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Georgia

## UNICEF, REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CEE/CIS

### EVALUATION OF THE

- **Family Support and Foster  
Care Project (FS&FC)**  
and
- **Prevention of Infant  
Abandonment and De-  
institutionalisation Project  
(PIAD)**

### GEORGIA

## EVALUATION REPORT

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# EVALUATION OF CHILD PROTECTION PROJECTS IN GEORGIA

- **FAMILY SUPPORT AND FOSTER CARE PROJECT (FS&FC)**
- **PREVENTION OF INFANT ABANDONMENT AND DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION PROJECT (PIAD)**

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*The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of UNICEF or of the authorities of the concerned country.*

FINAL REPORT

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## ACRONYMS & DEFINITIONS

### ACRONYMS

CEDC	Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances
CO	Country Office
DWG	De-institutionalisation Working Group
ESC	Employment Support Centre
FS&FC	Family Support and Foster Care project
MLH&SA	Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
PIAD	Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation project
SA	Social Assistance
TSA	Targeted Social Assistance

### DEFINITIONS

#### CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

To develop a child protection system based on child rights, UNICEF in CEE/CIS sets forth a "reform framework" for developing a continuum of services to prevent, identify, report, refer, address/treat and provide services to children and families in need or at risk. Without such a continuum of services, the rights of the child cannot be met, nor protected. UNICEF in CEE/CIS countries promotes the concept of a child protection system as a web of inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral provisions, measures, mandates, structures, services and professionals that are guided by child rights standards and are accountable for the quality of services and behaviours towards children and their parents or guardians.<sup>1</sup>

#### GATEKEEPING SYSTEM

Gate-keeping is the system of decision making that guides effective and efficient targeting of services aiming to ensure that the most appropriate services are provided to those who meet specified eligibility criteria. The system is based on the following principles: 1) The best interest of the child 2) proper safeguards for clients' rights 3) fair and clear criteria of entitlement to services in all users groups 4) transparent decision making, verification and control mechanisms 5) efficient use of scarce resources 6) monitoring, evaluation and review of the decision-making process based on the quality of outcome for the client.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF, Resource package on child protection in CEE/CIS.  
[http://ceecis.org/child\\_protection/Regional\\_prog\\_resp.htm](http://ceecis.org/child_protection/Regional_prog_resp.htm)

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Changing minds, policies and lives – Improving protection of children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia - Gatekeeping services for vulnerable children and families, October 2003, p. vi

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

The projects “Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation” (PIAD) and “Family Support and Foster Care” (FS&FC) share a two-fold objective. On the one hand, they aim at preventing additional children from entering residential care, and at de-institutionalising children that are already there, by: (i) addressing the causes of child abandonment, and (ii) creating family-based alternatives to institutional care. On the other hand, they intend to provide a model to encourage the adoption of family and community-based child protection policies at national level.

The FS&FC project was initiated in 2001 by the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), in partnership with EveryChild, and it now covers 5 regions in the country. The project’s components included the employment and training of the first cadre of social workers in Georgia, under the authority of the MoES, and the delivery of gatekeeping services such as fostering and adoption, cash assistance to vulnerable families and foster parents, material assistance and counselling. The target group includes children from age 4 to 18. The total project budget amounted to US\$ 353,219, of which US\$ 125,302 was funded by UNICEF. After May 2004, the MoES has taken over the project.

The PIAD project started in 2002, in partnership with EveryChild, World Vision, the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MLH&SA) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), with the intent to build upon FS&FC services, but with a specific target on children up till the age of 3. The project foresaw the hiring and training of social workers and the delivery of an integrated package of services, including a mother and infant shelter, employment and business support, material assistance, counselling and mediation, fostering, adoption and family reintegration arrangements. The total budget for four years (October 2002 – September 2006) amounts to US\$ 633,400, of which US\$ 119,000 is UNICEF funding. MoES is expected to take over the programme by September 2006.

### Purpose

The projects represent the first effort to introduce alternative child care services in the country. Since they are small scale initiatives, this cannot be expected to make a significant difference in reducing the number of children in institutions. From UNICEF perspective, therefore, the relevant evaluation question is what contribution the projects are making towards the development of a full-fledged gatekeeping system in Georgia. In particular, the evaluation discussed: 1) whether the two projects have succeeded in establishing good practices in gatekeeping, which can have a demonstration effect and be scaled-up; and 2) whether they managed to influence government policies towards adopting a family and community-based approach to child protection.

The complementarity between the two projects justified a joint evaluation, although the analysis also looked at the specific characteristics of each project in terms of implementing agency, age target, strategy and approach.

The evaluation falls at critical stages of both projects’ cycles, at the time when major projects components have just been, or are shortly going to be, taken over by the government. The evaluation is thus expected to provide lessons on what is needed to establish a full-fledged gatekeeping system, assisting therefore the government, UNICEF, and projects’ implementers to fulfil their mandates in this context.

### Methodology

The evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Field instruments included: a) Desk review b) 34 semi-structured interviews with project stakeholders -donors, implementing agencies, project managers, government representatives, experts, projects’ beneficiaries - in the Tbilisi, Batumi, and Kutaisi regions. c) 5 focus groups with social workers in

the same regions. d) Questionnaire administered to 47 mothers benefiting from projects' preventive services in Tbilisi

All key institutional stakeholders, and the totality of social workers, were reached by the evaluation in the 3 selected regions. The qualitative interviews with projects beneficiaries were limited in number as their purpose was to highlight the key-issues to be subsequently addressed by the questionnaire. The sample for the questionnaire is considered representative of the total number of beneficiaries of projects' preventive services. It does not include, however, eligible persons who cannot be reached by the services.

