly relations with them which gives project coordinators the opportunity to truly see who is indeed in difficult situation, forced to look for low paid job (i.e. working in mine or in prostitution). The project trains 52 youth leaders, peer educators working under the “peer to peer” approach.

The results of ILO/IPEC work included documented rehabilitation and reintegration into society of 1,200 children. This result is proved by individual case profiles of all children who were targeted by the program. This included medical help when needed, psychological rehabilitation (most common and requested). On the psychological level, this rehabilitation initiative helped kids to understand the fact they had to work in the streets is not fatal for them (as many children felt), that they are not “worse” than other children and will have better future despite their experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO ASSIST DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN OF UKRAINE

(Listed in suggested priority order)

Analyzing all the materials gathered during this assessment, numerous conversation and in-depth interviews held with child specialists from different corners of Ukraine, meetings with respected and well established international and local non-profits, I come to a conclusion that the priority measures to assist vulnerable children in today's Ukraine are clear and doable, especially given the augmented support and understanding from top levels of government enjoyed after the Orange Revolution that brought a progressive and caring President of Ukraine to power. Given the depth of vulnerable children issues and Ukraine's budgetary constraints foreign assistance to help those who can't help themselves is justified and very much needed.

Helping families with children in crisis/approaching crisis

One of the most efficient ways of spending funds while reaching significant results in disadvantaged children area appears the **social orphanhood, juvenile crime and abuse prevention**. CCF in one of their trainings for FTH parents provided the following statistics: work with crisis family in Estonia costs the state 23\$/month per child, holistic support to FFs – 200\$/month per child, support to an orphanage 500\$/month per child. The dollar ratio corresponding expenditures in Ukraine would not be much different. Far from enough is done in the area of prevention of social orphanhood, which means we might be looking at further increase of all problems associated with all forms of deviant children behavior. So, *what should be done?* The answer appears quite unambiguous: ***strengthen the fragile families with children and don't leave children in institutions.***

As to crisis families, the first obvious step is detection of families in crisis or getting into crisis. This task is easily completed via collaboration with local departments on minors, social services for minors, and police - - these entities have statistics of crisis families with children. Early identification and diagnosis of crisis family is also important and could be done even via consultations with district pediatricians, who are aware of state of health of all children registered in the district (state of health is the first good sign on the general state of affairs with the child), schools (regular missing school is an ominous sign). Local social services NGOs are additional resource. Types of assistance should include financial assistance to relieve immediate problems and stress, psychological help to parents to make them want get rid of alcohol/drug problem, if any (desire for rehabilitation is an absolute pre-condition of rehabilitation), ultimate alcohol/drug rehabilitation (expensive, specific but unavoidable), psychological assistance, loans or small grants to start their own small businesses (if applicable), assistance with coverage of utility debts, reintegration into community, any individual approach as necessary. Crisis families **MUST** understand it is a collaborative effort that goes both ways, i.e. the crisis family has its homework and obligations it must meet to continue receiving support from VQuest and its partners. Performance of this work could be done in collaboration with local branches of Ministry of Youth and Sports, and/or local NGOs, or completely separately by resources and staff of VQuest in Ukraine – this should depend on the number of regions and depth of intervention in each region. Come January 1, 2006, all local branches in ALL rayons of Ukraine will be staffed with two staff members responsible for children and families in crisis. These staff centers, however, are not likely to be well funded or trained, thus training of these potential partners appears expedient and cost effective. Experience of EveryChild/Ukraine in this work should be further studied in detail to ensure no mistakes are repeated. Measurement of such intervention would be the number of families assisted to become functional again or number of children in these families that due to our assistance do not hit the streets or are returned from streets.

Today there is virtually no alternative from the street/basement for a run away child who suffers abuse or neglect at home. In addition to the very much needed “full course” quality rehabilitation centers for abused/street children, there is great need for “short term rehabilitation-consultation centers” that would allow to removing the child from parents for rehabilitation on a temporary basis before the child hits the street. Thus, if the child-parent(s) relations got extremely difficult to the extent the child does decide to leave home - - (s)he could be housed in such temporary rehabilitation center that would give both parties “a break” - - help the child to realize what family means to him/her and visa versa. Certainly, social workers must be involved to work with the family to avoid worse effects (for example parents falling further into drinking or drug abuse as “our child(ren) has been taken away, so there is nothing left in life”). Thus, any child running into crisis or suffering abuse must have an opportunity **to turn to a well established child shelter, which appears a more attractive alternative to the street living**, where he/she could speak to psychologist, get comfortable, “cry it out”, or get whatever immediate help SO much needed in those first hours/days and most importantly: not go to the street. The logic behind such facilities is simple: if we lose the momentum of preventing the child from hitting the street the first night - - the influence the child gets during the first hours/days in the street is sometimes enough for a full rehabilitation course, if one can ever get the child away from the street at all. Such short term rehabilitation centers should also be available for children from well to do crisis/getting into crisis families, where a child has momentary crisis at home and does decide to run away. This approach also opens doors to sustainability.

In working with crisis families, we should not forget about those families where children are cared for under the guardianship arrangement (considered to be a family). Frequently, guardianship is formed by grandmothers and the way children are raised in such families needs to be monitored closely (currently there is virtually no social supervision of children under guardianship).

Focus on rehabilitation work with street children

Famous Ukrainian Professor of child deviant behavior Natalia Maximova as well as most child experts in the field believe there is very little that can be done to help street children **as** they are/**where** they are before the well established system of foster families, well trained parents are in place. Nobody will be able to move kids away from street to orphanages as they exist today (most kids have been to such orphanages and have and will run away). It is virtually impossible to help kids get rid of glue sniffing or drug use in the street. Realistically, experience proves that little to no intervention would be expedient to help street children, who tasted false freedom, as long as there is no attractive place outside of the street. We also believe it will not bring positive results if we try to help the street children as they are on the street (with food, clothing, entertainment, etc.), which could be justified **ONLY** as the entry step into the real intervention. The “street living” culture, although slightly curbed in the recent months, is well developed in Ukraine among children and we should do everything possible not to, accidentally, develop it further. Child psychologists and other experts state that some of street children have developed a taste for freedom as a side effect of street living and will not exchange it for anything.

