

Final Narrative Report

Child Care System Reform (Montenegro)

Part of the overall “Social Welfare and Child
Care System Reform: Enhancing Social
Inclusion” Project (IPA 2010) ID No.
2010/255-602

**For the Delegation of the
European Union**

December 2014

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PROJECT PROFILE

Assisted Country:	Montenegro
Project:	Child Care System Reform ID No. 2010/255-602
Donor:	European Union
Implemented by:	UNICEF Montenegro
Total Eligible Costs:	1,374,560.00 €
Total Allocation/Pre-financing for Years 1+2: 1,124,640.00€	
Total Expenditure in Years 1+2+3:	1,396,077.51€
Report Prepared:	30 December 2014
Period Covered:	10 January 2011 – 10 July 2014

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MAP OF MONTENEGRO



LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States
CSW	Centre for Social Work
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
DCC	Day Care Centre for Children with Disability
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
EUCOM	European Command of the US Military
KAP	Knowledge Attitudes and Practices survey
LPA	Local Plans of Action for Children
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MONSTAT	Statistical Office of Montenegro
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
SGH	Small Group Home
OPT	Operational Plan of Transformation
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
SIF / SIP	Social Innovation Fund / Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government of Montenegro has defined the rule of law agenda, observance of human rights and social inclusion of the most vulnerable as a major enlargement policy within the EU accession process. One of the key bottlenecks identified prior the start of the “Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform: Enhancing Social Inclusion” Project in 2010, laid in the weak capacity of the system which provided quick solutions to complex problems for children and families in need. The sector was weakened by the insufficient number of qualified professional staff and over-emphasis on administrative tasks. High number of children in institutional care represented the evidence of inadequate support to families, non-favorable social norms supporting institutionalization and lack of family and community based services at community level. It has been estimated that there are 18,000 children¹ with development disabilities. Physical access barriers, social rejection, insufficient social care and public prejudices proved to be among the most significant challenges for their social inclusion.²

From 10 January 2011 to 10 July 2014 UNICEF Montenegro has supported the Government of Montenegro (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare) in a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary reform of the child care system with the financial assistance of the Delegation of European Union to Montenegro (EUD). The Project “Child Care System Reform” was the third component of the “Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform: Enhancing Social Inclusion” Project (henceforth “Social Inclusion Project”) funded by the European Union (IPA 2010), a multi-sectoral intervention undertaken by the MoLSW, the Ministry of Education (MoE)³, UNDP and UNICEF.

The “Child Care System Reform” addressed the entire child protection system, and was focused on policy and legislative change, changes of attitudes and social norms, institutional and capacity building and the development of family and community based services for vulnerable children and families.

It needs to be noted that the EU accession process has been “a key facilitating factor”⁴ in the implementation of the reform and Social and Child Care System Reform has been integrated as one of priority actions in the development and implementation of the Chapter 23 (Fundamental rights)

The reform process resulted in high level of alignment of policy and legal framework with respective UN and EU international instruments (the new Law on Social and Child Protection (2013), the new Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System (2013-2017) and the Strategy on Development of Fostering (2012-2016)). The comprehensive reform which is still underway, significantly improved the capacity of the overall sector and capacities of the Centres for Social Work to deliver better services in a more coherent manner, based on improved cooperation with other services, families in need and NGOs, and with the support of a better data monitoring system. The system of quality assurance in the social and child protection system is in development phase.⁵ The essential foundation for data collection and analysis, and evidence-based planning in the area of child

¹ Government of Montenegro (2008), “Strategy for Integration of Persons with Disability in Montenegro for the period 2008-2016”, p.27

² External Evaluation of Child Care System Reform Project, 2014, Promeso Consulting Ltd.

³ MoE was in charge of First Component of the Social Inclusion Project, which was completed in March 2013.

⁴ External Evaluation of Child Care System Reform Project, 2014, Promeso Consulting Ltd.

⁵ External Evaluation of Child Care System Reform Project, 2014, Promeso Consulting Ltd.

protection has been established through the introduction of the electronic child protection database, installed in all CSWs at the local and MoLSW at the central level, and in use since the beginning of 2013. The Institute for Social and Child Protection has been established as per the new Law and will become functional in 2015.

The overall objective of the reform process is to enhance access to comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable family and community-based services as an alternative to institutionalization of vulnerable children.

As a result of the multidimensional work and efforts which influenced important changes in policy and legal framework, improved institutional and human capacities, and positive changes of attitudes and social norms upon the implementation of massive awareness raising campaign “Every Child Needs a Family”, the number of children in non-kin foster families increased by 289 % until July 2014 (from 9 children in non-kin foster care in 2010 to 35 children in July 2014) and the number of children in child care institutions decreased by 31% (from 370 children in 2010 to 254 children in the end of 2013).

The most importantly, and in line with the newly introduced provisions in the Law on Social and Child Protection which prohibits placement of children under three in institutions, the number of children aged 0-3 in the only Institution for children without parental care in Montenegro, “Mladost”, Bijela has decreased by 86% since 2010.

The Government also undertook important measures to increase the number of children with disabilities in mainstream schools and to provide children with the most severe disabilities with highly assertive daily care, which was all supported by the behaviour change campaign “It’s about Ability” (2010-2013). Those efforts have resulted in an increase of the number of children in inclusive education by 110% (from 654 children in 2010 to 1371 children in July 2014). Also, community based alternative services targeting vulnerable children are on the rise. At the end of 2010 there were only two functioning day care centres in Montenegro, whereas at present children in ten municipalities (almost half of all municipalities in Montenegro) have access to this service. The first small group home for children without parental care has been constructed in Bijelo Polje and equipped, and is expected to become functional in 2015.

Finally, Children’s Pavilion in Public Institution “Komanski Most” has closed in 2014 and Komanski Most is now an institution for adults with severe intellectual disabilities.

Other UNICEF programme interventions have also contributed to an important extent to efficient implementation of the reform process, most notably in the area of inclusive education, support to effective system response in the cases of child abuse and neglect, provision of the support to the Office of Human Rights Protector of Montenegro to install complaint boxes for children residing in child care institutions and many other activities focused on research and analysis and knowledge gathering such as Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey on the State of Children and Women in Montenegro, the Analysis of Media Exposure of Children in State Care and The Analysis of CSWs performance and work with children without parental care placed in child care institutions conducted by the Office of Human Rights Protector of Montenegro.

While important achievements have been made during this intervention, the remaining challenges and gaps in the capacity of the system to implement the reform in its comprehensiveness, drove the MoLSW, UN agencies and the EU Delegation to Montenegro to conclusion that the support of UN and EU to this reform must continue in order to consolidate the achieved results and progress and ensure their sustainability. To this end, the Government of Montenegro has submitted a proposal for financing the continuation of

the reform under IPA II, while the bridging period between the two IPA modalities (I and II) has been supported from IPA 2014 reserves (so-called Bridging).

The key challenges that will be addressed and worked on within the “Continuation of the Child Care System Reform in Montenegro” (Bridging Initiative 2014-2016) are further capacity building of MoLSW in leading, programme and financial planning, implementing and monitoring the reform process with the aim of strengthening leadership, planning, implementation and monitoring of the reform. A set of activities concerning providing support to MoLSW in finalizing secondary legislation to the Law on Social and Child Protection, strengthening professional capacity of the Institute for Social and Child Protection, strengthening professional capacities of centres for social work, providing support to the social and child protection, health and education sectors in the prevention of institutionalization of children and strengthening the provision of foster care and other family and community based services will be implemented in order to strengthen the implementation of the legislative and institutional framework and coordination for the provision of quality social and child protection services.

1. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS (10 JANUARY 2011 – 10 JULY 2014)

Activities of the project fall under the following sub-components and aim to achieve the following results in line with the Description of Action:

1. Policy, legislative and institutional framework
Expected result 1: The Child Care System has a policy and legal framework harmonized with international standards and the Institute for Social Welfare⁶ is established to standardize and ensure quality child care services.
2. Capacity-building and prevention of institutionalization of children
Expected result 2: Capacity of professionals in the child care sector is enhanced and vulnerable children and families have improved access to quality preventive and inclusive family and community-based services as an alternative to institutionalization.
3. Family and community-based alternative services
Expected result 3.1: Capacity of professionals in the child care sector is enhanced and vulnerable children and families have increased access to quality inclusive family and community-based services as an alternative to institutionalization;
Expected result 3.2: The general public is increasingly aware and sensitized on the child care system reform, social inclusion and family and community-based care.

These activities are described in detail below (numbering based on the revised Logframe⁷).

3.1 Policy, Legislative and Institutional Framework

3.1.1 Development of the new Law on Social and Child Protection

The new Law on Social and Child Protection is the foundation for the reform of the social and child protection system in Montenegro.

The MoLSW working group with the support of UNICEF consultants worked on the development of the text of Law in the period between 2011 and 2013. The Law was adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro on 28 May 2013. In addition, UNICEF provided support to the MoLSW in the execution of the financial impact analysis of the Law. Other reports and documents that were prepared during this period provided important inputs for the development of the Law (e.g. the Foster Care Strategy – see activity 3.3.5. and the assessment of CSWs – see activity 3.2.2.).

The finalization of the Law was delayed compared to the original time schedule and resulted in delays in the implementation of several project activities. Some of the key reasons were staffing changes at senior level in MoLSW and the participatory nature of the drafting process. Namely, MoLSW has limited human resources, and whenever new priorities emerged they conflicted with the process of law drafting and revision. In addition, as this is a key law in social and child protection, it was critically important to ensure that the text met

⁶ In the Law on Social and Child Protection named “Institute for Social and Child Protection”.

⁷ This refers to the Logframe revised in the Addendum of the Project (part of the Project Extension Documentation, Addendum no 1 dated 12 April 2013).

the highest possible standards. Notably, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Guidelines on the Alternative Care of Children, UNICEF advocated for restrictions on the placement of children in large residential institutions, particularly children aged 0-3; as well as for certain provisions on fostering that would facilitate access to this family based service as an alternative to institutionalization. However, the process of incorporating international standards in the Law was fraught with challenges. On several occasions the drafts prepared by UNICEF consultants and the official working group were subsequently altered by the MoLSW particularly with respect to provisions such as the introduction of support services, regulation of fostering etc.; as a result of which UNICEF had to intervene several times and this further delayed the drafting process. Also, much time was spent on advocating and negotiating with the MoLSW and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) a provision in the Law that would enable establishing of an independent Institute for Social and Child Protection (rather than a department in MoLSW to fulfil its functions). After strong advocacy of UN agencies UNDP and UNICEF, additional technical assistance provided, and with important assistance of the EU Delegation to Montenegro (EUD), the final Draft of the Law incorporated the majority of provided inputs.

The new Law on Social and Child Protection, was adopted in May 2013, and is broadly in line with international standards and written in the spirit of the reform. For instance, prevention of institutionalization and access to services in the least restrictive environment are listed among the principles of social and child protection; the Law envisages the transformation of residential institutions; it defines institutional placement as a measure of last resort; and it prohibits institutional placement of children aged 0-3 unless all alternatives have been exhausted. In addition, the Law envisages the establishment of the Institute for Social and Child Protection (see Activity 3.1.4.) and quality assurance mechanisms.

Annex: The Law on Social and Child Protection (in English language, unofficial translation).

3.1.2 Development of Secondary Legislation

The development of secondary legislation is crucial from the perspective of operationalizing the Law on Social and Child Protection and introducing quality standards and uniformity in the social and child protection system and service provision across the country.

UNICEF supported the official working groups in the development of the following bylaws:

1. The bylaw on the organization, standards and methods of work of CSWs (adopted in December 2013);
2. The bylaw on the terms and standards for performing professional activities in the social and child protection sector (adopted in December 2013, amended in March 2014);
3. The bylaw on the terms for provision and use of foster care services (adopted in April 2014);
4. The bylaw on the terms for provision and use and minimum standards of the service of accommodation in shelters and emergency reception units (adopted in June 2014);
5. The bylaw on the terms for provision and use and minimum standards of residential care services for children and youth (adopted in October 2014); and
6. The bylaw on the terms for provision and use and minimum standards of community-based services (under finalization).