### **Key findings and conclusions**

The Family Support and Foster Care (FS&FC) project and the Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation (PIAD) project have introduced elements of practice that constitute the basis for the development of a full-fledged gatekeeping system in Georgia, including the first cadre of social workers in the country, sound case management practices, and standards for child care services that are becoming the basis for national ones. The multidisciplinary decision-making panels created at regional level constitute one of the promising practices pioneered by the FS&FC project, establishing a mechanism for transparent decision-making in the best interest of the child. The PIAD has introduced innovative practices to handle the complexity of needs of beneficiaries, including shelter and employment support.

The MoES has now taken over FS&FC services. EveryChild's ability to meet MoES requests, and its willingness to raise the Ministry's capacity, was a central element in making FS&FC services part of the government system. In the case of PIAD, the more articulated and expensive approach makes the perspective for government take-over more uncertain, hence the need to single out its more effective components. The sustainability of employment services is particularly at risk, due to the limited MHL&SA support and lack of targeted employment policies in the country.

The projects have been successful in promoting the adoption of a government strategy for reforming child protection services. UNICEF, EveryChild and World Vision have been actively involved in advocacy and capacity building activities, using lessons learned from their projects on the ground. Inter-donor cooperation (including EU as a major player) towards a common goal has been instrumental in achieving results such as the establishment of the Interministerial commission on Child Welfare and De-institutionalisation, the work on standards for alternative child care services, and the government's Optimisation Plan on institutions.

In order to build on the results of the two projects and work towards a full-fledged gatekeeping system in Georgia, a number of challenges will have to be addressed. The definition of institutional mandates and accountabilities for the provision of various types of services is still in progress, and there is no clear indication of which services the government would deliver and which ones would need to be outsourced. In the meantime, priority needs remain unmet, such as day care centres, or services for disabled children. The hasty closure of institutions before such alternative services are in place may have a negative impact on child welfare. Weak inter-agency cooperation, and, particularly, the insufficient MLH&SA involvement, are preventing the development of an effective referral system. In addition, existing mechanisms for public funding to institutions, and the lack of employment alternatives for staff, still provide incentives to institutionalisation. The cultural resistance of institutions' staff constitutes a major obstacle for gatekeeping.

The services established by the projects, although of high quality, present some short-comings that will need to be addressed when going to scale. In particular:

- The follow-up procedures (especially within the FS&FC project) are not adequate to assess the outcomes of services in terms of child welfare.
- There is no system of independent monitoring or audit of project activities, or formalised mechanisms for independent complaint handling.

- The absence of a well-developed and computerised information system at the MoES level, shared by all providers of alternative services and relevant agencies, is an obstacle towards developing effective internal and external monitoring mechanisms.
- The amount of cash assistance provided by the MoES is insufficient to motivate a large number of people to become foster parents.
- Social workers' skills, exclusively focused on child care, may prove insufficient to deal with the complexity of beneficiaries' needs.

### **Lesson learned**

- Cash benefits are not always the right or sufficient instrument to support parents in raising their children. An integrated package of services, including shelter and employment support, is more effective in addressing the complexity of beneficiaries' needs.
- Targeted employment policies are an important component of a gatekeeping system.
- Sound cooperation towards a common objective and the effective division of roles established between UNICEF, implementing agencies, and other donors in the country have been a powerful tool in leveraging government support and moving the system in the direction of child welfare reform.
- In order to create an effective gatekeeping system, a number of institutional changes should happen at the same time. Limited changes in one sector only (such as closure of institutions while delaying the establishment of alternative services, or social work without a proper referral system) are not likely to produce a significant impact on child and family welfare.

### **Recommendations**

- Develop an implementation plan for the Child Welfare National Strategy, defining accountabilities and mandates.
- Regulate the referral system, establishing legal obligation for exchange of information among relevant agencies.
- Reform the current mechanisms of funding of institutions.
- Introduce follow-up procedures to assess the long-term outcome of services.
- Ensure implementation of re-deployment policies for institution staff.
- Establish independent and effective systems of monitoring, evaluation, supervision and complaint handling based on the best interest of children.
- Develop a number of indicators to assess project impact and outcomes, not only in terms of services provided and outputs, but also in terms of long-term child welfare.
- Develop adequate information systems to support planners, decision-makers, and implementing agencies dealing with child care alternative services.
- Undertake employment policies, targeted to vulnerable families, to address the causes of child abandonment. Establish a link between MoES social services and services provided by state employment agencies.
- Increase the amount of cash assistance provided to foster parents.
- Ensure timely draft of the law regulating social work, including a training and certification system.