But this is only a fraction of all street kids. Others, provided wise and professional approach, can be enticed into leaving the streets and moving either back into biological family (if at all possible) or, hopefully, into well-prepared professional families, as these children (definitely majority) will definitely “exchange” the street living for family care, home affection, safety, regular quality food,

clothing and other “advantages” of family life with understanding and no abuse. Believe we have to focus on two main directions:

1. Create/strengthen and manage attractive shelters/rehabilitation centers for children to spend time alternative from streets; We have to ensure these shelters (as first stop) are attractive, where children will want to stay: they have interesting developmental toys, games, bicycles, computers, opportunity to play sports (mini soccer field is very recommended), guitars with a talented guitar player on staff, tasty food, nice clothing, warm-hearted, professionally trained staff. Legislatively, we are well protected since there is a Cabinet of Ministers Decree #78 of Jan. 28, 2003 on “Center of Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of Children”. If the child stays in this shelter - - we have the time and momentum to learn about this child’s situation and status of biological family, thus simultaneously we:

2. Identify (if available) and immediately start to rehabilitate the child’s biological family for possible re-joining with this family. Many experienced child experts assert that if the child has experience living in his/her biological family, the love towards biological parents has unbeatable natural strength and rarely goes away, REGARDLESS of who the parents are or how badly they treated the child. When a social orphan or a child temporarily housed in shelter is asked “who do you love most?”, in over 50% of cases the answer would be something like “I love my mom the most... yes she beat me many times... but may be I deserved it... I still love her most of anything”... Sometimes it seems quite unbelievable to hear this, but it’s a fact. Number of such rehabilitated assisted families would serve as a measurement of such project.

However, **if rehabilitation of biological family is not a possibility - - we must prepare a pre-trained professional family from already existing database of expecting professional parents** who will start getting in contact with the child as soon as possible, while s/he is still in the shelter to help him/her in adapting to a life in the professional family setting, ultimately taking on this child into joint family living, potentially reviewing opportunities adoption of the child by this family. From January 1, 2005, the MYS of Ukraine plans to have a database of parents who are potentially willing to take a child into professional upbringing and possible adoption. Expedient preparation of necessary documentation of child forwarding to a professional family occurs simultaneously. Number of children moved to professional families thus avoiding institutionalization would serve as a measurement of success.

3. Quality training & preparedness of parents is essential given the frequent burn out of adults who are professional parents taking difficult children into their families. Regional experience proves that, although crucial, it is not enough to just have a good heart - - serious social worker and psychological training is a must and we have to ensure it happens. Trainers of professional parents are growing in numbers and quality in Ukraine given support from CCF, EveryChild, Holt International and some other groups. Number of trained professional parents who have taken and stayed with social and biological orphans could serve as a measurement of success.

Finally, I would like to stress the statements which I share with two child psychologists I discussed provision of assistance to children - - assistance to children at risk MUST be provided AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, no later than three months after a child’s involvement in sexual abuse or exploitation and no later than twelve months after a child has been on the street. The urgency of provision assistance to children who have fallen out of their family settings is in a way similar to giving help to somebody who got into a car accident – if such help is not provided timely, the person may die. Similarly, social workers and child protection non-profit organizations lose the momentum of helping a child effectively. If assistance to children at risk is not provided timely, rehabilitation afterwards may have only marginal or zero effect. If not helped timely, 1. Children exploited sexually are likely to pursue

work in prostitution as the only “simple” and realistic way of supporting themselves, 2. Children living in the streets are likely not to exchange their “street culture and freedom” to return and live either in their biological or professional family.

Removing children from streets to alternative settings is doable - - neighboring Poland, where Ukrainian social workers have attended trainings, has managed to practically eradicate this problem having political will and proper level of support. A mention should be made that in several visited regions, child specialists maintain that the Criminal Militia for Minors (Ministry of the Interior Affairs), needs special training on how to work with street children and other children with deviant behavior.

Increasing the amount of FTHs/FFs and strengthening existing ones

If the governmental approach of “money follows the child” is materialized, Ukraine would be able to significantly advance on the path of resolving numerous problems with orphanhood, street life and institutionalization of children by moving children to FTHs and FFs. As housing remains the major roadblock on the way of increasing the amount of FTHs, creating a program similar to HHC, which helps the government to create FTHs is definitely justified. More so, that fundraising mechanism of HHC to purchase houses is already developed and could be utilized in the United States or other countries.

Most professional parents feel that hundreds of couples are theoretically ready to take children into FFs and FTHs today, however, most of them do not understand the difficulties of raising children with difficult histories. Proper selection of FTH parents, training them and ensuring proper monitoring and social supervision is a must (several FTHs have been dismissed as professional parents were not ready for the challenge of raising children difficult background). Such work has already been properly initiated in Ukraine and should be augmented and improved. At the initial stage, close collaboration with CCF, HHC, Holt International and some other organizations performing selection of FTH and FF parents, their training and social supervision is recommended in order to divide responsibilities, share experience and methodologies and coordinate the work by large.

Creating FTHs especially in rural areas, where children can learn how to work and survive on land seems more attractive to the majority of FTH parents interviewed, thus should be prioritized. Apartment are less preferable as many of both children and parents come from rural areas, so they want to be involved in agricultural work, grow animals and chicken, etc., including mentally challenged children (of course every case must be reviewed individually and monitored afterwards). Vehicles (vans) are also important to be able to move the children around. Computers, educational leisure provision are much needed.