Due to the delays in the finalization of the Law on Social and Child Protection, and again, due to the limited human resources in the MoLSW, the process of development of bylaws took longer than expected. Three bylaws were not developed during the “Child Care System Reform”, but technical assistance will be provided for their development during the continuation of the reform (IPA 2014), as follows:

1. The bylaw on minimum standards of socio-educational and counseling and therapeutic services;
2. The bylaw on licensing of professionals;
3. The bylaw on accreditation of training programmes.

The texts of the bylaws were, unfortunately, significantly shortened and the norms have been left very strict without further elaborations, which is typical for so called “soft law” characteristically applicable for the social sector domain. The issue occurred in the course of MoLSW legal department’s discussions with the Secretariat for Legislation. As regards the bylaw on CSWs, which introduces case management, this shortcoming will be overcome in the course of the training where additional tools are being provided. As regards the bylaw on foster care, the Guidelines for CSWs on the implementation of the bylaw on foster care were developed and shared with the relevant professionals. For other bylaws, mitigation strategies will be identified in the first quarter of 2015. UNICEF and UNDP already held several consultative meetings with MoLSW regarding this issue.

In addition to the development of secondary legislation, MoLSW requested support by one of UNICEF’s key policy and legislation experts to the process of development of the *Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System 2013-2017* by the official working group. The Strategy was adopted by the Government of Montenegro in June 2013.

Annexes: Secondary legislation on professional activities in the social and child protection sector (in English language, unofficial translation); secondary legislation on the organization of CSWs (in English language, unofficial translation); secondary legislation on foster care (in English language, unofficial translation); secondary legislation on shelters and emergency reception units (in Montenegrin language); *The Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System* (in Montenegrin language).

3.1.3 Organization of Roundtables for Presentation of the revised Law on Social and Child Protection

The public discussions of the Law on Social and Child Protection were organized to make the process of development and finalization of the Law more transparent and participatory.

During the “Child Care System Reform” implementation, four roundtables were held, the first one in Podgorica to announce the process of development of the new Law in May 2011, and three across Montenegro in February 2012 as part of the public discussion. In consultation with the MoLSW it was agreed that a final conference was no longer necessary as key aspects of the Law had already been covered by the various workshops and events held. However, key provisions of the new Law were highlighted at all events held following the adoption of the Law by the Parliament, including at the national conference on deinstitutionalization held on 16 July 2013, shortly after the adoption of the Law.

3.1.4 Establishment of the Institute for Social Welfare and Capacity Building

The new Law on Social and Child Protection envisages the establishment of the Institute for Social and Child Protection which will provide effective and coordinated monitoring, evaluation and supervision of the quality of work of professionals and services, standardization, licensing of professionals and accreditation of programmes as well as analytical and research activities.

The Institute was established in 2014 (*Official Gazette of Montenegro* 17/2014), furnished by the Government of Montenegro, while the electronic equipment was provided through the “Child Care System Reform”. It was expected that the Institute will become operational by

the end of 2014, when staff will be recruited, and the training for staff provided under the continuation of the reform (IPA 2014). However, all was delayed because of the long administrative procedures for recruitment – the recruitment is expected to be done in the first two months of 2015. This training was originally envisaged within the “Child Care System Reform”, but could not take place due to the delays in staff recruitment (due to the elections in spring 2014, and the Institute could not be established sooner due to the delays in the finalization of the Law on Social and Child Protection).

The “Child Care System Reform” also contributed to the establishment of the Institute through advocacy for the establishment of a separate Institute rather than a department of the MoLSW to cover these functions (see activity 3.1.1.), and an international expert was engaged to develop the proposal on the establishment of the Institute with job descriptions.

In addition, a study visit to a selected EU Member State with extensive experience in managing similar knowledge/resource centres in the area of social and child protection was envisaged. Northern Ireland was selected as a good example of the reform of the child care system (and comparable in size to Montenegro) and it was decided that the purpose of the visit should be broadened to include visiting various child protection services, particularly small group homes, in addition to visiting the Social Care Council of Northern Ireland (with functions comparable to the Montenegrin Institute). The visit took place in February 2014 for representatives of MoLSW (including the Minister) and UNICEF.

Annexes: Proposal on the establishment of the Institute for Social Welfare and the PowerPoint presentation of the report (in Serbian language); Agenda of the study visit to Northern Ireland.

3.1.5 Development of Child Protection Standards and a Monitoring System

This activity aimed to ensure that all social and child protection services provided to children and families meet certain requirements according to international standards; and that these services are provided in a standardized manner.

The following standards were developed by multi-sectoral working groups with technical assistance of international consultants engaged by UNICEF in 2012: the draft standards on foster care (which have been integrated into the bylaw on foster care), the draft standards on shelters and emergency units (which have been integrated into the bylaw on shelters and emergency units), and the draft standards on day care centres (which have been integrated into the draft bylaw on community based social and child protection services).

Upon request of the MoLSW, in 2013 UNICEF provided technical assistance for development of a Concept Note on Small Group Home Service in Montenegro including financial projections of the service (see also Activity 3.3.3.). This document served as a reference for the working group and the consultants engaged by UNICEF who worked on the development of minimum standards of quality of residential care for children and youth, which includes small group homes. This bylaw was in the final stage of development at the end of the “Child Care System Reform”.

Annex: Concept Note on Small Group Home Service in Montenegro (in English language).

3.1.6 Development of National and Local Databases on Child Protection

One of the highlights of the project and a cornerstone of the reform is the development of the Child Protection Database, conceptualized as a modern, user-friendly electronic database facilitating quality and efficiency in service provision and enabling statistical analyses,

monitoring of reform progress and evidence based policy making and programme design.

The Child Protection Database, linking all CSWs at the local level and the MoLSW at the central level, was developed by two international experts through a consultative process with stakeholders, and the software solution by a local IT company, in the period 2011-2012. It was launched at a press conference in March 2013 but it has been in use since January 2013. As of 25 June 2014, it contained over 17,400 entries (active cases from all years, not only new entries from 2013). The database includes several components including information on the beneficiary, information on measures and services provided to the beneficiary, statistics page and indicators page (the values of these internationally recognized indicators are calculated automatically by the software and will be used to monitor progress in the reform).

Training was provided on multiple occasions to professionals on the use of the database, while the training on evidence-based policy making will be provided to MoLSW, the Institute for Social and Child Protection representatives and directors of CSWs under the next phase of the reform “Continuation of the Child Care System Reform” (Bridging Initiative, IPA 2014 reserves), considering that thus far in this sector data has been used to a very limited extent in policy and programme planning.

Annex: The list of child protection database indicators (in English language, unofficial translation).

3.1.7 Support to Local Plans of Action in at least 5 municipalities of Montenegro, and mapping of child protection services in all municipalities in Montenegro

A Local Plan of Action for Children (LPA) is a strategic document outlining general municipal policy relating to children for a defined period, along with priority measures and activities that ought to be implemented so that all girls and boys grow up healthy, educated, protected and able to develop to their full potential, particularly those who are in need of special protection, in line with the UN Convention on Rights of the Child and the National Plan of Action for Children.

Under the “Child Care System Reform”, a multi-sectoral local team, including representatives from the education, social welfare and health sectors, civil society and children, developed the LPA of Cetinje in 2011, based on a thorough and participatory analysis of the situation, which was carried out through 17 focus groups with local stakeholders including children. The Municipal Assembly of Cetinje adopted the LPA in 2012. One of the objectives of the plan was the establishment of the Day Care Centre in Cetinje, operational since 2013.

Five additional municipalities were supported in the process of publication and promotion of their LPAs, namely Rozaje, Bar, Bijelo Polje, Kotor and Ulcinj (for Ulcinj in both Montenegrin and Albanian languages).

In order to support evidence based transformation of the system and targeted planning and development of family and community based services, an activity was added to the Project, namely the mapping of existing and needed child protection services at the local level. One international and one local consultant have been engaged for the execution of this task but long term Project consultants were also involved in field work due to the extensive scope of this activity. The report was finalized in 2013 and its findings were particularly useful for the finalization of the Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System (2013-2017).

Annexes: LPA Cetinje (in Montenegrin language); The report on mapping of child protection services in Montenegro (in Montenegrin language).

The table below shows the status in the achievement of the expected result against objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs).

Expected result 1: The Child Care System has a policy and legal framework harmonized with international standards and the Institute for Social Welfare is established to standardize and ensure quality child care services.

OVI - Law on Social and Child Protection compliant with international standards by the end of 2013.

Status - The Law on Social and Child Protection broadly aligned with international standards and adopted by the Parliament in May 2013. *Target achieved.*

The Institute for Social Welfare officially established and functional by 2014.

100% of Institute staff trained and operational by July 2014.

The Institute for Social and Child Protection was established in early 2014 but did not become operational during the “Child Care System Reform” (due to delays in establishment of the Institute and then spring 2014 elections), hence the training of staff could not take place. *Target partially achieved.*

Secondary legislation for the Law on Social and Child Protection including Child Protection Standards created by July 2014.

At least 50 Social Welfare professionals participated in the process of development of secondary legislation and Child Protection Standards and corresponding training by July 2014.

At least 50 NGO representatives participated in the process of development of secondary legislation and Child Protection Standards and corresponding training by July 2014.

Five bylaws were adopted within the “Child Care System Reform”, and one additional draft developed. Three bylaws were postponed for autumn 2014 (and will be developed during IPA 2014). There were 153 participants involved in the process of development of these documents, of which 13 NGO representatives. *Target partially achieved.*

Local and national Child Protection databases created by end 2012

The child protection database was developed in 2011/2012 and has been in use since January 2013. As of 25 June 2014, it contained over 17,400 entries (active cases from all years, including new entries from 2013). *Target achieved.*

At least 5 Local Plans of Action for children supported by July 2014.

Since 2011, one LPA was adopted (in Cetinje) and five more supported in promotion (Bar, Bijelo Polje, Rozaje, Kotor and Ulcinj). *Target achieved.*

3.2 Capacity Building and Prevention of Institutionalization of Children

3.2.1 Development of the Protocol on increased intersectoral collaboration for the prevention of institutionalization and provision of alternative services

Prevention of institutionalization requires a holistic approach and efficient and effective cooperation between several sectors, in particular the social and child protection, education and health sectors.

An intersectoral working group consisting of representatives of the social welfare, education and health sectors (including policy makers and practitioners) with the support of UNICEF international expert developed the document entitled *The Protocol on intersectoral cooperation for the prevention of child abandonment* in 2013-2014. The Protocol was signed

in April 2014 by the MoLSW, the MoH and the MoE. The Protocol was subsequently presented to approximately 80 professionals from the three sectors.

The Protocol outlines the responsibilities of each sector in considerable detail, however, further support to the implementation of the Protocol will be provided under IPA 2014, with particular focus on the role of the health sector and linkages with the social protection and education sectors, which has in the previous period been rather weak.

Annex: The Protocol on intersectoral collaboration for the prevention of child abandonment (in Montenegrin language).

3.2.2 Training of Social Welfare Professionals on Assessment and Care Planning

Rights in social welfare and child protection in Montenegro are basic cash benefits and social and child protection services (Law on Social and Child Protection 2013, Article 11), which are provided by Centres for Social Work (CSWs) at the local level, making their reform instrumental to the reform of the entire social welfare and child protection system.

In preparation for the reform of CSWs, UNICEF engaged an international expert in the second half of 2011 to undertake an assessment of current practices and organizational structures of CSWs. The expert produced a report which was critical for the finalization of the new Law on Social and Child Protection, essential for the development of secondary legislation on CSW organization and standards of work and the bylaw on professional activities, as well as for planning capacity building activities for CSWs.

In May and June/July 2014, a pilot phase of the training on case management was implemented. Initially it was planned to pilot the methodology in 2 to 3 CSWs, however, this strategy proved not to be feasible considering that the process of development of the new systematization of work places was ongoing in all CSWs. Instead, 19 professionals from CSWs across Montenegro, who were identified by MoLSW as the “champions of change”, were trained by two international experts. Scaling up of the case management methodology to cover all CSWs will be implemented under IPA 2014.