## 1 BACKGROUND

### 1.1 PROBLEM ANALYSIS: VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND INSTITUTIONALISATION IN GEORGIA

Since declaring independence from the USSR in 1991, Georgia has undergone a difficult transition from the Soviet system towards a market economy. Like many other former Soviet republics, the country has experienced serious economic difficulties exacerbated by the collapse of industry, high inflation, budgetary deficits and widespread corruption. This has led to a huge rise in unemployment, migration and social vulnerability. These issues and the complex social problems they have created have contributed to an increase in the rate of family breakdown, child and family separation, to a strong increase in the number of children being placed into institutional care, illness and mortality, as well as to the neglect and abuse of children. Child care institutions are an inheritance from the Soviet era and, until 1999, represented the only state support available for vulnerable children and families. Children are readily placed in residential institutions for socio-economic reasons without any adequate assessment of the child's needs. Although most families consider placement of a child into residential care only as a last resort and for a temporary period to support them during crisis, in most cases children stay in institutional care for long periods, often for their entire childhood. In 2005, an estimated total number of 5,204 children lived in 43 State funded institutions (including infant houses<sup>3</sup>), 2,591 of which were children with disabilities<sup>4</sup>. An additional 1,600 children are known to be in municipal and private institutions. While these numbers are modest, the trend towards infant institutionalisation is of serious concern as admissions have more than doubled since 1995<sup>5</sup>.

The great majority (85 to 90%) of children and infants in institutions actually have parents<sup>6</sup>. Besides poverty, an important reason for child abandonment is the negative attitude of society towards single mothers and disabled children, attitude that is particularly strong in the countryside. In 2001, out of 208 infants admitted to infant houses, over half had been abandoned by single mothers and approximately 45% of babies resident in Tbilisi infant house have some form of disability.

All residential institutions in Georgia fall under the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) authority, with the exception of infant houses that have the status of LTD (commercial entity) and have been until recently supervised by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MLH&SA).

### 1.2 NATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES ON CHILD PROTECTION AND DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION

De-institutionalisation and establishment of alternative services for inclusion of children with disabilities are today key social sector priorities for both the MoES and MLH&SA. This is the result of two main factors: i) the change of government with the election of Saakashvili as president in January 2004; and ii) a well reasoned and executed advocacy campaign carried out by the European Union, UNICEF, World Vision, EveryChild and other international agencies aimed at including child welfare reform in government's top priorities. In 2001, the Government

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<sup>3</sup> There are two infant houses in the country. The Tbilisi Infant House currently houses 117 infants aged up until 3 while in the Makhinjauri there are about 70 infants and children aged up until 7 years.

<sup>4</sup> Research on Childcare Institutions, Ministry of Education, March 2005. For reasons later explained in this report, there are very few official figures in Georgia on the total number of children in institutions.

<sup>5</sup> However, no figures are available on institutionalisation trends since the FS&FC and PIAD projects were established.

<sup>6</sup> Source: PIAD project documents.

together with international and local agencies working on reform issues related to childcare formed the 'De-institutionalisation Working Group' (DWG)<sup>7</sup>. The DWG drafted a policy document - the National Strategy for Family Based Child Welfare in Georgia - intended to serve as a guideline for developing new thinking on policy issues relating to childcare and family welfare programmes. The strategy established a number of priorities, among which:

- 1) Human resource development for rights-based quality child care, de-institutionalisation and development of a continuum of care services at community level.
- 2) Government and administrative reform that decentralises and reorganises child protection structures.
- 3) Standards of care, monitoring and licensing procedures developed and agreed upon by all Ministries.

The strategy also suggested the establishment of a Policy Unit to work on the laws and policy needed for the childcare reform. These recommendations remained, however, unapplied until 2004, due to unfavourable political conditions. The election of Saakashvili in January 2004 created the political space to revamp the reform process.

A Government Interministerial Commission on Child Welfare and De-institutionalisation was thus formed in 2005, with the task of handling the transition period until the establishment of clear institutional responsibilities and mandates for child welfare policies. The Commission created three working groups,<sup>8</sup> including professionals, practitioners and civil servants, with the objective of analysing existing standards for care services as well as procedures and mandates of decision-making bodies, which are in charge of providing services, and then proposing an outline of norms and standards for services to be adopted in the future. The groups are divided into: 1) government gatekeeping (or statutory) services, 2) family and individual support services, 3) family substitute services. The first draft 'recommendations on standards' is due for February 2006.

The Commission has developed a draft law on de-institutionalisation that has among its first objectives to "*provide the priority right of the child to be raised in a family environment to promote the child's harmonious development, personality formation and integration into the society*". International agencies have, however, expressed negative comments on the draft, and a technical group formed within the Commission is currently working on the required amendments. The new draft should also include regulations on adoption and foster care, replacing the previous legislation (1999 Law on Foster Care and Adoption of Orphans and Children Deprived of Parental Care) with provisions in line with the new national strategic framework.

### **1.3 PROJECTS' DESCRIPTION**

The Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation project (PIAD) and the Family Support and Foster Care project (FS&FC) share a two-fold objective. On the one hand, they aim at preventing additional children from entering residential care, and at de-institutionalising those children that are already there, by: (i) addressing the social and financial causes of child abandonment, and (ii) creating a gatekeeping system and family-based alternatives to institutional care. On the other hand, they intend to provide a model to be mainstreamed in the public system, and in this way to encourage the adoption of family and community-based child protection policies at national level. The complementarity between the two projects justified a joint evaluation, although the analysis also looked at the specific characteristics of each project

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<sup>7</sup> Members of the DWG include UNICEF, EveryChild, World Vision International, Social Policy Initiative Group, Horizonti Foundation, The First Step Foundation, The World Bank, representatives of MoES and MLH&SA, the State Chancellery, Ombudsman's office and a few others.