Lack of understanding among general population as to foster parents and professional upbringing of children is a big issue, which stems from mere lack of information and international experience in the foster family area as well as consequences of institutional upbringing of children. Given the large scale of institutionalization and its historical mark in former Soviet Union countries - - majority of population is very careful, to say the least, towards foster families and FTHs. One of major reasons is that such family form of children upbringing is completely new and people do not even understand why somebody would want to do this. Enlarging and improving the media campaign focusing on

foster parents and professional upbringing of neglected children deserves special attention. First elementary educational short movies have been created to educate the population, however, their level of expertise is not sufficient, in some experts' opinion. Thus, training of producers and journalists as to advantages of foster families or closely working with them on producing more educational films and press releases could go a long way in Ukraine. As a first step, it would be important to select several areas to focus media and community education explaining advantages of FFs and FTHs to these targeted areas. Joint lobbying should be carried out to reduce red tape registering a FTH - - 21 documents needed to be prepared to take one street child into the family and register a FTH in Yalta (Crimea). Other regions are similar.

Proper information campaign on the appropriate level to inform adults of the situation in orphanages, consequences of institutionalization and opportunities to create FTHs and FFs should spread in VQuest selected areas. Certain material for such campaigns is already created and should be studied carefully, as some criticism has been released as to its professionalism - - ultimately improved and augmented. Successful experience of Russian deinstitutionalization efforts should also be studied in more detail.

An important nuance is that throughout Ukraine FFs and FTHs professionals said that while preparing adoptive parents and child towards common living it's important to put parents in touch with children before they make the decision to take the child into a FTH or FF. The child **MUST** be comfortable to go to that specific family. When it is not done this way and the child simply does not "match" his/her parents, the likelihood of this child becoming an orphan yet another time is very high.

As the government is making efforts to support existing FTHs/FFs and create new ones, close coordination with MYS and helping the government fill up their niches is recommended.

Finally, it would be an important start to create the first FTH for HIV-positive children, an exemplary FTH that would add further attention to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Ukraine and reduce stigma and discrimination.

Assistance to orphanage graduates and those approaching graduation

Dealing with children graduating from institution we are dealing with an outcome of a problem we could not avoid. However, helping them remains a top priority, especially considering the lack of effort by other organizations to effectively work with orphanage graduates/those approaching graduation.

As stated earlier, institutionalization of children leads to thousands of dysfunctional adults, partially or totally unprepared to life outside of orphanage gates.

One way to show orphanage graduates some light at the end of the tunnel and better prepare to independent life is to create a program where orphanage inmates start to spend part time, for instance weekends, in foster families (FFs) some time before graduation. In several regions of Ukraine (including Crimea) indigenous NGOs are trying to utilize this approach, however, funds are needed to 1. Better train more foster families to spend quality educational time with "difficult youth"; 2. Work with orphanage directors to educate them of advantages of such practices for children (s)he is responsible for. 3. Financially support FFs for their time, possible special initiatives and miscellaneous expenses natural to such program. 4. Possible involvement of social workers to this program. The

biggest advantage of such initiative is that it should be very efficient: while not extremely expensive, it should prove effective in indoctrinating essential life skills to soon-to-be orphanage graduates.

Undoubtedly, Ukraine's orphans of today would benefit from graduating (or entering 6 months prior to graduation day) into what is called in the west "half-way houses", where they can live in small groups under supervision of trained social worker who can prepare them for the future independence. Assistance to Russian Orphans program I visited in 2003 supported such initiatives (called "social hotels") that turned out extremely useful - - this and similar Romanian experience should be studied in detail and implemented in Ukraine. Such intervention could be initiated in selected orphanages and would be easy to monitor for success. The stay in such program should last until the orphans themselves feel comfortable to leave and be on their own. Parallel to life and job skills training, certain work should be done to ensure some sort of housing arrangement is made for orphans not to hit the streets (social housing of such type is discussed elsewhere in this assessment).

Importantly, one of the major problems for orphans with no housing secured is to find a place to live, which obviously makes it impossible for orphanage graduates to lead independent and normal lives. Very few orphans luck out to marry people out of institutions having their own housing (even those who do, tend to turn their children to orphanages as this is the only way to raise children known and understood to them). Social housing is envisioned in governmental programs to assist orphanage graduates, however the issue of systematic financing is not finalized. Realistically, it would be very difficult for the government to find enough housing for orphanage graduates, thus international assistance in this area is much justified, especially for graduates who went through life/job skills courses and are relatively prepared for independent living. *A combination of purchasing some tiny apartment of house in a rural area with additional life skills and job skills courses is a perfect combination how to save an orphanage graduate.* The way to measure success of such intervention would be the number of orphans who were helped with proper integration into society and who have become functional adults.

As orphanage graduates are extremely unlikely to be adopted or taken into somebody's family, assistance by way of individual child sponsorship is very appropriate to this category of children. Please, see child sponsorship section for more detail on suggested approach.

Intervention in the area of juvenile justice

Foreign experience in resolving this legislative and practices problem is urgently needed. Western experience should be studied and local officials and NGO leaders should be trained on how to proceed to amend the difficult situation with juvenile justice in Ukraine. Some of this work has been done and Foundation on Child's Rights Protection (FCRP) by developing their model on Juvenile Justice under funding from International Renaissance Foundation. UNICEF has conducted pilot work in this area in Kyiv and Kharkiv (see UNICEF section for more details). Realistically, since urgent actions are needed in this area, I would suggest taking the developed model be it in collaboration with FCRP or UNICEF, polish it and utilize it in selected regions of Ukraine. Sub-laws on the local level should be passed to better implement this concept. Importantly, since so many crimes are connected with drugs and are done by children with deviant behavior, the selected region must also establish a medico-social rehabilitation center for drug addicts (2 of them already exist in Ukraine in Donetsk and Dnipropetrovs'k regions). Child psychologist recommended that it be a closed center for social

rehabilitation for children with deviant behavior or at least the first stage of rehabilitation must be compulsory as ruled by a judge.