Additionally, a study visit to a neighbouring country which has already accepted and applied case management methodology was envisaged. Slovenia was selected as a good example, comparable in size to Montenegro and with similar heritage in the social welfare system. The visit took place in July 2014 for representatives of CSWs (mostly directors), one representative of MoLSW and one of UNICEF, and it focused on the reform of CSWs but also more broadly on the reform of the child protection system.

In addition, a comprehensive family counselling training was provided in 2011/2012 to selected CSW professionals with the aim to enhance the capacity of centres for social work in supporting families in their care giving role and preventing separation of children from their families. Four workshops were held with 19 professionals – including 17 from CSWs (which comprises 10% of total professional workforce in CSWs across the country), and facilitated by international experts engaged by UNICEF. The training programme complies with standards of the European Association Psychotherapy (EAP) and European Association for Family Therapy (EFTA). Certificates were awarded to 18 successful participants, in a ceremony held in June 2013.

Annexes: Assessment of CSWs organization and capacities (in English language, unofficial translation), family counselling training programme (in Montenegrin language), case management training programme (in Montenegrin language); Agenda of the study visit to Slovenia.

3.2.3 Training of Professionals from the Health Sector on Support to Vulnerable Mothers

Health workers are frequently the first of point of contact of the system with a vulnerable pregnant woman or parent hence the health workers' role in supporting them and referring to other services needs to be promoted and strengthened.

Prior to the implementation of this capacity building activity, the MoH requested an assessment of the procedures and practice in maternity wards and relevant health services with a focus on the health professionals' communication with/support to vulnerable mothers and cooperation with the social protection sector, so as to better identify the training needs of these professionals (this study was funded by UNICEF using other resources). Four high-level international experts were engaged by UNICEF and the assessment was finalized in late 2011.

Two of the above international experts and one local expert were subsequently engaged to prepare and deliver a part of the recommended training programme (general training on the prevalence of institutionalization and consequences for the child, preventative strategies and the roles of each relevant sector, ethics, and child rights). The training was delivered in March 2012 to approximately 100 health and social welfare professionals from all Montenegrin municipalities. The training provided inputs for the *Protocol on intersectoral cooperation for the prevention of child abandonment* (see activity 3.2.1.).

As mentioned above, additional training will be organized especially targeting the health sector as part of additional support to be provided to the implementation of the *Protocol* under IPA 2014.

Annex: Assessment of support services in maternity wards and relevant health services (in English language, unofficial translation).

3.2.4 Training of Members of the local Commissions for Orientation of Children with Special Educational Needs

The Commissions for Orientation of Children with Special Educational Needs are an inter-sectoral mechanism functioning at the local level, which on the basis of an assessment of a child with special educational needs proposes the most adequate educational programme and the necessary support for the child to access education.

UNICEF engaged international technical assistance to support the MoE in the process of finalizing the bylaw on the work of the Commissions for orientation of children with special educational needs, which was adopted in late 2011. The planned training of members of the 18 commissions from across Montenegro were organized in March 2012, supported by the abovementioned international expert and two local consultants. In addition, the two local consultants, supported by the long term Project consultant (defectologist by training), visited all local Commissions twice in 2012 with the aim to provide additional practical support to their work. Additional training was provided to the Commissions as a result of the findings and recommendations made on these occasions, and these were organized by UNICEF in 2013 using UNICEF's other resources.

The table below shows the current status in the achievement of the expected result against OVIs.

Expected result 2: Capacity of professionals in the child care sector is enhanced and

vulnerable children and families have improved access to quality preventive and inclusive family and community-based services as an alternative to institutionalization.

OVI - Protocol of inter-ministerial cooperation formalized by end of 2013.

Status – The Protocol developed and signed in April 2014. *Target achieved.*

Case management piloted in at least 2 centres for social work by the end of 2014.

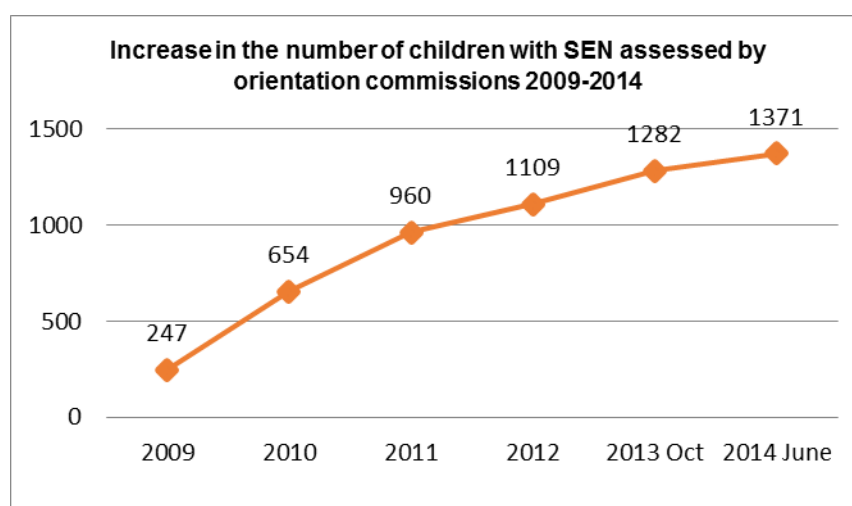
Bylaws developed, including concerning case management. Case management piloted in early 2014. *Target achieved (although strategy changed, from piloting in CSWs to training champions of change).*

10% of professional workforce in centers for social work trained on family counselling and received certificates by the end of 2013.

10% of professional workforce in centers for social work trained on family counselling and received certificates in June 2013. *Target achieved.*

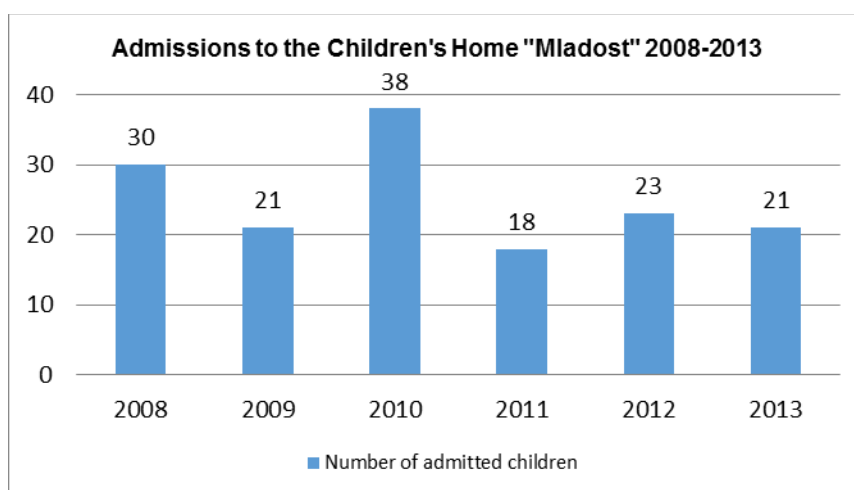
Number of children with special educational needs assessed by Commissions for Orientation of Children with Special Educational Needs increased by 100% by July 2014 (baseline: 654 at the end of 2010, i.e. before the project start).

Between 2010 and July 2014, there was a 110% increase in the number of children with special educational needs referred by Commissions for assessment and orientation of children with special educational needs (SEN), as shown in graph below (source: MoES December 2013, updated September 2014). *Target achieved.*



The average admissions of children into “Mladost”, Bijela institution reduced by 10% by the end 2013 (baseline: 31.5 admissions per year on average by the end of 2010, i.e. before the project start).

The average admission to “Mladost”, Bijela institution has decreased by 20% (average admission between 2008 and 2013 is 25.17). *Target achieved.*



3.3 Family and Community Based Services

3.3.1. Deinstitutionalization of children residing in the Institute 'Komanski Most'

De-institutionalization has been at the heart of the child care system reform in the country, with a special sense of urgency in relation to the children residing in the institution Komanski Most, until recently an institution accommodating both children and adults with learning and combined disabilities.

Under the "Child Care System Reform", staff in the children's pavilion of Komanski Most and CSW representatives were supported in the process of revising children's individual care plans with a view to deinstitutionalization. One international expert from the UK's Intensive Interaction Institute was engaged in late 2011 to support staff who previously did not receive training in communication and work with children with profound disabilities and to assess children's progress since this work method was introduced with the support of UNICEF in 2009. Another international expert was engaged towards the end of 2011 to support the revision of the children's care plans, which incorporated the assessments of the Intensive Interaction expert, information received after the social workers' visits to children's families and conclusions reached during the consultative process of revision. The care plans thus made were broadly in line with case management, even though case management was officially introduced only in 2013 (see activity 3.1.2.). UNICEF experts subsequently supported relevant professionals in the process of revision of the children's individual care plans once in six months.

As a result of the care planning, significant progress has been made in strengthening contact with the children's parents. Two children (siblings) made the first contact since placement with their family in cooperation with their CSW and visited their family accompanied by Komanski Most care staff. Another child also made the first contact since placement with the child's mother, who is now visiting her child regularly. In the case of two more children, contact with the parent/sibling intensified.

A draft operational plan of transformation of the children's pavilion was developed and shared with MoLSW, and in parallel UNDP and UNICEF supported MoLSW in developing the draft plan of transformation of the adult pavilions through a Delivering as One initiative (in 2011/12 by UNDP with the support of UNICEF, which was adopted in late 2013).

In accordance with MoLSW plans, Komanski Most is now an institution for adults with learning disabilities, and the children's pavilion closed in 2014. Unfortunately, due to the delays in the establishment of alternative services for children in Komanski Most, the closure of the pavilion cannot be ascribed to a deinstitutionalization process in line with international standards. Namely, there were ten children in the Children's pavilion when the "Child Care System Reform" was launched, of which five children aged out over time and moved to the adult pavilions in late 2013/early 2014. MoLSW and the institution made the decision to transfer young adults from the Children's pavilion to the adult pavilions, in order to ensure safety of the children still resident in the Children's pavilion and this was monitored by UNICEF. One child passed away during the 2012 influenza outbreak. Two children who will turn 18 in 2014 and 2015 respectively (the latter has a sibling who is already in the adult pavilion) also moved to the adult pavilion but they now spend full day at the Resource Centre "1st June" instead of attending morning classes only. Two youngest children moved to the Resource Centre "Podgorica", and their progress was assessed very positively by a team of international experts who were engaged to provide training on the preparation of children for changing placement (see activity 3.3.3.). It is possible that they will be residents of the first small group home to become functional in the first half of 2015 (see activity 3.3.3.).

3.3.2. Transformation of 'Mladost' Bijela Institution for Children without Parental Care

The Children's Home "Mladost" in Bijela for children without parental care is the largest child care institution in Montenegro hence its transformation is inextricably linked to the reform of the entire system.

The beginning of the "Child Care System Reform" initiative coincided with the process of drafting the Master Plan of Transformation of Child Protection Services led by the NGO Lumos in partnership with UNICEF and the Government of Montenegro. The draft Master Plan was developed in an intersectoral workshop held in March 2011 based on an assessment of the system conducted in 2010, and was presented to an intersectoral group of stakeholders in September 2011 with mixed success. This was followed by study visits to the United Kingdom organized for representatives of the education sector (in late 2011) and social welfare sector (in May 2012), funded by Lumos. Unfortunately the Plan was not adopted for several reasons, mostly due to the fact that the Plan was overly ambitious while the capacities of the system were too weak at the time, which resulted in weak ownership of the process especially on the part of the MoLSW. The draft Master Plan did however intensify the debate on deinstitutionalization and influenced the course of the reform, and was used, along with the assessment of the system conducted in 2010, as a valuable source of information for consultants engaged in the process of the reform.