<sup>8</sup> The initial plan was to have five working groups, but the number has been brought down to three. Source: interview with Federico Berna, EC- Food Security/Rural Development.

in terms of implementing agency, age target, strategy and approach. The following sections will describe the two projects separately.

### **1.3.1 Family Support and Foster Care project**

The project was initiated in 2001 by the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), in partnership with UNICEF and EveryChild<sup>9</sup>, in three pilot regions (Tbilisi, Rustavi and Telavi in East Georgia), and it was since extended to two additional regions in West Georgia (Kutaisi and Batumi).

The FS&FC primary objective was to introduce social work and gatekeeping services in the Georgian environment with the goal of preventing institutionalisation and reducing the number of children in institutions. The project, by implementing pilot activities in the areas of social work and gatekeeping services also aimed at promoting the definition of a government strategy for reforming children's services on a large scale.

The project specific objectives include:

- 1) Family reintegration for children currently in institutions, where safe and appropriate to do so.
- 2) Prevention of institutionalisation of children at risk of placement under public care, with the aim of continued care in their biological families.
- 3) Placement in appropriate foster care, when needed, of children currently in institutions.
- 4) Information on both processes and outcomes incorporated into the development of a Social Work curriculum and strengthening of the already developed National Strategy for Children.

The project did not define quantitative targets in relation to the expected outcomes.

The target group includes children aged between 4 and 18. The project comprises three main components:

#### **1) Employment and Training of Social Workers**

Since the beginning social workers – for an overall total of 42 - were formally employed by the MoES, although EveryChild provided funding for salaries in the first phase. Social workers were trained by EveryChild on issues related to social work with a specific emphasis on working with families and children, and ever since the NGO has continued to provide on-the-job training and technical assistance. EveryChild has been the agency responsible for developing case management tools, social workers' job descriptions, and standards for childcare services adopted by the project.

#### **2) Family Support and Foster Care Panels**

The project set up a multidisciplinary Family Support and Foster Care Panel (composed of local experts and stakeholders from various fields), in each of the 5 regions<sup>10</sup>. The panels are advisory and decision-making bodies that meet on a monthly basis to review recommendations presented by social workers and make final decisions on every particular case. EveryChild has provided them with short-term training in child rights, foster care and inclusion of families in decision-making.

#### **3) Service delivery**

The responsibility of FS&FC social workers is to conduct an assessment of children in institutions, and of parents at risk of abandoning their child/ren, and develop and recommend the best family-based alternative forms. Social workers are in charge of identifying, screening and training foster parents, and of monitoring foster arrangements following child placement. As to prevention, the primary service delivered is a temporary cash allowance, paid by the MoES

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<sup>9</sup> EveryChild is a UK based organisation formerly known as European Children's Trust.

<sup>10</sup> See also § 4.2.2, section on 'Decision-making in the best interest of child'.

(typically GEL<sup>11</sup>60 allowance for food for a period of 6 months) to households either to prevent institutionalisation or to motivate reintegration. An additional GEL 40 is paid as remuneration to foster parents, making it GEL 100 overall, amount that reaches GEL 220 in the case of disabled children.

In addition, social workers provide employment support (in the form of advice and contacts with local employers) and sometimes material assistance (food, medications). On a more informal level, they also provide social mediation (assisting with local bureaucracy) and facilitate contacts with extended families.

The total project budget amounted to US\$ 353,219, of which US\$ 125,302 was UNICEF funding<sup>12</sup>, and the rest was covered by EveryChild. After May 2004, the MoES has taken over the funding of FS&FC social workers' salaries in the 5 project locations, and is also covering the total amount of cash assistance to families at risk and foster parents. EveryChild's contribution to the project presently consists of ongoing training and technical assistance to social workers.

### 1.3.2 Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation (PIAD) project

The PIAD project was designed to build upon the Family Support and Foster Care (FS&FC) project, with a specific target on children up till the age of 3. Activities started in December 2002 following an agreement between UNICEF, EveryChild, World Vision, the MLH&SA and MoES. The project's objectives included:

- 1) Preventing additional infants from entering the two infant houses in Georgia, located in Tbilisi and Makhinjauri (Autonomous Republic of Adjara, Batumi region), unless in the best interest of the child<sup>13</sup>.
- 2) De-institutionalising infants currently in residential care.
- 3) Contributing to the formulation of a single law on child welfare protecting children's rights.

As in the Family Support and Foster Care project (FS&FC), the PIAD foresaw the establishment of a cadre of trained social workers (12 in Tbilisi and 4 in Makhinjauri) to implement the prevention and de-institutionalisation components. EveryChild provided PIAD social workers with the same type of training and case management tools as in the FS&FC project. Social workers are housed in a referral centre (close to infant house premises) from which they deliver various types of services. PIAD project main components include:

- 1) **Prevention of abandonment through:**
  - Mother & Infant Shelter. The service is

#### PIAD EXPECTED QUANTITATIVE OUTCOMES BY PROJECT PHASE

##### Phase I October 2002 – September 2004

###### Year 1

1. To reduce by 50% the number of infants abandoned by single mothers at Tbilisi Maternity Houses referred by the central Tbilisi Referral Clinic.
2. To deinstitutionalise 10 infants currently in the Tbilisi Infants' Home.