The steps of the work/funding could be:

1. selecting the regions of Ukraine for intervention
2. training of judges who would major only in juvenile justice
3. preparation of justice care takers/up bringers of youth with deviant behavior, convicted conditionally, “graduates” of juvenile colonies/prisons
4. development of programs for rehabilitation of such youth in accordance with their personal qualities
5. establishing rehabilitation dormitory/half way houses for graduates of prisons with no housing opportunities (a significant percentage of them fall into this category)

Measurement of success of such program would be the declining number of juvenile delinquency/crime in selected regions as compared to past year and as compared to other regions + according decrease in number of drug users in selected regions.

Christian Children’s Fund (CCF) also recognizes this problem and has conducted a number of trainings for police working on juvenile matters, however, these trainings are not enough as they only give elementary knowledge on youth deviant behavior and psychology. This is a good start which should be built on with the program suggested above.

Intervention to combat drug use among minors

All regions of Ukraine have reported another alarmingly growing problem in Ukraine -- drug usage among individuals from 8 to 18 y.o. While smaller children 8 – 12 y.o. are mostly involved in glue sniffing, it still creates pre-conditions for moving towards heavier drugs by the age of 14 to 16. Research conducted thus far, indicates that approximately every 5th youth aged below 18 has at least tried drugs and has strong potential to get involved in using heavy narcotics sooner or later. Along with this, there are virtually no centers or systems to help these youth rehabilitate. In 2004 alone, 5,600 minors have been officially registered as drug users, which is far below the real number in Ukraine. However, only about 560 youth have received any form of socio-medical from one of the four existing drug rehabilitation centers in the entire country (located in Donetsk, Dnipropetrovs’k, Zakarpattia and Crimea, each housing about 20 drug users at a time). Furthermore, the highest amounts of registered drug users reside in cities/oblasts where there is absolutely no opportunity to receive any drug rehabilitation: Kirovograd, Kyiv, Odessa, Mykolayiv, Zaporizzhya, Zhitomir, and Lugansk. Visits to these institutions have shown that they lack such elementary items as pens and paper for staff, needless to say about their professional level. Adult clinics rehabilitating drug users do not accept clients aged below 18. Also, there are no programs working with parents of drug users, which is a huge problem because parents of young drug users are in shock and don’t know how to help their children. While trying to act independently and being already emotionally unstable towards their children, some parents only deepen the problematic situation their children are already in.

Both regional and local programs are possible to work on this difficult problem. One way includes creation of specified rehabilitation center of closed type which will have:

- Day-and-night rehabilitation department for teenage drug users below 18 (closed rehabilitation institution type with strict rules and well trained staff)
- Use (possibly modify) advanced program on drug rehabilitation for youth (such methodologies are readily available in countries like Poland, Czech Republic, U.S., etc.)
- consultation unit for parents
- well established rehabilitation program for those who have gone through the main rehabilitation treatment

Importantly, such program has all grounds to become financially sustainable because parents of drug addicted children are ready to do or pay anything to professionally and truly help their child. In some areas of Ukraine there are psychologists who try to consult parents of children with drug abuse problem. Unfortunately, knowing the absence of holistic approach towards this problem such psychologists, regardless of how sincerely they want to help, cannot do anything for these parents as no professional holistic rehabilitation mechanism exists for teenagers. One has to remember - - drug use is a chronic dependency, thus ambulatory, open, non-mandatory treatment is not likely to bring any results according to experience all over Ukraine. For instance, a large essentially ambulatory program of drug rehabilitation has virtually failed in Ukraine recently in the opinion of parents of drug users.

Analysis of specific assistance to children with disabilities

In the beginning of 2005, there were close to 141,000 disabled children in Ukraine (139,857 in Jan. 2004). Throughout 2004, 15,923 children under 16 were diagnosed as “invalids”, which amounts to 20.0 per 10,000 ratio in the nation. In the structure of child disability, which has not changed significantly in the last decade, dominate the cases of central nerve system disorders (22%), disability at birth (21.8%), psychic and behavioral disorders (16.1%). The severity of disabilities covers the full spectrum from minor physical or psychological problems all the way to severe combination of the two. The proportion of institutionalized children with disabilities has **decreased** significantly as compared to non-disabled children since the break up of the Soviet Union. One of the major reasons is that during the USSR times, women who gave birth to disabled children were immediately encouraged to keep their children in an institution. Instead of spending enormous amounts of time to look after a disabled child and later disabled person (depending on the type of disability), a woman was encouraged to try to have another child, especially if the disability was connected with drinking habits of the child’s father or an error during labor or immediately after that. The logic behind it was that Soviet system was by definition a perfect one, thus all issues were kept positive, only progress and success was declared on the way to the “imminent communist reality”. Consequently, officials did not want any problematic “scenes” on the streets, or encouraged those as few as possible while keeping disabled children behind high fences of institutions. Furthermore, not having disabled children and later adults on the streets allowed the government to never worry about constructing ramps or making any other arrangements to facilitate disabled. However, after Gorbachev’s perestroika this approached has changed: all parents who wanted to keep and care for a disabled child at home were invited to do so. This applied to both disabled children already in institutions and the newborn disabled children. As a result, **about 80% of disabled children are now raised in families and only 20% remain in orphanages**. The amount of Centers of early intervention and social rehabilitation of disabled children has been increased to 273.