UNICEF subsequently focused efforts on advocating for and supporting the development of the Operational Plan of Transformation (OPT) of the Children's Home "Mladost". A draft OPT of the children's home was developed by a working group consisting of representatives of the MoLSW, the Institution and CSW and with the support of UNICEF international consultant in the period July 2013 – March 2014. The OPT is based on the initial draft plan developed by the Institution representatives and an advisor from the MoLSW in 2012, demonstrating commitment and ownership by the Institution of the transformation process. MoLSW committed to finalizing the plan in autumn 2014.

Even though the OPT has not yet been adopted and hence implemented, there has been a significant reduction in the number of children in Bijela. There were 154 children in 2010, 116 children at the end of 2013, and 96 in July 2014. The number of children aged 0-3 was steady between 2008 and 2011 averaging at 25 children resident in a year, subsequently, the number began decreasing dramatically, with only 4 children aged 0-3 placed in July

2014. This reduction is due to the reduced admissions (by 20%), increased level of discharge, intense capacity building of CSWs (see activities 3.2.2, 3.2.3., 3.3.5 and 3.3.7.) and key staff from Bijela (involved in a number of activities including in relation to the development and promotion of foster care and prevention of institutionalization) and above all growing awareness, understanding and commitment to deinstitutionalization at all levels. The interministerial conference held in November 2012 in Sofia, organized by UNICEF regional Office and OHCHR, and the national conference on deinstitutionalization organized as part of the “Child Care System Reform” in July 2013 provided opportunities for the Government of Montenegro to publicly reaffirm commitment to deinstitutionalization.

The “Child Care System Reform” envisaged upgrading the process of supporting older children graduating from the institution “Mladost”, and more broadly from formal care, based on the recognition that leaving care is a particularly sensitive and challenging for youth, and that youth in Montenegro leave care insufficiently prepared for independent life (according to MoLSW and child rights NGOs). Unfortunately this activity was not implemented due to the difficulties in recruiting adequate technical support and tight deadlines for the deliverables as the project was nearing its end. This activity has been postponed for autumn 2014, to be carried out under IPA 2014.

Annex: Draft Operational Plan of Transformation of ‘Mladost’ Bijela.

3.3.3. Support to the Establishment of Small Group Homes for Children

A small group home (SGH) is an alternative to large scale institutions for children requiring residential care, with the purpose to provide adequate care in a family-like setting, in an open community, and with more focused attention of the carers in a smaller group, resulting in greater chances that children will be prepared to the highest possible extent for independent life and be able to develop to their full potential.

The first SGH in Montenegro was constructed in April 2014 in Bijelo Polje, with the financial assistance of the EUCOM through the American Embassy in Montenegro. UNICEF provided support to MoLSW in finalizing the proposal for the construction of the SGH and in gathering the necessary legal documentation for the construction to begin. Also, under the “Child Care System Reform” the SGH was equipped. The SGH unfortunately did not become operational by the end of the initiative, officially due to the local elections in 2014 and the inability to hire staff. However, the commitment to the establishment of SGHs should certainly be stronger (please refer to the “Challenges” section). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the financing of the SGH was not signed between the local authorities and MoLSW by the end of the project, but only in December 2014. Under the continuation of the reform (IPA 2014) UNICEF will monitor the situation to ensure that the SGH becomes operational as early as possible. In addition, UNICEF has agreed with MoLSW and UNDP to allocate a part of the funding that MoLSW transferred to UNDP for the continuation of the reform, for the training of SGH staff, or any additional needs such as the development of internal procedures or the preparation of children for the move. UNICEF held a preliminary meeting with the CSW Bijelo Polje concerning the possible residents of the SGH in Bijelo Polje based on the children’s individual care plans. UNICEF will also invest efforts in advocacy for the identification of the locations where additional SGHs can be constructed (unfortunately only one SGH, rather than two as initially planned, was secured under the “Child Care System Reform”).

It is worth noting that in 2012 and 2013, UNICEF supported with own resources CSWs’ visit to Montenegrin children residing in Serbian institutions, with the support of an international expert (for the first visit) as well as the local long-term project consultant (for the first and second visit) and accompanied by a representative of the MoLSW. Children’s individual care

plans were revised, and it is expected that some of these children will be placed in the first SGH. As in the case of Komanski Most children (Activity 3.3.1.) significant progress has been made in terms of re-establishing contact between children and their families and one child eventually returned to her family in April 2014. However, the commitment to deinstitutionalizing children from Serbia is not uniformly shared within the MoLSW.

In June 2014, a team of international experts were engaged to provide support to CSWs staff in the preparation of children changing placement in the light of the changes in placement of some children until then and MoLSW's future plans on deinstitutionalization (in the form of a three day training and hands-on support provided to the carers of children who recently changed placement). A one day workshop was also held for the members of the local Commission for Orientation of Children with Special Educational Needs.

Annex: Photos of the SGH.

3.3.4. Support to the Establishment of a Network of Day Care Centres for Children with Disabilities

Day care centres (DCCs) are local services where children with severe disabilities can benefit from a professional therapeutic environment during working hours, while living with their families, where they belong.

Significant support was provided to the network of DCCs across Montenegro. In terms of training, the basic training on DCC functioning was organized for: Pljevlja (in partnership with the local association of parents of children with disability "Ray of Hope") Igalo in Herceg Novi municipality (in partnership with the DCC), Plav, Ulcinj, Berane and Cetinje (between 2011 and 2014), and advanced training on DCC functioning was provided to selected representatives of all functional DCCs in June 2014. Selected staff from "Mladost" institution took part in some of these training sessions upon request of MoLSW. It is worth noting that additional training outside of this project was provided to several DCCs on autism (those that were functional at the time).

As regards the provision of equipment, it was procured for the following DCCs: Pljevlja and Niksic (sensory rooms), Plav, Mojkovac, Cetinje and Podgorica (virtually fully equipped). The following diagram maps the functional DCCs, all of which were supported in one way or another during the "Child Care System Reform". Joint training sessions also provided opportunities for the networking between DCCs.

DCCs in Montenegro



Unfortunately the DCC in Mojkovac did not become operational during the initiative, due to the local elections in 2014 and the inability to hire staff, according to the local authorities and MoLSW. Under the continuation of the reform (IPA 2014) UNICEF will monitor the situation to ensure that the DCC becomes operational as early as possible. In addition, UNICEF has agreed with MoLSW and UNDP to allocate a part of the funding that MoLSW transferred to UNDP for the continuation of the reform, for the training of staff of DCCs which are to be established in the forthcoming period (please see above map).

Finally, as per the decision of the Project Steering Committee, a significant portion of funds originally intended for supporting child protection services within the Social Innovation Fund (see activity 3.3.6.) was allocated to the renovation of the premises to serve as the DCC in Podgorica. A MoU between MoLSW, the Capital City, UNDP and UNICEF was signed in early 2014, spelling out the contributions and responsibilities of each party (UNICEF using EU funding, MoLSW also contributed with funding to be administered by UNDP, UNDP made a financial contribution, and the Capital City made non-monetary contributions). During the process of renovation, additional expenses emerged, most of which have been covered (please refer to the minutes of 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Project Steering Committee meetings enclosed with this report). Under the continuation of the reform (IPA 2014) UNICEF will monitor the situation to ensure that the DCC becomes operational as early as possible (expected in January 2015 as the construction and equipping was finalised in December 2014).

It is worth noting that the number of children and youth with disabilities in DCCs increased more than four times between 2009 – 2012 (from 30 in 2009 to 126 in July 2014).

Annex: MoU between MoLSW, the Capital City, UNDP and UNICEF on the rehabilitation of the premises to serve as the DCC in Podgorica.

3.3.5. Promotion and Implementation of fostering

While kinship care has been relatively widespread in Montenegro, non-kin foster care was extremely rare until the “Child Care System Reform”, hence significant efforts needed to be invested in promoting this type of family based care.

In 2011, an international expert was engaged by UNICEF to support the working group in the development of the *Strategy on the Development of Foster Care in Montenegro 2012-2016*. Following two intense workshops held in November 2011 and February 2012 the text was finalized and the Strategy adopted in March 2012, and presented to over 50 stakeholders in June 2012. The expert also provided valuable inputs to the new Law on Social and Child Protection which was being drafted at the time, in order to enhance the legal framework for the development of foster care (introducing various types of foster care services, standardization of foster care, licensing of foster carers and improved benefits for foster carers), in line with the specific objectives of the Strategy.

As part of the implementation of the Strategy, a team of five international experts were engaged to deliver basic training on fostering consisting of 5 modules (promotion of foster care, contemporary approaches to foster care, foster care standards, assessing prospective foster families and assessing children’s needs). The first two modules were delivered to a wider profile and greater number of professionals (approximately 70, including representatives of relevant ministries, municipal authorities, all CSWs, and civil society) while the latter ones targeted social welfare professionals. The whole training programme was delivered between July and November 2012. Subsequently, in February 2013, an advanced training for selected CSW professionals was delivered in three sessions. As a result, 23 CSW and 2 MoLSW professionals became trainers of foster families, and were awarded certificates in June 2013. In June 2014, the certified CSWs professionals took part in two-day interactive workshops on training foster families including practical workshops with current and prospective kinship and non-kin foster carers. During those sessions the preparation of children for foster care was identified as an issue, hence a training on this topic will be organized for CSW and “Mladost” representatives during the continuation of the reform (IPA 2014).

Also, during the continuation of the reform (IPA 2014), specialized training will be provided to CSWs professionals on the different types of foster care introduced by the Law on Social and Child Protection 2013, namely: foster care with intensive support (frequently called specialized foster care), emergency foster care, and respite foster care.

In addition to the training of professionals, it is worth noting that the bylaw on foster care was adopted in 2014 (see 3.1.2.), that the Guide for foster carers was developed and published in July 2014 (to be used in training foster carers), and that guidelines for CSW professionals for the implementation of the foster care bylaw were developed in July 2014 and finalized and shared with the CSWs in autumn 2014.

Details on the implementation of campaign “Every child needs a family” are described in activity 3.3.7. below.

Annex: *Strategy on the Development of Foster Care in Montenegro 2012-2016* (in Montenegrin language); draft guidelines for CSW professionals for the implementation of the foster care bylaw (in Montenegrin language); *The Guide for foster carers* (in Montenegrin language) can be downloaded from http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media_9983.html.

3.3.6. Support to the establishment of child protection services

The shift from institutional to community-based care requires the development of a continuum of sustainable and inclusive child protection services at the local level.

In July 2011, two UNDP and two UNICEF project team members undertook a study visit to Serbia to learn about their experience in piloting the Social Innovation Fund, a grant mechanism supporting innovative service provision at the local level. Following the visit, UNICEF project team members participated in the short listing of grant proposals for adult services in the three rounds administered by UNDP in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Echoing UNICEF's concerns about the sustainability of the supported services, it was recommended by the Mid-term Evaluation of the project (see relevant section below), and subsequently agreed by the Project Steering Committee in March 2013 (5th meeting) to use the funding originally envisaged for SIF grants (120,000 EUR) for the development of sustainable child protection services identified as priority by the MoLSW. At the Project Steering Committee held in November 2013, it was decided that 70,000 EUR of the amount envisaged for this budget line would be used for the rehabilitation of facilities which will serve as the Day Care Centre for children with disabilities in Podgorica, while MoLSW would cover the rest of the expenses (see 3.3.4.). In the end, due to additional unforeseen expenses, UNICEF contributed with approximately 110,000 EUR (based on the Project Steering Committee approval, see minutes of the 8th and 9th meeting).

3.3.7. Promotion and awareness raising activities on the overall reform process and on social inclusion and family and community-based services

Special attention was paid to promoting and raising awareness of the general public about the overall reform process and family based care in particular in order to promote the social inclusion of some of most vulnerable children in Montenegrin society.

Events organized within this initiative were covered by the media (print, electronic, television), and/or published on the UNICEF Montenegro website and Facebook and Twitter pages. However, most resources and efforts were invested in the mass campaign "Every Child Needs a Family".

The campaign was planned to take place in the fall 2012, however, it had to be postponed for 2013 due to the parliamentary elections which were held in October 2012 (also meaning that the new Government was established in only December 2012), and the delay in the finalization of the Law on Social and Child Protection which was seen as key and a prerequisite for the success of the campaign (see Activity 3.3.5.). The campaign was hence implemented between September 2013 and January 2014. It was launched by the Prime Minister of Montenegro, Head of the EU Delegation and UNICEF Montenegro Representative on 19th September 2013.