###### Year 2

1. To reduce by 75% the total number of infants abandoned by single mothers at Tbilisi Maternity Houses referred by the Tbilisi Referral Clinic.
2. To deinstitutionalise an additional 15 infants currently in the Tbilisi Infants' Home.

##### Phase 2 October 2004 – September 2005

To reduce the total number of infants in residential care by at least 35%.

Source: PIAD Project documents

<sup>11</sup> 1 US dollar is approximately 1,828 Georgian Lari (GEL).

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that in the period 1999-2000, prior to the official starting date of the FS&FC project, UNICEF had funded similar activities implemented by EveryChild for an additional amount of US\$ 78,905.

<sup>13</sup> The numeric target varied according to the project year. For the year 2005, the objectives included reducing the total number of infants in residential care by at least 35%.

aimed at mothers who have not definitely decided to relinquish care. The shelter provides a safe environment where mother and infant can remain together while the mother decides a long-term plan for her child that does not include institutionalisation.

- Fostering and Adoption. The service is provided in cooperation with FS&FC social workers.
- Prevention of Unwanted Pregnancies and HIV/AIDS. Social Workers with a medical background provide both reproductive health counselling and services as part of routine visits to pregnant women.
- One-time emergency assistance, such as help in refurbishing or repairing house, food and medicines, small grants for income generation, and gifts from donors' lists (including cows in rural environments).
- Psychological support, mediation with family and assistance in dealing with bureaucracy and health and social services.
- Employment counselling, job placement and micro-enterprise development, through the Employment Support Centre (ESC). This component is aimed at ensuring the economic self-reliance of mothers upon leaving the shelter.

## **2) De-institutionalisation of children at the Tbilisi and Makhinjauri infant house.**

PIAD social workers work with infant houses' directors to develop selection criteria and identify babies to be reintegrated within their birth families, or placed in adoptive/foster families. The project retrained 4 institution staff (2 in Tbilisi and 2 in Makhinjauri infant house) as social work aides, to facilitate cooperation between social workers and the two institutions.

**3) Public education & media campaigns,** to spread information on the existence of the project, recruit potential foster and adoptive parents, improve cooperation with other services and strengthen referral system.

Since 2005, the MoES has assumed financial responsibility for PIAD social workers salaries, and the Ministry is expected to fully take over the programme by 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2006, when donors will phase out<sup>14</sup>. At present, World Vision Georgia, with some extra-funding from World Vision USA and Honk Kong, covers the salary of 13 project staff (including mother and infant shelter manager, job counsellors, psychologist, trainer, and other administrative and specialised personnel), the organisation and maintenance of the mother and infant shelter, and the funding for emergency assistance and grants. The total budget for four years (October 2002 – September 2006) amounts to US\$ 633,400, of which US\$ 100,800 is UNICEF funding.

### **1.3.3 Projects' common features and specificities**

The FS&FC and PIAD projects serve the same main objectives, although they focus on different target groups. Both FS&FC and PIAD social workers have been trained by EveryChild, and use the case management tools developed with EveryChild assistance. In addition, the MoES is covering social workers' salaries under both projects.

However, the two initiatives differ significantly in terms of approach and types of services delivered, also in relation to EveryChild and World Vision's specific vocation. PIAD is characterised by a strongly developmental perspective, entailing the provision of a package of integrated services with the aim of strengthening mothers' self-reliance. There is no direct cash assistance involved, if not in the form of grant and in association with an income-generating project. Cases remain open for as long as necessary to verify such developmental outcome. On the contrary, FS&FC mainly delivers cash assistance as a preventive measure. Cases are closed

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<sup>14</sup> The project components that will be maintained have not been agreed yet (see section on Institutional sustainability).

when assistance ends, usually after a 6 month period. While FS&FC services have been mostly taken over by the MoES, PIAD is still mostly dependant on donors funding.

## 2 PURPOSE, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional office has selected the two Georgia projects as potential good practices in the region to be evaluated. The projects represent efforts to introduce individual elements of a gatekeeping system in the country. Although both are small-scale initiatives, insufficient to produce massive changes in the situation of vulnerable children and families, they may, however, demonstrate how the UNICEF “Continuum of services” concept can prevent institutionalisation and therefore foster the adoption of a family and community-based approach at national level.<sup>15</sup>

From the perspective of UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional office, the purpose of this evaluation is to assess whether and how the two projects have succeeded in establishing good practices in gatekeeping, which can have a demonstration effect and be scaled-up. A central task of the evaluation was therefore the identification of the “elements of practice” established by the project that could be “extracted” and mainstreamed, thus contributing to system change towards a full-fledged gatekeeping system at national level.

From the perspective of local implementers, the evaluation has assessed whether the two projects succeeded in establishing a relevant, sustainable, and effective system of family and community-based services, aiming at preventing institutionalisation and at reducing the number of children already in public care. The evaluation has also analysed to what extent UNICEF Country Office succeeded, through regular meetings, advocacy, and/or technical assistance to Government and Parliament, in influencing policy, legislation, and changes in budget lines in favour of de-institutionalisation and prevention of abandonment.

Finally, the evaluation looked into the unit costs of services provided by both projects as well as the cost of alternative prevention and reintegration strategies. In fact, although it is often said that the cost of keeping a child in institutions is much higher than providing family-based care, previous evaluations expressed some concerns about cost-effectiveness, particularly in reference to the PIAD project. This is a crucial aspect when discussing the projects’ potential to scale up.