Specific assistance to children with disabilities is especially challenging and expensive for obvious reasons. As already mentioned, child experts in the field have repeatedly stated that orphanages for disabled children should not be specifically targeted first for closing, as there are obviously fewer families in Ukraine willing to take disabled children to their homes given the additional financial and emotional burdens (provided there are thousands of relatively healthy children to be removed from orphanages for whom the professional families and housing have not been identified). Given during the Soviet times all parents of disabled children were pushed to leave their children in orphanage, the infrastructure, trained staff, state funded rehabilitation initiatives and other forms of special assistance (when at all available) - - are primarily on the orphanage premises in those orphanages for disabled children whose directors truly care about these children (as well as NGO centers focusing on disabled children whose parents opted to keep them in families). It is especially challenging for professional parents to become responsible for raising disabled children as there is no infrastructure in Ukraine yet to help these children (later adults) to lead independent life.

Example of deaf children orphanage Crimea - - special trainers who teach children how to speak, how to understand the movement of lips as well as learning to live with hearing devices - - all this training is centralized around the specialized orphanages. There is NOT enough specialists to provide such training to children individually, provided the fact that Simferopol orphanage houses children from entire Crimea - - it is not possible for several trainers to be scattered around Crimea at the same time, unless the amount of such trainers is significantly increased.

Legislative changes promoting country's restructuring for easier getting around and life in general of disabled children should and will pursue, as this process is already underway, given the strong influence of NGOs targeting to help disabled children and one of Rada's Deputy who is in the wheelchair. Most of such NGOs are headed and staffed by mothers of disabled children, naturally the strongest advocates, most proactive and sometimes even aggressive (meaning it in positive terms) as constructive changes in the area of disabled children affect them personally.

Interestingly, 24 new youth sports facilities where 7,400 disabled youth are able to practice sports were opened in Ukraine in the recent years. By comparison, the amount of sports schools for non-disabled social and biological orphans has been reduced from 42 to 13 recently. Since the state does not have sufficient funds to inaugurate sports schools, it indicates that parents of disabled youth practice strong fundraising and lobbying techniques to help their children.

Child experts believe the **efficient ways of provision assistance to children with disabilities does not differ significantly to the ways to help non-disabled children**, obviously except specific individual rehabilitation programs. Priority step would include taking as many children as possible out of institutions and preventing of new disabled children getting to institutions. Thus, ways of doing it would include 1. Identifying (if available) and working with (if possible) with biological family: economic help, psychological rehabilitation, individual assistance in other matters, etc. 2. If biological family is not an option - - identifying, preparing and training a special foster family to take a child with special needs. Training of professional parents of disabled children is recommended to be in groups, once a group of 20 parents like this is ready - - an expert could be invited from the U.S. or any other country to train professional parents on peculiarities of raising a child with special needs 3. Child is recommended to be put out for sponsorship request in the U.S. and other western countries as part of general child sponsorship initiative of VQuest (professional fundraiser is recommended to initiate this

as well as in-depth studying of such experience of CCF and other successful child sponsorship organizations). 4. Special rehabilitation programs individual to a particular child should be sought in collaboration with indigenous Ukrainian NGOs have been active in creating contacts with similar organizations overseas and fundraising. 5. Creating of a mother and baby unit for children born with disability to provide special psychological and financial assistance to mothers of newly born disabled children. Experience shows that if a mother stays with the child for the first six months and breast feeds the child, the chances of her abandoning the child after these first six months are very low.

Finally, there are organizations in the United States and other countries that major in finding adoptive parents to disabled orphans overseas. International adoption of disabled children should be promoted as a way to find more families, thus perspectives in the future, for disabled children. Foreign adoptive parents of better financial status usually take excellent medical care of their adopted children, including expensive surgeries that help disabled children develop better. Some time would definitely be justified to search for such organizations and connect with the parents they represent as to situation with disabled orphans in Ukraine. Some orphanage directors have been identified who would allow collecting detailed information about the disabled orphans they are responsible for to share this information with such western organizations and private sponsors.

Computerization of FTHs, FFs, rehabilitation centers, schools

The “digital divide” is deep in Ukraine. Statistical evidence as to lack of computers in schools especially in the rural areas is sufficient to pay attention to this problem. Urban schools are supplied with computers at 64% level of demand, rural – 45%. Worst statistics is in Kirovograd oblast (20% urban and rural combined), Zhitomir oblast (36%), Crimea (37%), Cherkassy (39%). Extremely few children institutions have computers. There are programs in the United States that collect used computers from well to do companies that are upgrading their computer arsenal. Given Counterpart International still has a program that would ship supplies for free to countries like Ukraine from the U.S., it certainly seems worthy to determine if there is an opportunity to organize shipments of used computers to rural areas of Ukraine. Such project is not suggested as a stand alone one. Rather, it would be a good addition to any rehabilitation program where computers would play a role of promoting additional education opportunities and developmental leisure of needy children, support FTHs and FFs, children institutions, etc.

APPENDIX A

Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

Decree # 564 of April 26, 2002 ON APPROVAL OF THE REGULATIONS ON FAMILY TYPE HOME

Aimed at establishing the necessary conditions for the upbringing of orphans and children deprived of parental care within the family environment the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decrees:

1. To approve the Regulations on Family Type Home (FTH).
2. The State Committee on Family and Youth affairs is to co-ordinate and provide methodical support for the FTH activities.
3. The Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of The Crimea, Oblast and Kyiv and Sevastopol City Administrations are to provide assistance in establishment and work of FTHs.
4. To nullify:

Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers # 267 “On approval of the Regulations on Family Type Home” (1994).

Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers # 310 “On amendments and alterations to the Regulations on Family Type Home” (1998).