CSWs were instrumental in the implementation of the campaign, having organized in total 48 open days in all municipalities across Montenegro. Some open days had special guests or contributors, such as the famous British actor Mr. Nicholas Lyndhurst (visit funded by UNICEF using other funds), the internationally renowned professor of forensic and child psychology Prof dr Kevin Browne, the famous Montenegrin singers Mr. Sergej Cetkovic and Ms. Nina Zizic, UNICEF Montenegro Goodwill Ambassador Rambo Amadeus, and UNICEF high level officials (UNICEF Regional Director for CEE/CIS Ms. Poirier and UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Ms. Gupta, whilst UNICEF Montenegro representative visited at least one open day in each municipality). As for child participation, during the campaign 20 children

participated in the making of so called One-Minute Juniors on the right of the child to a family environment. The most successful of these short films have been shown at various events during the campaign, including open days. In addition, 28 kinship carers or non-kin foster carers and 16 young people who used to be fostered participated in the open days in order to share their compelling personal stories.

The results of the campaign, which was assessed as very successful, were presented in a special event hosted by the Prime Minister of Montenegro at Vila Gorica on 31st March 2013. The so-called Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys implemented on a nationally representative sample before and after the campaign (in December 2012 and January 2014) demonstrated positive changes in attitudes of inhabitants toward foster care as opposed to placement in an institution: four out of five people in Montenegro now believe that it is better for a child without parental care to be placed in a foster family rather than in an institution. The number of children in foster care has been increasing with 321 children in kinship care and 35 children in non-kin foster care in July 2014 (compared to only 9 children in non-kin foster care in 2010). This number continued growing, thus in December 2014 there were 329 in kinship care and 42 children in non-kin foster care.

Further efforts will be invested in the future in the recruitment of foster families in order to reach the target set out in the *Strategy on the Development of Foster Care in Montenegro* (July 2014: 27 non-kin foster families, December 2014: 31, target by the end of 2016: 55 families).

I am a foster carer. I would like to tell you something about myself and what motivated me to become a foster carer.

I am a teacher. I have worked with children for many years and gave them my love and respect unselfishly because “love gives strength to children” and children have to be our priority above anything else. In front of the Centre for Social Work which is in my neighbourhood, I would often see unhappy children, torn between their moms and dads and their pain was hard for me, but this feeling culminated one day when I was watching a TV show on children without parental care.

Namely, the journalist asked the children “What would you like to get from Santa Claus?” One child responded “Mom and dad!” Deeply moved by this child’s wish, with tears in my eyes, I watched the children eating cake, smeared on their faces, yet they had a sad look in their eyes and no joy. I immediately thought of taking one child into care. However, my son convinced me to take two children by saying “Well, mom, you of all people should know how difficult it is to grow up alone.” (I was the only child to my parents, my son is an only child as well). I accepted his suggestion and for quite some time I’ve been waking up happy knowing that I have made two lives happier, that I have provided kindness and love, which is given back to me in return as well. After all, is there anything nicer than being told “you are our love, joy, happiness and thank you for taking us from the [children’s] home”. I have enriched my life and the life of my family and made friends with children whom I hadn’t known before. Seeing them grow up happy in a loving family environment is what makes me fulfilled and happy. I will now tell you a short story:

After a sunny day, a strong wind made the waves cast out thousands of fish on the hot sand. The fish helplessly try to get back into the sea. Two men are passing by and one of them says: “What a pity, so many fish will die”. The other one, approaching him, bends down and throws something into the sea. When they meet the first one says: “Excuse me, I see you are throwing the fish back into the sea, but you cannot save them all”. The other man replies, while throwing the fish back into the sea and walking: “I cannot save them all, but these I can.”

*Nada, foster carer,
excerpt from her speech at the launch of “Every child needs a family”
September 2013*

Media releases concerning the fostering campaign can be accessed at http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/15868_24752.html.

The table below shows the current status in the achievement of the expected results against OVs.

Expected result 3.1: Capacity of professionals in the child care sector is enhanced and vulnerable children and families have increased access to quality inclusive family and community-based services;

Expected result 3.2: The general public is increasingly aware and sensitized on the child care system reform, social inclusion and family and community-based care.

OVI - 100 % of children in Komanski Most de-institutionalized by July 2014

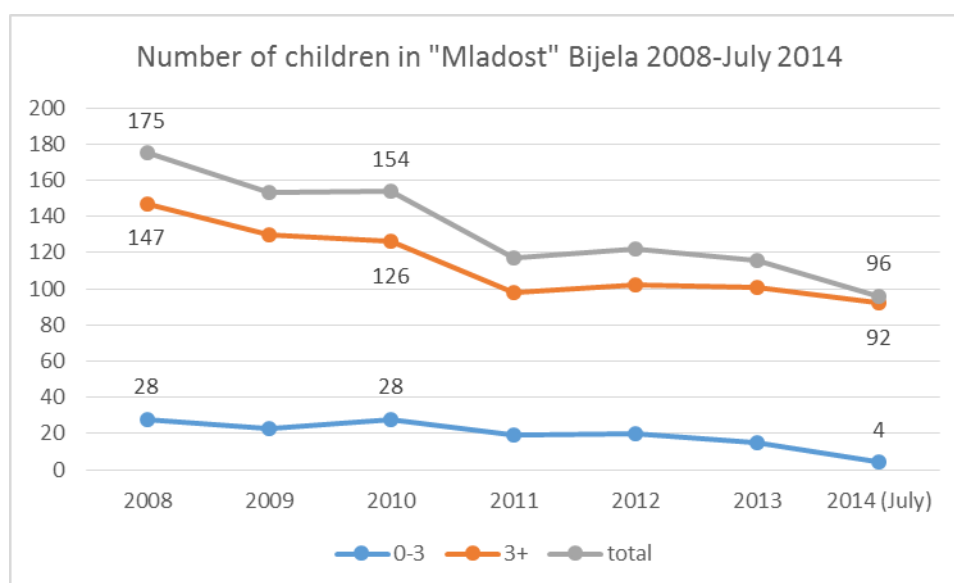
Status – The Children’s pavilion closed, however, the children did not move to alternative services in line with the principles of deinstitutionalization. *Target partially achieved.*

30 % of children from ‘Mladost’ Bijela aged 0-3 de-institutionalised by July 2014 (baseline: 28 children in 2010, i.e. before the project start)

20 % of children from ‘Mladost’ Bijela aged over 3 de-institutionalised by July 2014 (baseline: 126 children in 2010, i.e. before the project start).

The number of children aged 0-3 has decreased by 86% since 2010, whilst the number of children aged 3 and

above has decreased by 27% compared to the baseline. *Target achieved.*



100% increase in the number of children attending Day care centres by July 2014 (baseline: 53 children in 2010, i.e. before the project start).

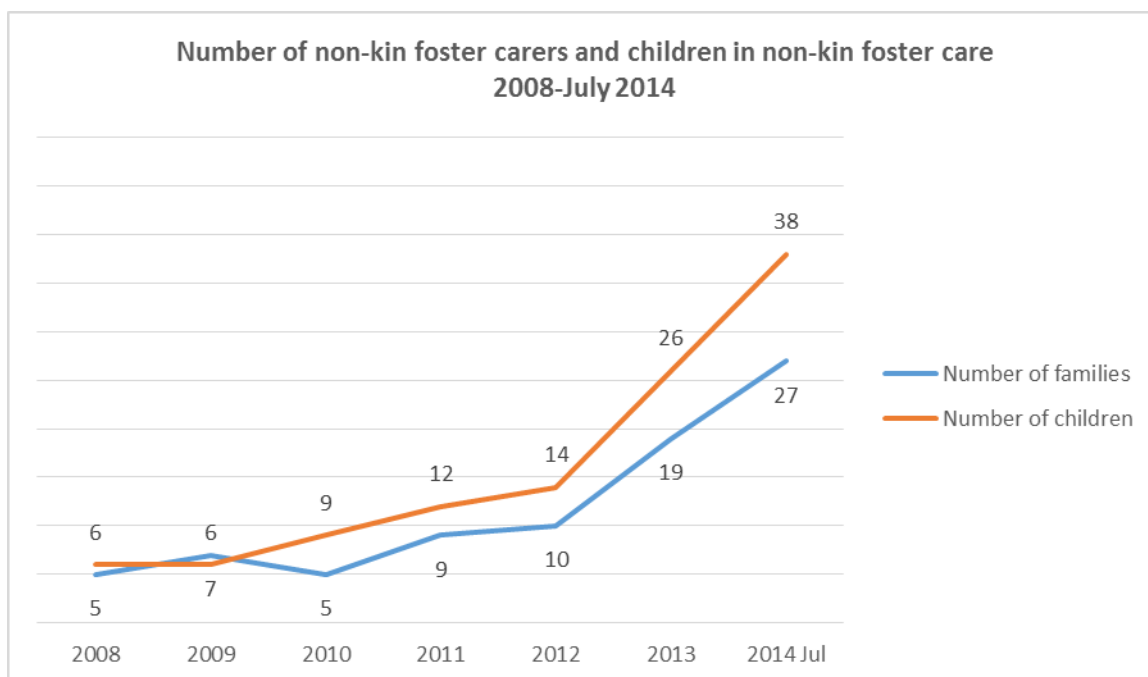
The number of children and youth attending day care centres has increased by 140% since 2010 (from 53 children in 2010 to 126 in July 2014). There are eight operational DCCs across Montenegro: Bijelo Polje, Niksic, Herceg Novi, Pljevlja, Plav, Ulcinj, Cetinje and Berane (Mojkovac DCC will be operational soon). *Target achieved.*

At least 2 Small Group homes established and operational by July 2014.

The first small group home was constructed and furnished but has not yet become operational. *Target partially achieved.*

At least 300% increase in the number of non-kin foster families identified and trained by July 2014 (baseline: 5 foster families in 2010).

The number of non-kin foster families has increased by 22 families or by 440% compared to the baseline (there were 27 non-kin foster families in July 2014). *Target achieved.*



Improved health and development of children participating in the de-institutionalization process by July 2014 (documented in individual care plans).

Improved health and development of children has been observed and documented through the regular revision of individual care plans, as a result of training of staff, introduction of new work methods, provision of specialized equipment, renewed contact with children's families etc. *Target achieved.*

More than 60% of people think that children should be placed in a foster family rather than in an institution after the fostering campaign.

At least 60% citizens noticed the campaign "Every child needs a family", by January 2014.

Campaign implemented. 83% people think that children should be placed in a foster family rather than in an institution after the fostering campaign. 87% citizens noticed the campaign "Every child needs a family", by January 2014.

Visibility Activities

The "Child Care System Reform" project paid special attention to ensuring EU and UNICEF visibility.