The evaluation falls at critical stages of both projects’ cycle, at the time when major projects components have just been, or are shortly going to be, taken over by the government. The evaluation is therefore both summative (assessing projects’ effectiveness and impact up until now, taking projects’ own objectives as parameter), and formative (providing recommendations on future sustainability and lessons on what is needed to establish a full fledged gatekeeping system).

Key users of the evaluation will be the Georgian Government (particularly the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MLH&SA), and the Ministry of Finance), UNICEF Regional and Country Offices, EveryChild and World Vision. It is foreseen that the results of the evaluation will be used by: i) UNICEF Regional Offices to identify lessons learned and elements of good practice to be disseminated and ii) by project implementers to make improvements to the current implementation patterns.

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<sup>15</sup> It is to be noted that a number of other initiatives and projects covering elements of the “continuum of services” are implemented in the country; however they are not within the scope of the present evaluation.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation was designed in order to respond to two main questions, namely:

1. Have the two projects succeeded in establishing high quality gatekeeping services, serving the general aim of: i) preventing institutionalisation and reducing the number of children already in public care, ii) encouraging the adoption of family and community-based child protection policies at national level?
2. How are the projects contributing to system change in the direction of the establishment of a full-fledged gatekeeping system in Georgia?

The questions will be discussed using the standard evaluation criteria for project quality:

*Relevance:* what are the links between the projects and government de-institutionalisation strategy? Are the projects' services relevant in addressing existing needs?

*Effectiveness:* have the projects succeeded in establishing high quality gatekeeping services?

*Impact:* what have the projects achieved in terms of prevention and reintegration, and what impact have they had at policy level?

*Cost-effectiveness:* what are the comparative costs of alternative services versus residential care?

*Sustainability:* what are the perspectives for the political, institutional, financial and cultural sustainability of the established services?

The evaluation will also refer to the two UNICEF additional criteria:

*Human rights-based approach:* are the projects enhancing the system's capacity to fulfil the child right to grow up in his/her family (complying with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)? Are the projects reaching the intended beneficiaries, regardless of language, nationality and ethnicity?

*Results based management strategies:* Are the project managed so that i) clear accountabilities are established, ii) activities and resources are linked to planned results, iii) performance indicators are identified and monitored, iv) risk mitigation strategies are planned?

#### 3.2 RESEARCH TOOLS

##### 3.2.1 Sources of primary data

The evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative field instruments included:

- Semi-structured interviews with key project stakeholders (World Vision, EveryChild, MoES and MHL&SA, government/parliament bodies in charge of reforms in the child protection area, Social Workers Association, PIAD and FS&FC project beneficiaries, foster parents, members of FS&FC panels) and
- Focus groups with FS&FC and PIAD social workers.

The quantitative component consisted of a questionnaire administered to a sample of mothers using PIAD and FS&FC preventive services.

##### 3.2.2 Sources of secondary data

The evaluation has collected and reviewed the following sources of secondary information:

- National and local statistics on Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC);
- Draft law on de-institutionalisation, and EveryChild technical comments;

- EveryChild Training materials for social workers;
- Case management forms, guidelines, checklists, etc. (elaborated by EveryChild and adopted by the MoES)
- Data generated by project information system (no. of service users, services provided, outcomes);
- Outcomes of internal monitoring and review activities;
- PIAD and FS&FC Standards of care.

### 3.2.3 Data collection methods and analysis

The total number of semi-structured interviews and focus groups has been, respectively, of 34 and 5. The questionnaire has been delivered to 47 users of FS&FC and PIAD services (see Annex 2: 'List of people met', Annex 3 'Guidelines of interviews' and Annex 4 'Questionnaire').

Semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussion have been tape-recorded. Interviewers summarised (in English) the main issues emerging from each interview and from the focus group discussions, organising them from the start so that each issue was listed under the corresponding evaluation question/s. This facilitated the identification of common issues, specificities, and key findings.

Statistical analysis of data from the 47 questionnaires has been carried out by the local experts with the SPSS programme. Data analysis included frequency distributions, two entry tables, and graphs.

With regards to interviews and questionnaires with service users, the evaluation has sometimes tackled personal and ethically sensitive issues. To protect the privacy of respondents, specific comments from interviews have been kept anonymous<sup>16</sup>. Identity is nevertheless reported in quotations in the case of institutional stakeholders.

### 3.2.4 Description of sampling

With regards to the qualitative analysis, the evaluation reached all key institutional stakeholders (government representatives, directors of infant houses, social workers, donors and implementers) in Tbilisi, Makhinjauri, Kutaisi and Batumi. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with a small sample of project beneficiaries, including FS&FC foster parents (3), FS&FC family reintegration cases (3) and mothers users of PIAD employment and business services (4). The sample for the qualitative interviews to service users was extremely small, as the main purpose of the qualitative analysis was to highlight the key issues to be subsequently addressed by the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 47 mothers benefiting from PIAD and FS&FC preventive services. Considering that the total number of users of preventive services (active cases) is currently about 70 under PIAD and 100 under FS&FC, the sample is to be considered representative. Consulted stakeholders agreed on having the survey administered in Tbilisi exclusively, as the sample size did not allow for stratification by projects location (or any other variables). Based on a list of eligible names provided by social workers, the final sample composition also depended on the actual possibility to reach the beneficiary and make arrangements.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In accordance with ESOMAR and AAPOR rules and regulations, the evaluation report protects the anonymity of questionnaire respondents. All questions / variables that contain any type of information about the identity of service users are removed from the report and the final database. This means that the answers given by respondents are physically separate to data that relates to their identity. Any purposeful attempt to come by the identifying data of respondents, whether by the Client, Institute for Policy Study, or any third party, will be considered a serious violation and will be treated as such.