The Premier Minister of Ukraine

A.Kinakh

Approved by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers # 564 “On approval of the Regulations on Family Type Home” (April 26, 2001).

THE REGULATIONS ON FAMILY TYPE HOME

General Provisions

1. The goal of establishment of the FTH is the provision of the necessary conditions for the upbringing within the family environment of orphans and children deprived of parental care.
2. FTH — is an independent family that is being established by request of a couple or single person who takes 5 and more children deprived of parental care for upbringing and joint living. Mentors (Parents) — people who take the children for upbringing and joint living children deprived of parental care.

The children stay at the FTH till the age of 18. In case of their studying at the technical college or University the children stay at the FTH till the moment of the graduation from the technical college or University.

The total number of the children within FTH can't exceed 10 children taking into account the biological children.

The establishment and liquidation of the Family Type Home

3. The decision on establishment of the Family Type Home shall be taken by the district, district in cities Kyiv and Sevastopol state administration, of Executive Committees of the City Halls (in Cities of Oblast (in the AR Crimea — republican) subordination) based on application of the person/people who has conceived a wish to establish FTH and the conclusion of the corresponding Dept. on Family and Youth Affairs on availability of the conditions for FTH establishment.
4. In terms of the decision on establishment of the Family Type Home the agreement between the governing bodies that had taken that decision is to conclude an agreement with mentors according to the model elaborated.

The validity of the agreement could be suspended in case of unfavourable conditions for upbringing and joint living of the children appear in the FTH (mentors' serious illness, lack of understanding with children, conflict relations with children); reunification of the fostered children with a biological family (guardian, adopter etc); attainment of children's majority; By mutual consent; because of other reasons specified in the agreement and according to the court decision.

In case of agreement validity suspension the decision on further children placement is taken by the trusteeship and guardianship body.

5. When the decision on FTH establishment is taken the mentors are to be provided out of turn with a house of a big apartment free of charge according to the legal regulations.

The house or apartment need to be equipped with all the necessary furniture and equipment.

The list of such equipment is to be made by the government body that has taken decision on establishment of the Family Type Home.

6. In case of children's number reduction in consequence of majority attainment or other reasons the decision on placement of new children to FTH need to be taken by mutual agreement.
7. Children's living conditions monitoring is to be made by the trusteeship and guardianship bodies, family and youth affairs departments of the district, district in cities Kyiv and Sevastopol state administration, of Executive Committees of the City Halls (in Cities of Oblast(in the AR Crimea - republican) subordination).
8. Children in FTH keep all the statutory benefits and guarantees for themselves as for the orphans or children deprived of parental care.
9. The liquidation of the FTH can be conducted according to the decision of the governmental body that established it only or in accordance with the court decision.
10. The officials who are guilty of violation of the legislation concerning the FTH bear responsibility according to the legislation in power.

Placement of the children to the FTH

11. There is a priority for the children with family ties to be placed in one FTH with the exception of cases when they can't be brought up together because of medical indices or other reasons.
12. Trusteeship and guardianship body is to provide for the mentors following documents for every placed child:

Birth Certificate

- ▶ Medical reference on the state of the health of the child or extract from child development history;
- ▶ Reference(certificate)on education or the reference of the psychological educational medical commission on child personal development level;
- ▶ Documents concerning the parents or guardians (death certificate, court verdict/decision, reference on illness, search of parents and other documents that prove absence of parents or their incapability to bring the children up);
- ▶ Reference on brothers and sisters and other close relatives and their place of residence;
- ▶ The description of the children's property (real estate included) and the information on people who are responsible for its preservation;
- ▶ Pension book for child who gets pension, copy of the court decision on levy of alimony.

In case of absence of any of the documents at the moment of placement to FTH the trusteeship and guardianship body is committed to provide mentors with those documents within 3 months. Trusteeship and guardianship body and the head of the institution where the child was placed are responsible for the authenticity of the documents.

13. The FTH is to be completed with children within 3 months from the moment of its establishment. The local Family and Youth Affairs Dept. is responsible for monitoring of children selection process.
14. Children placed in FTH keep for themselves all the alimonies, pensions and other benefits that need to be transferred to the child personal banking account.

Mentors can use this money only under concordance with the trusteeship and guardianship body if only there's a need of specific medical treatment (heart operation, transplantation etc.); acquisition of specific instruments for child skills development and special assistant equipment for the children with special physical needs.

15. Trusteeship and guardianship bodies are responsible for the protection of the children's property and control its use.
16. The children have right to maintain contact with their biological parents and other relatives if it doesn't conflict with their interests or prohibited by court decision. The form of such a contact shall be defined by the trusteeship and guardianship body along with mentors' recommendations.

Mentors, their Rights and Responsibilities

17. The mentors could be adults with the exception of:
- ▶ People who are acknowledged by the court as incapable or partially incapable;
 - ▶ People who are deprived of parental rights;
 - ▶ People who are relieved of the post of guardian because of inapplicable fulfilment of their obligations;
 - ▶ People who can't meet commitments on children education because of their health state (disabled people of groups I and II; people who suffers from serious neurotic diseases, alcohol and drug addiction; who is ill with AIDS, tuberculosis, mental disorder; people with officially registered asocial deeds and inclination to violence.

People who live with the family members suffering from serious neurotic diseases, alcohol and drug addiction; who is ill with AIDS, tuberculosis, mental disorder; people with officially registered asocial deeds and inclination to violence can't be the mentors of the FTH.