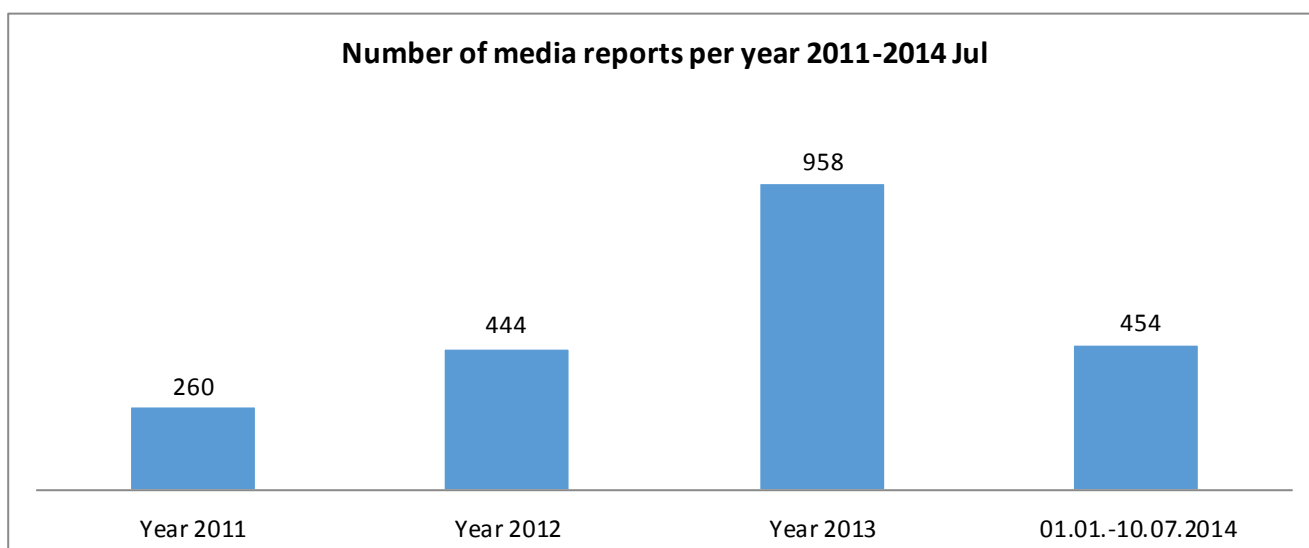
High level representatives of the EU Delegation participated in a number of special events and press conferences organized within the project, most notably the launch of the project (held on 22nd February 2011), roundtables on the Law on Social and Child Protection (held in May 2011 and February 2012), presentation of the Strategy for the Development of Foster Care in Montenegro (June 2012), mid-term review roundtable (November 2012), launch of the Child Protection Database (March 2013), launch of the campaign "Every child needs a family" (September 2013) and presentation of the campaign results (March 2014) hosted by the Prime Minister of Montenegro.

In the opening remarks at all events (public events or closed such as training sessions and meetings), implementing partners and basic information about the Project were mentioned, and partners' logos (including EU flag) as well as the title of the project were used on banners at events as well as on invitation letters and accompanying agendas. Brief information about the implementing partners and the Project were outlined in vacancies advertised in daily press and on UNICEF Montenegro website.

Folders and notepads with all implementing partners' logos as well as the title of the project were designed, printed and disseminated at all events, while stickers with EU logo were printed for the equipment procured through the Project (Project office, the Institute for Social and Child Protection, a number of day care centres and the Small Group Home in Bijelo Polje). The project office plaque was designed and posted on several locations in the building where the Project Office was located (between April 2011 and May 2014). EU templates for communication products have been followed and shared with the EU Delegation and the beneficiary (primarily the MoLSW) for approval prior to being used.

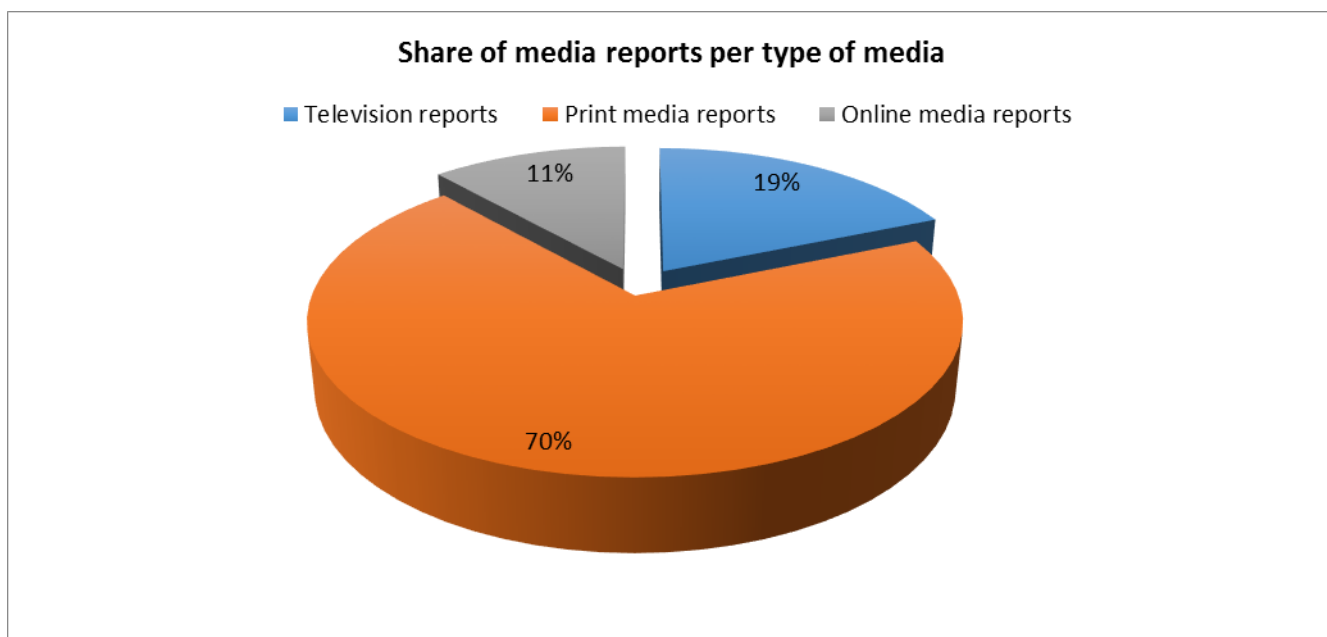
Particular attention was paid to EU visibility during the mass media campaign "Every child needs a family", implemented between September 2013 and January 2014, with a special event showcasing the results of the campaign held in March 2014. Visibility activities, aside from the two high level press conferences included press releases, broadcasting of a video spot on all TV stations in Montenegro (free of charge), printing of leaflets explaining what foster care is, publishing of the Guide for foster carers, organization of 48 open days by centres for social work across Montenegro, where EU visibility guidelines were respected.

In total 2,116 media reports were published about the "Child Care System Reform" between 10 January 2011 and 10 July 2014⁸, as shown in the graph below:



Not surprisingly, most media reports were published during 2013 and 2014 as a result of the campaign "Every child needs a family". During the reporting period, most media reports were published in print media, followed by television, and then online media, as shown in the chart below:

⁸ Charting report developed by Arhimed in September 2014, which included the following media: televisions (TVCG, TV Vijesti, Atlas, Pink M, Prva, Montena, MBC), print media (Vijesti, Dan, Pobjeda, Dnevne novine, Blic Crna Gora, Vecernje novosti, Monitor), and online media (Café del Montenegro, Analitika, Bankar.me). Each media report is counted on its own right (even if several media agencies report about the same news/topic).



During the implementation of “Child Care System Reform”, 22 stories about the reform (both in Montenegrin and English) were published on the UNICEF Montenegro website. When Facebook posts are added to this figure, the total number of web stories and Facebook posts was 90.

Finally, the joint work of the Government and the UN system in Montenegro in the area of social welfare and child care system reform, was effectively presented and communicated to the EU counterparts through the joint presentation of UNICEF and UNDP Representatives, together with the Montenegrin Chief Negotiator in February 2014 in Brussels.

Annexes: Media Coverage Report, visibility material, photos, links, etc.

Mid-term and final evaluations of the project

During the implementation of the “Child Care System Reform”, a mid-term evaluation (November/December 2012) and final evaluation (May 2014) were conducted.

The mid-term evaluation covered components 2 and 3 of the Social Inclusion Project (“Social Welfare Reform” and “Child Care System Reform”) and was conducted by a high level international expert during November/December 2012 with the aim to provide recommendations for the most effective continuation of the project and the reform process based on an assessment of the implementation of the two components to date. More specifically, the mid-term evaluation:

- 1) Assessed the relevance of the intervention, the progress against planned results and objectives, and the expected sustainability of project benefits beyond the lifetime of the project;
- 2) Provided reflections on the system’s capacity to manage, implement and monitor the reform process;
- 3) Identified good practices, lessons learned and gaps in the approaches to the reform;
- 4) Provided recommendations for potential improvements in the project until its finalization, as well as recommendations concerning the continuation of the reform processes beyond this project.

In addition to conducting interviews with stakeholders, a mid-term review roundtable was held on 27 November 2012, in which more than 70 project stakeholders participated and unanimously agreed that the project is highly relevant for Montenegro and that the reform of the social and child protection system must continue in the coming years. Based on the findings of the report⁹ finalized in early 2013, UNDP and UNICEF requested no-cost extension of their components by 12 months, which was granted by EUD in April 2013.

The final evaluation covered only component 3 of the Social Inclusion Project (“Child Care System Reform”) and was conducted by an international agency specializing in evaluations in the spring 2014, with the purpose to evaluate its final results. More specifically, the final evaluation:

- 1) Provided feedback to UNICEF Montenegro and counterparts on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Project approach in strengthening the capacities of the Child Care System in implementing the reform for the benefit of the most vulnerable and excluded children and families;
- 2) Extracted general lessons learnt and recommendations aimed at further enhancement of the “Child Care System Reform”;
- 3) Provided the EUD with information on the impact of their specific support to the reform of the system.

Data was collected from project documentation, relevant literature and reference documents, interviews with key stakeholders at the national and local levels, focus groups, discussion groups and site visits to a representative sample of municipalities. The report¹⁰ was finalized following the final Project Steering Committee meeting where it was presented on 4th July 2014. Like the mid-term evaluation, the final evaluation found the “Child Care System Reform” extremely relevant for the realities in Montenegro and supported the continuation of the reform¹¹.

The Project officially ended on 10 July 2014, but it had been agreed by MoLSW, EUD and UN agencies that the reform needed to continue in line with Montenegro’s roadmap for EU accession. To this end, a request was submitted by MoLSW for further financing of the reform by the EU through IPA II modality. In the meantime a funds for bridging period were granted by EUD in August 2014 as “Support to Montenegrin Social Reform” (IPA 2014), with two complementary components:

1. Component 1, implemented by MoLSW and UNDP, entitled “Continuation of the Social Welfare Reform in Montenegro” (50,000 EUR EU contribution¹²),
2. Component 2, implemented by MoLSW and UNICEF, entitled “Continuation of the Child Care System Reform in Montenegro” (in total 300,000 EUR with 200,000 EU contribution and 100,000 EUR UNICEF contribution).

Annexes: Final report of the mid-term evaluation of components 2 and 3 of the Social Inclusion Project (“Social Welfare Reform” and “Child Care System Reform”) and final report

⁹ Arkadi Toritsyn PhD. 2013. Mid Term Evaluation of the „Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform: Enhancing Social Inclusion” Project: Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform Components. Unpublished report.

¹⁰ Promeso Consulting Ltd. 2014. Final Evaluation Report (07 July 2014): Final Evaluation of the “Child Care System Reform” IPA 2010. Unpublished report.

¹¹ According to the final evaluation, “external support is crucial for the continuation of reforms especially at local level until rights-based foundations of practices and procedures are built and capacities are in place to ensure that laws and systems run effectively” (Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 74).

¹² In addition MoLSW will transfer in total 350,000 EUR by 2015 to UNDP for the continuation of the reform until December 2015 (see MoLSW press release <http://www.minradiss.gov.me/vijesti/138957/SAOPsTENJE-Nastavak-reforme-sistema-socijalne-i-djecije-zastite.html>, accessed 4 July 2014).

of the final evaluation of component 3 of the Social Inclusion Project (“Child Care System Reform”).

2. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This action is built upon a decade of efforts of MoLSW to reform the child care system, but rather than using a piecemeal approach, this intervention adopted a **systematic approach to the reform of the system**, at the level of policy and legislation, at the level of strengthening of the institutional framework including through capacity building, at the level of service provision in line with international standards and the level of awareness raising.

A number of activities were undertaken to this end with a significant investment of **human and financial resources** (including UNICEF non-project staff and resources). It is also worth noting that activities that UNICEF has been implementing outside of the framework of this project complemented and contributed to the reform of the child care system, including the reform of the justice system for children, education system, activities advancing quality in the health care system, support to the development of national policies, monitoring mechanisms, data collection and research etc.