<sup>17</sup> Some beneficiaries had changed their address, etc.



The sample does not include eligible persons who cannot be reached by the services. The objective of the survey was in fact to assess FS&FC and PIAD beneficiaries' satisfaction with services provided. The time available for the evaluation, as well as the lack of baseline data, did not allow assessing the projects' impact by comparing beneficiaries to a control group.

### **3.2.5 Stakeholders' participation in the evaluation**

The first step of the evaluation team was to consult key project stakeholders (implementing agencies, donor, and government representatives) on what the evaluation questions should cover, as the evaluation intended to provide useful indications first of all to those who are daily involved in project implementation. This approach was expected to improve cooperation and ensure that the relevant issues were addressed. Time available for the evaluation did not allow for the consultation of other relevant stakeholders, including projects' beneficiaries, in this preliminary phase.

The team had a very productive exchange of opinions with EveryChild, World Vision, and UNICEF. Their feedback on the evaluation questions and guidelines for interviews and questionnaires were discussed during the first day of in-country activities, and contributed to the fine-tuning of the evaluation methodology. On the other hand difficulties were encountered on government side, as the numerous reshuffles that had taken place in recent years, and the government "short institutional memory", as some key-informant described it, did not allow for the identification of officials with a good knowledge of the two projects' history. Although consulted government stakeholders did show interest in the evaluation, they did not express their intention to participate in the process, nor did UNICEF CO take any formal steps to request their further engagement. For such reasons, the evaluation team deemed it appropriate to have the mission final debriefing with UNICEF CO exclusively, deferring the official presentation to government until the evaluation report is finalised. Informal debriefing meetings were also held with EveryChild and World Vision representatives.

## 4 FINDINGS

### 4.1 RELEVANCE

#### KEY FINDINGS

- The projects are consistent with government's strategic framework on de-institutionalisation.
- With regards to concrete policies and practices, progress towards deinstitutionalisation appears to be characterised by a number of obstacles. These include closure of institutions before alternatives are in place, limited inter-agency coordination, lack of clear mandates for child care service provision and delays in devising redeployment policies for institutions' staff.
- The government is planning to link projects' preventive services to its social assistance programme. This is a positive step towards addressing the social and economic causes of institutionalisation, strengthening gatekeeping as a result.
- The main problems of mothers approaching projects' services are economic hardship, sense of helplessness, and concerns about their reputation. The services provided by the two projects are relevant to address the identified needs.
- The integrated approach adopted by PIAD, based on a package of diversified services (shelter, employment support, psychological assistance, etc.) seems particularly appropriate in responding to complex needs.

#### 4.1.1 Role of FS&FC and PIAD projects within the government strategic framework on de-institutionalisation

At the time when PIAD and FS&FC were designed, they represented pilot initiatives in a rather unfavourable political context. Although the 2001 national Strategy for Family Based Child Welfare in Georgia recommended re-directing the funds spent on running the institutions towards family and community based services, until 2004 the government took no concrete steps toward de-institutionalisation. After the election of Saakashvili, a more conducive political environment allowed for the establishment of a number of mechanisms that placed these two pilot projects in a larger national context. These mechanisms include the establishment of the Interministerial commission on Child Welfare and De-institutionalisation, the work on standards for alternative child care services, and the government's Optimisation Plan on institutions, which foresees the closure of 5 childcare institutions, the transformation of 5 institutions, and a moratorium on admissions in selected institutions. A MoES budget line has been earmarked for "Alternative services for children deprived of parental care", covering the salary of FS&FC and PIAD social workers and cash allowances to foster parents. The MoES Action Plan mentions social workers as the main vehicle through which to enforce policies supporting children within families. The Family Support and Foster Care (FS&FC) and Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation (PIAD) projects are thus currently in line with national strategic objectives.

The European Commission, through the Food Security and TACIS programmes, has recently become a major player in steering the reform process in Georgia, and the closure of institutions and shift to alternative forms of care is an important pre-condition to access funds within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)<sup>18</sup>. The EC requirements to MoES

<sup>18</sup> The ENPI is a "policy driven" instrument that will operate in the framework of the existing bilateral agreements between the Community and the neighbouring countries. Starting from 2007, financial support for the European

also include support to FS&FC and PIAD social workers. EveryChild and UNICEF, if of secondary political importance compared to the EC, are in a key position to deliver technical advice on child welfare issues, and have relied on the experience gathered through the projects' implementation – amongst others - to guide policy development. In particular, EveryChild provides advice on the de-institutionalisation law, delivers ongoing training to social workers, as well as technical assistance to the government on the establishment of a continuum of services, and is a member of the De-institutionalisation Working Group. UNICEF has provided technical assistance for drafting the regulations of the Interministerial Commission on Child Welfare and De-institutionalisation, is funding the Technical Secretariat and the salary of the National Coordinator of the Commission,<sup>19</sup> and its experts are contributing in the working groups on service standards.