18. The applicants for the FTH mentor post are to provide the body taking decision on establishment of FTH with following documents:
- ▶ Reference on family composition (Form 3);
 - ▶ Certificate of marriage copy (for couples);
 - ▶ Education certificate;
 - ▶ Passports copies; and
- Reference on the state of health of applicants and people who live with them; Notarized letter of consent of all the adult members of the family who live together with the applicants in case the applicants decided to establish the FTP at their apartment. Mentors are to participate in the preparation and practical trainings (once in 5 years) conducted by the local Youth and Family Depts.
19. Mentors are responsible for the life, health, physical and psychological development of the foster children.
20. Mentors are the legal representative of the children at the FTH, their interests in all the bodies, institutions and organisations without any specific powers.
21. General and obligatory state social insurance in favour of mentors, payments for General and obligatory state social insurance, obligatory pension tax payments are made by the body that has taken the design on establishment of the FTH and deducted from the salaries of the mentors according to the legislation for employed workers in power.

All the period of time when the mentors are working in the FTP is included into their general labour time record.

22. The range of the salaries of the FTH mentors is to be determined according to the procedures of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Annually The FTH mentors are provided with the pecuniary aid at the rate of 1 month salary before their vacations.

23. The issue of housing rights of the mentors and people who are living with them are to be regulated within the framework of certain agreement.

Family Type Home Material Security

24. The funding of the FTH (salaries for mentors and children maintenance costs) is provided from district budgets, republican (of the Autonomous Rep. Of the Crimea) and budgets of the cities of oblast subordination.

Every month the FTH is provided with money for acquisition of food, clothes, toys, medicines, personal hygiene items, books etc. According to the standards for orphans and children deprived of parental care established by Ministry of Education and Science.

According to the standards and tariffs for public utilities of certain region and correspondingly to the number of children the FTH shall be provided with all necessary funding for the coverage of the expenses for public utilities and communication.

The money that could be saved by the mentors can't be withdrawn by the state officials but should be used mentors for the needs of the children next year.

25. By mutual consent the FTH can be provided with a small holding for vegetable gardening that is situated near the place of location of the FTH. The FTH can also be provided with a vehicle.
26. If children studying at the University or technical college after the age of 18 keep living at the FTH, money for their maintenance costs are to be transferred to the FTH by the local administration during all the time of his/her studying period.
27. Local Family and Youth departments along with NGOs, trade unions are responsible for organising the free of charge summer rest activities for the FTH children every year.

Those children who need medical treatment or specific supervision should be provided with an opportunity of free stay at the health centre.

28. All the other problems on the material and financial security of the FTH should be resolved by the body that has taken decision on establishment of the FTH.
29. The FTH can obtain charitable aid from juridical entities and natural persons.

APPENDIX B

Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

Decree # 565 of April 26, 2002 ON APPROVAL OF THE REGULATIONS ON FOSTER FAMILY

Aimed at sharing the experience of establishment of foster families as a new form of the upbringing of orphans and children deprived of parental care the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decrees:

1. To acknowledge as positive the results of the experiment on establishment of the foster families (FF) in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea, Zaporizzhya, Lviv, Kharkiv oblasts and in the city of Kyiv and to ensure the spread of this practice in all the regions.
2. To approve the Regulations on FF.
3. The State Committee on Family and Youth affairs is to co-ordinate and provides methodical support for the FTH activities.
4. The Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea, Oblast and Kyiv and Sevastopol City Administrations are to provide assistance in establishment and work of FFs.
5. To nullify:

Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers # 241 “On experiment on establishment of FF in Zaporizzhya oblast and approval of the Regulations on FF” (1998).

Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers # 1713 “On experiment on establishment of FF in some regions of Ukraine” (1999).

The Premier Minister of Ukraine

A.Kinakh

Approved by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers #565 “On approval of the Regulations on FF” (April 26, 2001).

THE REGULATIONS ON FOSTER FAMILY

General Provisions

1. The goal of establishment of the FF is the provision of the necessary conditions for the upbringing within the family environment of orphans and children deprived of parental care through their placement into the families for the upbringing and joint living.
2. FF — is a family that voluntarily has taken from the institutions 1-4 orphans or children deprived of the parental care for upbringing and joint living.

Foster Parents — married couple that takes the children for upbringing and joint living children deprived of parental care.

Foster Children — orphans or children deprived of the parental care placed into the FF.

The children stay at the FF till the age of 18. In case of their studying at the technical college or University the children stay at the FF till the moment of the graduation from the technical college or University.

3. In case of establishment of FF foster parents take foster children to their apartment if there is adequate life, sanitary and hygienic conditions in their apartment.
4. Foster children keep all the statutory benefits and guarantees for themselves as for the orphans or children deprived of parental care.

The Establishment of the Foster Family

5. The decision on establishment of the FF shall be taken by the district, district in cities Kyiv and Sevastopol state administration, Executive Committee of the City Hall (in Cities of Oblast (in the AR Crimea — republican) subordination) based on application of the married couple that has conceived a wish to establish FF and the conclusion of the corresponding Dept. on Family and Youth Affairs on availability of the conditions for FF establishment.

The body that has taken decision on establishment of the FF bears responsibility for its operating within the framework of the legislation in power.

6. In terms of the decision on establishment of the Foster Family the agreement between the governing bodies that has taken that decision is to conclude an agreement with foster families on placement of the children to this family for upbringing and joint living according to the model elaborated.
 - ▶ The validity of the agreement could be suspended in case of unfavourable conditions for upbringing and joint living of the children appear in the FF (foster parents' serious illness, change of foster parents marital status, lack of understanding with children, conflict relations among children);
 - ▶ Reunification of the fostered children with a biological family (guardian, adopter etc);
 - ▶ Attainment of children's majority;
 - ▶ By mutual consent;
 - ▶ Because of other reasons specified in the agreement; and
 - ▶ According to the court decision.

In case of agreement validity suspension the family is deprived of its "foster family" status and the decision on further children placement is taken by the trusteeship and guardianship body.