As anticipated, a significant number of project activities required the provision of external technical expertise. It has in fact proven necessary to provide more technical expertise than initially anticipated, with the intention to contribute to building an effective social protection system for children by enabling local professionals to acquire new knowledge and practices of work. For instance, selected CSW professionals received certification in family counseling and as trainers of foster carers, having attended comprehensive training programmes led by two teams of international experts. The case management training has been delivered to a first group of professionals, in line with the adopted bylaws and will also be certified and scaled up to cover professionals in all CSWs.

The provision of external technical expertise was particularly valuable for the drafting of legislation and policy documents in line with international standards, the reform of the institutional framework (CSWs and the Institute for Social and Child Protection), capacity building of professionals, transformation of child care institutions, the development of the foster care services and the evaluation of the project progress and impact. Aside from the provision of external technical expertise for specific activities, two consultants (one at senior level) were engaged to assist the Ministry in the implementation of the project, and an additional one as a consultant for activities relating to deinstitutionalization and the provision of community based services.

This project has included **the provision of essential equipment** for the functioning of new services, including for the establishment of community based services for children without parental care and children with disabilities – day care centres and the small group home service, and the Institute for Social and Child Protection.

Project activities were complemented by a **strong communication component**. The mass media campaign promoting foster care “Every child needs a family” combined visits by celebrities, expert presentations on the harm of institutionalization, and practical information about the national procedures for becoming foster carers, through print and electronic media, television and radio, and ceremonial and public events such as open days organized by CSWs.

UNICEF key strategy has been to **cultivate sustainable partnerships** with a wide range of stakeholders including policymakers, child care and social work professionals, NGOs and to

ensure participation of children (for instance, the production of One Minute Juniors, activity 3.3.7.). UNDP was also a major partner in this project as the implementer of the second component of the Social Inclusion Project and in the light of some complimentary activities (the development of bylaws for instance). The main project partners included:

- MoLSW,
- Ministry of Education,
- Ministry of Health,
- Centres for Social Work,
- Children's Home "Mladost" and other relevant child protection/care institutions,
- Municipalities, and the Union of Municipalities,
- The Prime Minister's cabinet,
- Ombudsman's Office of Montenegro,
- Parliament of Montenegro (relevant Parliamentary Committees),
- NGOs (associations of parents of children with disabilities, Child Rights Centre, Forum MNE, etc.),
- UNDP and other UN agencies,
- Other international organizations, diplomatic representations etc.

To support additional project sustainability, UNICEF has paid particular attention to **securing and confirming clear ownership of the project by its stakeholders** – notably the MoLSW. This was ensured through participatory and transparent development, planning, implementation and monitoring of activities, the development of consultants' Terms of Reference and training materials, preparation of lists of participants in events, execution of concrete activities and sharing of consultants' deliverables and reports and providing and obtaining feedback.

Furthermore, the MoLSW has had a coordinating role in all activities and has been central to providing overall policy directions for the reform process. However, challenges have been identified in the limited capacity of MoLSW to implement the reform at the pace envisaged by the Project (elaborated in Section 3 below).

This project aimed to **strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination** between the MoLSW, MoES and MoH for the prevention of institutionalization of children deprived of parental care and/or children with disabilities and the development of alternative family and community-based services. This can be exemplified by activities such as the development and signing of the *Protocol on intersectoral cooperation for the prevention of child abandonment*, organization of joint training sessions and the intersectoral workshops for the development of the draft Master Plan of Transformation of Child Protection Services.

The **Project Steering Committee meetings** provided an important opportunity for information exchange across sectors aiming to improve the quality of the Social Inclusion Project and enhance the process of implementation of the reform through monitoring, supervision and decision-making. The Committee was composed of representatives of:

- MoLSW,
- MoE,
- MoH,
- MoF,
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations,
- the Union of Municipalities,
- EUD,
- UNICEF and UNDP.

In total nine Steering Committee meetings were held during project implementation. For the purposes of monitoring progress, MoLSW and UNICEF prepared briefs and documents outlining the status of activities, the progress in the achievement of results using the Logframe indicators and a budget overview, prior to each Steering Committee meeting. At the final Steering Committee meeting it was decided that the Steering Committee will continue to convene in the framework of the continuation of the project under IPA 2014.

As outlined in the previous section, due credit and **visibility** was given to the EU for contributing to this intervention. UNICEF systematically informed all partners that funding was provided by the EU. UNICEF did its utmost to promote the EU's name and image in association with the intervention, in the local press and/or on its website and social media channels.

Annexes: Minutes of the Project Steering Committee meetings (9 meetings)

3. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Components 2¹³ and 3 of the Social Inclusion Project were due for completion by 10 July 2013; however a no-cost project extension was granted until 10 July 2014 (Addendum no 1, dated 12 April 2013). In addition, in August 2014, a continuation of both components of the reform was ensured through so-called bridging - reserve funds of IPA 2014 for the period from August 2014 to January 2016.

UNICEF's commitment to ensuring the government's full involvement at every stage of the process, and to conducting policy making processes in an open and transparent manner has meant that the original timelines envisaged for some activities were over ambitious, and it has been necessary to adjust the project's pace to better reflect the capacity constraints and needs of the main stakeholders, i.e. the MoLSW. . In particular, the processes of revision of policies and legislation necessitated the central involvement of the MoLSW, and limited resources within that Ministry resulted in a relatively small number of individuals being burdened with participation in multiple working groups and drafting processes, inevitably slowing down the overall workflow of activities and in turn resulting in delays in implementing subsequent activities. This refers in particular to the Law on Social and Child Protection which was adopted only in May 2013, finally creating the preconditions for the implementation of other activities, such as the development of secondary legislation, preparations for the establishment of the Institute for Social and Child Protection, capacity building of professionals to implement the new legal framework and implementation of the mass media campaign "Every child needs a family".

Additional delays occurred at the beginning of the project as the inception period coincided with the Government's **writing of the Action Plan** to meet the seven priorities for the opening of negotiations for accession to the European Union; during the first two years of project implementation due to several **personnel changes at higher political levels** (at the MoLSW and the MoH) and a reluctance by respective ministries to fully commit to the implementation of project activities until replacements were officially installed; in mid-October 2012 due to the Parliamentary **elections** and May 2014 due to the local elections in 12 municipalities, when public events could not be organized to avoid the risk of lack of media space or misuse of events for the purposes of election campaigns or when services could not be established due to the ban on the employment of public servants.

The numerous changes in the social and child protection system brought by the reform proved to be challenging for the rather **limited professional capacities in the system**. For instance, MoLSW negotiations with the Secretariat for Legislation significantly delayed the process of development of bylaws, which were also considerably shortened. In the case of the foster care bylaw a mitigation strategy was adopted, namely to develop detailed Guidelines for CSW professionals (a Guide for foster carers has also been published). UNICEF, UNDP and MoLSW will continue dialogue on identifying the most appropriate forms of support that can be provided to professionals in the implementation of other bylaws and these discussions will be joined by the Institute for Social and Child Protection once operational.

The limited capacity in the social welfare sector in general in the country also became apparent in the process of recruitment of project team members, where the senior-level consultant seconded to MoLSW was engaged only in September 2011, following repeated selection procedures. However, the reform itself has brought important contribution to the

¹³ Component 2: Social Welfare Reform, implemented by MoLSW and UNDP.

capacity development in the MoLSW and across the administration in a number of critical areas from social welfare reform to child care systems reforms and international norms and standards in this area.

MoLSW has over time shown growing commitment to the overall reform, and this was confirmed by the final project evaluation¹⁴. Growing commitment to the process of deinstitutionalization in particular has also been observed among child protection professionals, and also noted by the final project evaluation¹⁵. However, the **commitment to deinstitutionalization** at the operational levels of MoLSW still appears to be ambivalent. As the final evaluators noted, “in general, *MoLSW stronger push is needed towards the deinstitutionalisation process*”¹⁶. This particularly refers to the delays in the finalization of the Plan of Transformation of “Mladost”, Bijela and delays in the development of alternative community based services such as small group homes (as a result of which the closure of the Children’s Pavilion in Komanski Most has not been done in a fully satisfactory manner, and there is still a high proportion of children with disabilities in large scale institutions in Montenegro and neighboring countries – Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Practical implementation of the project has also been hampered by the **financial crisis** which has negatively impacted the development of new services. New services commonly require costly investments in infrastructure and the recruitment of new workforce. This can be exemplified by the delays in the establishment of the DCCs despite strong MoLSW commitment, as well as the small group home (in addition, only one rather than two as was envisaged by the project was constructed). Although the government has been able to raise funds for the construction works in several cases (e.g. DCCs Cetinje, Berane, Mojkovac and partly for DCC Podgorica) and the construction of the SGH was funded by the USA Embassy, while the project provided funds for furnishing/equipping and a large part of the rehabilitation works on the DCC in Podgorica, reaching agreement with the local authorities on the financing of running costs has proven challenging particularly in relation to the SGH in Bijelo Polje. Local recruitment procedures and the lack of funding frequently resulted in time gaps between the ceremonial opening of a DCC and the day it actually began functioning (i.e. welcoming children).

The fate of the Institute for Social and Child Protection was also uncertain for a long time, due to the reluctance of the MoF to agree to the establishment of this new institution in times of crisis and reform of public administration. In early 2013 however, MoLSW was able to reach an agreement with MoF on establishing an independent institution rather than a new department at the MoLSW.

Related to the financial crisis and the involvement of MoF in the reform process, it has been noted that **MoF should have a stronger role in the reform of the social and child protection system**, by being more accommodating to the transitional costs of the reform of

¹⁴ “Political commitment for the reform supported by the Project boosted with the appointment of the new MoLSW leadership early 2013. The new Minister and his team managed to include the setting up of the most-needed Institute for Social and Child Welfare in the new law adopted in 2013 (which raised long discussions and negotiations with the MoF and did not figure in the first draft submitted to the Parliament) and to fundraise for the continuation of reform with the Government and the EU, with the full support of NIPAC, UNICEF and UNDP”. Source: Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 71 (emphasis in original).

¹⁵ “Most importantly, the capacity building actions, on the background of new legal provisions, rulebooks and standards, had a major contribution to the change of mindsets and consequently of attitudes and work practices: *in the past, the CSWs staff believed that institutionalisation is the best option for children left without parental care, a belief which has been reversed with the contribution of the Project*”. Source: Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 50 (emphasis in original).

¹⁶ Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 53 (emphasis in original).

services and an increase in financial benefits. The new leadership of the MoLSW seems to be more successful compared to their predecessor in negotiations with the Ministry of Finance (as evidenced by the establishment of the Institute for Social and Child Protection and the budget line for the development of services, as well as MoLSW's intentions to increase financial benefits once savings are generated through the Social Card)¹⁷.

The **health sector** played a more active **role** in the project particularly in inter-sectoral activities: the development of the Protocol and the training of health and social protection personnel on baby abandonment. The professionals interviewed by the final evaluators stated that "the Project introduced new ways of thinking in the health sector. Health workers are more aware of their 'social' role, more able to recognise the social risk and better networked with colleagues from other sectors"¹⁸. Notwithstanding this achievement, more work needs to be done to enhance cooperation between the health and the social and child protection sectors and to enhance understanding across the health sector of their important contribution to the reform of the social and child protection system¹⁹.

As regards the involvement of another key stakeholder, i.e. **civil society organizations**, they have not participated in the policy making process to a satisfactory extent, despite UNICEF's calls for stronger representation of civil society in working groups established by the MoLSW. Non-governmental organizations are important service providers and their stronger involvement in the reform process would be beneficial for the reform, as noted by the final evaluation²⁰.

The reform of the social and child protection system has **coincided with the introduction of the so-called Social Card** (Social Welfare Information System - SWIS). This presented an additional burden on the system in particular on the CSWs, which have rather weak capacities, which are undergoing reorganization and which are instrumental to the implementation of the new legal framework (see Activity 3.2.2.). UNICEF is now investing efforts in ensuring that the Child Protection database is integrated into the Social Card database (the amount of data stored in the Social Card will be larger but key elements of the Child Protection database such as indicators and statistics "filters" will need to be introduced in the Social Card to enable data analysis and monitoring).