7. Children's living conditions expertise and agreement provisions conduct monitoring is to be made by the trusteeship and guardianship bodies, family and youth affairs departments of the district, district in cities Kyiv and Sevastopol state administration, of Executive Committees of the City Halls.

Local family and youth affairs departments, departments of education, departments of health care (chief medical officers of the district hospitals), departments of labour and population social

protection of the district, district in cities Kyiv and Sevastopol state administration, of Executive Committees of the City Halls; the administration of the institutions the orphans or children deprived of parental care assist the foster families in selection of children and establishment of the contacts with them.

9. Local family and youth affairs departments in co-operation with the professionals of the State Institute of Family and Youth Problems organise training for the foster parents on a periodic basis (but not less than once in 2 years) aimed at enhancing their educational potential.

Placement of the Children to the FF

10. Trusteeship and guardianship body is to provide for the foster parents following documents for every placed child:

Birth Certificate

- ▶ Medical reference on the state of the health of the child or extract from child development history;
- ▶ Reference(certificate) on education or the conclusion of the psychological educational medical commission on child personal development level;
- ▶ Documents concerning the parents or guardians (death certificate, court verdict/decision, reference on illness, search of parents and other documents that prove absence of parents or their incapability to bring the children up);
- ▶ Reference on brothers and sisters and other close relatives and their place of residence;
- ▶ The description of the children's property (real estate included) and the information on people who are responsible for its preservation; and
- ▶ Pension book for child who gets pension, copy of the court decision on levy of alimony.

In case of absence of any of the documents at the moment of placement to FF the trusteeship and guardianship bodies are committed to provide foster parents with those documents within 3 months.

Trusteeship and guardianship body and the head of the institution where the child was placed before FF is responsible for the authenticity of the documents.

11. Foster children keep for themselves all the alimonies, pensions and other benefits that need to be transferred to the child personal banking account.

Foster parents can use this money only under concordance with the trusteeship and guardianship body if only there's a need of specific medical treatment (heart operation,

transplantation etc.); acquisition of specific instruments for child skills development and special assistant equipment for the children with special physical needs.

12. Trusteeship and guardianship bodies are responsible for the protection of the children's property and control its use.
13. The foster children have right to maintain contact with their biological parents and other relatives if it doesn't conflict with their interests or prohibited by court decision. The form of such a contact shall be defined by the trusteeship and guardianship body along with foster parents' recommendations.

Foster Parents, their Rights and Responsibilities

14. The foster parents could be married people with the exception of the cases if even one of them:
 - ▶ Hasn't passed the preparation training for the foster parents;
 - ▶ Person who was acknowledged by the court as incapable or partially incapable;
 - ▶ Person who was deprived of parental rights;
 - ▶ Former guardian who was deprived of guardianship rights because of improper fulfilment of his/her obligations; and
 - ▶ Person who can't meet commitments on children education because of their health state (disabled people of groups I and II; people who suffers from serious neurotic diseases, alcohol and drug addiction; who is ill with AIDS, tuberculosis, mental disorder; people with officially registered asocial deeds and inclination to violence.

People who live with the family members suffering from serious neurotic diseases, alcohol and drug addiction; who is ill with AIDS, tuberculosis, mental disorder; people with officially registered asocial deeds and inclination to violence can't be the mentors of the FTH.

Average total month budget of every family member during last 6 months before the moment of applying for establishing FF can't be lower than legal living wage.

15. It is obligatory for the people who have made their mind to become the foster parents to be trained by the local family and youth departments and State Institute on Family and Youth Problems professionals. The training program is approved by the State Committee of Ukraine on Family and Youth Affairs.
16. The applicants for the foster parent post are to provide the body that establishes FF with following documents:
 - ▶ Written request of the applicants for the establishment of FF;
 - ▶ Passports copies;

- ▶ Reference on family composition (Form 3);
- ▶ Certificate of marriage copy (for couples);
- ▶ Education certificate;
- ▶ Reference on the state of health of applicants and people who live with them;
- ▶ Reference on the incomes of possible FF;
- ▶ Reference on conducting the training course for the foster parent applicants; and
- ▶ Notarized letter of consent for FF establishment of all the adult members of the family who live together with the applicants.

Foster parents' candidatures and foster children candidatures are being approved by the bodies of trusteeship and guardianship.

17. Foster parents are responsible for the life, health, physical and psychological development of the foster children.

Foster Family Material Security

18. The funding of the FF (children maintenance costs) is provided from district budgets, republican (of the Autonomous Rep. Of the Crimea) and budgets of the cities of oblast subordination.

Every month the FF is provided with money for acquisition of food, clothes, toys, medicines, personal hygiene items, books etc for foster children in accordance to the standards for orphans and children deprived of parental care established by Ministry of Education and Science.

According to the standards and tariffs for public utilities of certain region and correspondingly to the number of children the FF shall be provided with all necessary funding for the coverage of the expenses for public utilities and communication.

19. The funds for foster children's maintenance expenses are to be transferred to the personal account of one of the foster parents in his/her residential area.
20. The budget money that could be saved by the foster parents can't be withdrawn by the state officials but should be used mentors for the needs of the children next year.
21. The control over proper use of funds by the foster family is conducted in accordance with the legislation in power.
22. If children studying at the University or technical college after the age of 18 keep living at the FF, money for their maintenance costs are to be transferred to the foster parents by the local administration during all the time of children studying period.
23. Local Family and Youth departments along with NGOs, trade unions are responsible for organising the free of charge summer rest activities for the foster children every year.

Those foster children who need medical treatment or specific supervision should be provided with an opportunity of free stay at the health centre.

24. All the other problems on the material and financial security of the FF should be resolved by the body that has taken decision on establishment of the FF.
25. The FF can obtain material, financial and other charitable aid from juridical entities (enterprises, institutions, foundations, NGOs) and natural persons.