It needs to be noted that the EU accession process has been "a key facilitating factor"²¹ **in the implementation of the reform, and that the involvement of the EU Delegation in the project through Steering Committee Meetings, at public events, in discussions about the continuation of EU support to the reform, and in discussions with the MoLSW, MoF, UNDP and UNICEF about the Law on Social and Child Protection greatly enhanced the results and impact of the project.**

The key lessons learned are as follows:

¹⁷ The so-called "over-rigid formula for budgetary allocations" is not unique to the Montenegrin MoF. The multi-country evaluation of the child care system reform in CEE-CIS countries revealed an underdeveloped relationship between the Ministry of Finance and the line ministries responsible for child welfare services, "which was sub-optimal in a reform environment" (Pluriconsult Ltd. "Child's Right to a Family Environment: Multi country evaluation of results achieved through child care system reform 2005-2012". Unpublished draft evaluation report to UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS, 23 September 2014. P. 52).

¹⁸ Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 48.

¹⁹ In fact, across the CEE-CIS region, coordination with the health sector has been assessed as "not well developed" and as "one of the most significant factors hindering more effective and complete reform within the child care system" (Pluriconsult Ltd. Ibid. P. 64).

²⁰ Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 71, also see p. 59.

²¹ Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 45-46.

1. Demonstrating flexibility in the design and implementation of the project²²

The implementation of the mid-term evaluation of the components “Social Welfare Reform” and “Child Care System Reform” was an important activity in the project, which provided a strategic moment of reflection on the direction of the reform²³. It showed a clear need for the continuation of the reform and its recommendations were integrated in the request for no-cost extension of the project and the addendum of the Description of the Action. For example, instead of implementing the Social Innovation Programme, UNICEF redirected the envisaged funds to the support to sustainable child protection services with clear buy-in by the Government and local authorities – most of these funds were redirected to the establishment of the DCC in Podgorica.

2. Adapting to the changes in time schedule

The delay in the adoption of the Law on Social and Child Protection caused delays in the implementation of certain activities, however, some activities were implemented in parallel to the process of drafting the Law and this in fact proved to be beneficial. For instance, the parallel development of the Strategy for the Development of Foster Care in Montenegro, the Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System, the draft standards of a number of child protection services and the initial working group sessions on the bylaw on CSW reorganization and work standards, provided important inputs to the text of the Law and enabled coherence between the legal and policy documents. This also meant that during the development of the Law on Social and Child Protection experts in various fields were on contract and were able to contribute to the development of the text of the Law.

3. Recognition that the reform is very demanding on the system and requires more time

The final evaluation of the project found the project “commendable for pushing the reform forward and tackling the system in its complexity”²⁴, however it also expressed concern that the project was overly ambitious for the given time frame and the ability of the system to absorb changes. It may also be noted that building ownership of MoLSW of the reform took a long time and the building full commitment to deinstitutionalization at all levels will require additional work. In view of the aforementioned, the no-cost extension of the project by 12 months proved to be necessary, as well as the continuation of the reform through IPA 2014 to consolidate the achieved results and to implement activities that were not implemented during IPA 2010.

²² Also see Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 43 and 90.

²³ Arkadi Toritsyn. Ibid. Also see Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 57.

²⁴ Promeso Consulting Ltd. Ibid. P. 42. Also see p. 90.

FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

The continuation of the “Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform-Enhancing Social Inclusion”, reform proved to be of outmost importance for consolidation of the reform progress and results and has been set as a high priority in the country’s accession process to the EU. It has, therefore, been carefully planned and agreed among the main project partners in a short and long run as follows:

1. **Through the Bridging intervention** (August 2014-January 2016), which has been provided from IPA 2014 reserves, and consists of the two components, component 1 implemented by MoLSW and UNDP “Continuation of the Social Welfare Reform in Montenegro” and Component 2 implemented by MoLSW and UNICEF “Continuation of the Child Care System Reform in Montenegro”.

“Continuation of the Social Welfare Reform in Montenegro” is expected to achieve the following results: **Result 1 – Leadership, planning, implementation and monitoring of the reform process strengthened**

By strengthening leadership, programme and financial planning, implementation and monitoring of the reform process by MoLSW, MoLSW will have stronger capacities for managing the reform of the system, increasing impact and sustainability of the initiated reform process. As will be described in the activities section below, capacity building of MoLSW is a complex and lengthy process but essential foundations will be laid in the course of this intervention. Investing in capacity building of MoLSW was recommended by both the mid-term and final evaluation of IPA 2010.

The achievement of this result will be monitored using the following indicator:

Indicator 1: At least 80% professionals in the Directorate for Social and Child Protection with strengthened capacity in evidence-based leading, planning, implementing and monitoring the reform process by the end of 2015.

Data collected for the purposes of monitoring the above indicator will be gender disaggregated, taking into account the gender structure in MoLSW’s Directorate for Social and Child Protection.

Result 2 – Legislative and institutional framework strengthened and coordination enhanced for the provision of quality social and child protection services and to prevent institutionalization

During IPA 2010, the reform of the legislative and institutional framework have been initiated but a significant amount of work remains to be done. The Law on Social and Child Protection needs to be fully operationalized through secondary legislation to be fully implementable. Capacity building of the CSWs who are presently undergoing significant restructuring and of the Institute for Social and Child Protection which is yet to become operational are essential in order to ensure effective social work interventions and efficient provision of quality social and child protection services. During IPA 2010, coordination between the social welfare, education and health sector has been formalized through the protocol on intersectoral cooperation for the prevention of institutionalization, but further efforts need to be invested to ensure its adequate implementation. Notable achievements have been made with regard to promoting non-kin foster care, but further efforts need to be made to reach the targeted number of non-kin foster families and to improve the quality of care in foster care in general.

The achievement of this result will be monitored using the following indicators:

Indicator 1: Three bylaws developed by July 2015.

Indicator 2: At least 80% professionals in the Institute for Social and Child Protection with strengthened capacity to perform functions prescribed by Law (in line with training needs assessment) by the end of 2015.

Indicator 3: At least 100 relevant professionals in centres for social work with strengthened capacity in case management²⁵ by the end of 2015.

Indicator 4: At least 100 health professionals with strengthened capacity in communication with vulnerable pregnant women/parents by the end of 2015.

Indicator 5: At least 20 professionals in centres for social work with strengthened capacity in the provision of specialised, emergency and respite fostering as per the Law on Social and Child Protection by the end of 2015.

All data collected for the purposes of monitoring the above indicators will be gender disaggregated (for Indicators 2, 3, 4 and 5, however, it is important to note that the social and child protection sector is female dominated and that a higher ratio of trained females to males is to be expected).

Result 3 – Increased availability of and access to quality child protection services

The child care system reform implies significant changes in the system response to child vulnerability, a shift from institutional to community-based care. The prevention of separation of children from their families, the prevention of admissions to child care institutions and the process of transformation of child care institutions (including finding alternative placements for children currently resident) requires a continuum of child protection services in order to adequately respond to the diverse needs of children.

The achievement of this result will be monitored using the following indicators:

Indicator 1: At least one service (socio-educational, counselling, therapeutic, or crisis intervention as an alternative to institutional care) established in “Mladost”, Bijela institution by the end of 2015.

Indicator 2: One small group home and at least 2 new day care centres opened and operational by the end of 2015.

As described above, the Government of Montenegro has submitted a proposal for financing the continuation of the social and child care system reform under IPA II, while this intervention is seen as bridging the gap between IPA 2010 and IPA II, using IPA 2012 reserves. The future reform of the social and child care system will therefore be a continuation of this intervention. MoLSW is leading the reform process and is the main partner and beneficiary of IPA 2010, Bridging intervention and IPA II if approved, therefore securing continuity of the reform.

2. In order to ensure continuation of the reform process in the long run and foster its sustainability the Government of Montenegro has submitted the application for continued EU assistance through IPA II funding (2014-2020) for so called “**Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform**” which has defined the following results that are expected to be achieved by 2020:

²⁵ Individual planning, effective implementation and regular monitoring and revision of plans with enhanced gatekeeping and referral mechanisms.

Result 1- Strengthened capacities of social and child protection system institutions for the development of social and child protection services in line with minimum standards as per the new legal framework

Indicator 1: Professionals in charge of planning and implementing activities pertaining to social policy, development, monitoring, supervision, evaluation and control of services in 3 institutions (MLSW – Directorate for Social Welfare and Child Protection, including the Division for the Development of Social Services in Municipalities, Institute for Social and Child Protection, Social Inspection) strengthened by end of 2017;

Indicator 2: Minimum 15 training programmes developed and submitted for accreditation and adoption by end of 2017;

Indicator 3: Licenses issued to at least 70% needed professionals in the social and child protection sector by end of 2017;

Indicator 4: Minimum 30 licenses issued to service providers by end of 2017.

Result -2: Priority social and child protection services established and accessible to socially vulnerable persons in line with national strategies and local plans for social inclusion

Indicator 1: Coverage of municipalities by social and child protection services increased by 50% (services supported through the Action);

Indicator 2: The rate of children admitted to the Institution for children without parental care “Mladost”, Bijela decreased by 40% by the end of 2017 (baseline: 25 admissions on average between 2010 and 2013, target 15 admissions on average *between 2014 and 2017*);

Indicator 3: By end 2017 Bijela has no children under three years of age and the number of children aged three years and above decreased by 45% (baseline 91 at the beginning of May 2014, target 50 at the end of 2017);

Indicator 4: By end 2016 additional family and community based services established resulting in: 40% increase in the number of children in non-kin care (baseline 30 children in May 2014, target 50 children by the end of 2017), 60% increase in the number of children in Day Care Centres for children with disabilities (target 69 children aged up to 18 at the end of May 2014, target 109 at the end of 2017); at least 15 children placed in SGHs by end 2017 (baseline 0 in May 2014).

4. FINANCIAL UTILIZATION

The final financial report against the contractual budget is attached.

LIST OF ANNEXES

- 3.1.1. The Law on Social and Child Protection (in English language, unofficial translation).
- 3.1.2. Secondary legislation on professional activities in the social and child protection sector (in English language, unofficial translation); secondary legislation on the organization of CSWs (in English language, unofficial translation); secondary legislation on foster care (in English language, unofficial translation); secondary legislation on shelters and emergency reception units (in Montenegrin language); secondary legislation on residential placement of children and youth, including SGHs (in Montenegrin language) ; The Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System (in Montenegrin language).
- 3.1.4. Proposal on the establishment of the Institute for Social Welfare and the PowerPoint presentation of the report (in Serbian language); Agenda of the study visit to Northern Ireland (in English language).
- 3.1.5. Concept Note on Small Group Home Service in Montenegro (in English language).
- 3.1.6. The list of child protection database indicators (in English language, unofficial translation).
- 3.1.7. LPA Cetinje (in Montenegrin language); The report on mapping of child protection services in Montenegro (in Montenegrin language).
- 3.2.1. The Protocol on intersectoral collaboration for the prevention of child abandonment (in Montenegrin language)
- 3.2.2. Assessment of CSWs organization and capacities (in English language, unofficial translation), family counseling training programme (in Montenegrin language), case management training programme (in Montenegrin language); Agenda of the study visit to Slovenia (in English language).
- 3.3.3. Assessment of support services in maternity wards and relevant health services (in English language, unofficial translation).
- 3.3.2. Draft Operational Plan of Transformation of 'Mladost' Bijela.
- 3.3.3. Photos of the SGH.
- 3.3.4. MoU between MoLSW, the Capital City, UNDP and UNICEF on the rehabilitation of the premises to service as the DCC in Podgorica.
- 3.3.5. Strategy on the Development of Foster Care in Montenegro 2012-2016 (in English language, unofficial translation); draft guidelines for CSW professionals for the implementation of the foster care bylaw (in Montenegrin language);
Final report of the mid-term evaluation of components 2 and 3 of the Social Inclusion Project ("Social Welfare Reform" and "Child Care System Reform")
Final report of the final evaluation of component 3 of the Social Inclusion Project ("Child Care System Reform").
Minutes of the Project Steering Committee meetings (9 meetings)

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