#### 4.1.2 Obstacles and contradictions in the de-institutionalisation process

However, when shifting the attention from general strategies to concrete policies and practices, progress towards de-institutionalisation appears to be characterised by a number of obstacles. In particular:

1. The government is sometimes moving too fast in the direction of closing down institutions, before a continuum of services has been established and alternatives are available for children deprived of parental care. This is due to the still insufficient awareness of the complexity of the de-institutionalisation process.<sup>20</sup>

An example is the government's decision to close down a boarding school in the Tianeti municipality that had been housing some 150 children, without a plan to reintegrate them. To avoid dire social consequences, EveryChild had to intervene and assist the MoES in placing children in alternative arrangements.

“The decision was rather radical, and although it was aimed at achieving desirable outcomes the time frame allowed was rather unrealistic, which could have harmed children. Initially there were no real back up plans that would serve the best interest of these children, no alternative community services for children residing there” *Andro Dadiani, EveryChild Country Director*

A negative consequence could be to generate a tendency among projects' social workers – encouraged by the MoES - to pursue family reintegration or foster arrangements at all costs, without conducting a sufficiently in-depth assessment of family capacity to provide adequate care, thus going against the child's best interest.

2. The draft de-institutionalisation law was strongly criticized by the international community, and eventually tabled. According to EveryChild, UNICEF and other stakeholders, main shortcomings in the draft law included: i) lack of clear indications on roles and mandates of government and non governmental actors in service funding and delivery; ii) lack of provisions to regulate the social work profession, and iii) no reference to parents' and child rights. The law foresaw the immediate shifting of responsibilities for all children institutions and community based services from the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MLH&SA). However, the MLH&SA did not seem to be involved in the inclusion of this principle in the draft law. It did not seem to be the right timing for such transition. On the opposite, “the probability is that the process of

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Neighbourhood Policy and ENP countries will be provided through a dedicated European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The ENPI will target sustainable development and approximation to EU policies and legislation.

<sup>19</sup> Through a grant of the Swedish SIDA.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Andro Dadiani, EveryChild Country Director.

getting children out of institutions will be lost or submerged beneath the process of transferring functional responsibility”<sup>21</sup>.

3. In the absence of an adequate regulatory framework, the lack of clear mandates is negatively affecting the projects. This is clearly illustrated by the current status of infant houses in Georgia. The institutions used to be LTD (commercial societies with limited responsibility), falling under the authority of the Ministry of Finance, while the MLH&SA used to pay the director and staff salaries. The MLH&SA has recently handed infant houses to MoES authority, and the institutions are currently under a liquidation process - changing the status from LTD to legal public entity. Until the lengthy transition is completed, infant house directors are not obliged to release information on resident children to PIAD social workers (who are paid by the MoES).<sup>22</sup> In addition, MoES representatives cannot enter the premises to carry out inspections on children’s conditions. This represents a whole new barrier to the achievement of PIAD’s goal of stopping the flow of infants into State care and to reduce the number of infants already there. To increase the confusion, the Tbilisi infant house now has two directors, paid respectively by MLH&SA and MoES.
4. Some Georgian policies still encourage children institutionalisation. Foremost is the funding system of residential institutions that is based on the number of resident children. Although a great share of the costs of an institution is fixed and not directly linked to the actual number of children under care, the funding depends exactly on this number. As a result, either the institution retains the same number of children (by inflating numbers or attracting new children), or it becomes under-funded thus leading to the worsening of conditions for remaining children. This is the main reason behind the uncooperative attitude of orphanages, boarding schools and infant houses directors towards PIAD and FS&FC social workers, including reluctance to release information on the number of resident children.
5. The de-institutionalisation process brings about employment issues that are not systematically addressed by the Georgian government. The number of personnel working within institutions, and at risk of losing their job is rather high (about 2,700 in those under MoES authority). Due to lack of funding, the MLH&SA<sup>23</sup> does not foresee the allocation of resources to active employment policies in the year 2006, and by the same token it is not involved in providing alternative job opportunities to institution employees. At the same time, the MoES considers the employment issue as an obstacle to de-institutionalisation, but by no means as a moral or legal obligation to take care of personnel who may get dismissed through the reform process.<sup>24</sup> The MoES Action Plan foresees a strong change in the profile of institutions and the re-training of staff to be employed in alternative services, although the MoES leadership itself is sceptical about the possibility of retraining institutional staff, considering their rigidity, lack of general skills and education, and entrenched corruption.<sup>25</sup> As mentioned, the PIAD retrained 4 infant house staff as social work aides and provided - through its Employment Support Centre - vocational training to 40 infant house staff. These promising initiatives would not however have any significant impact on maintaining jobs for the majority. In the absence of convincing strategies to solve the employment issue, the uncooperative attitude of institution administration and employees keeps featuring as a major obstacle for the FS&FC and PIAD social workers.

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<sup>21</sup> Briefing note by Peter Evans, EveryChild Technical Adviser, 7/06/2005.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Mary-Ellen Chatwin, World Vision CEDC Programme Manager.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Victoria Vasileva, Social Policy department, Ministry of Health Labour and Social Affairs; member of child welfare Interministerial working group.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Tamar Golubiani, Head of Child Care Department, Ministry of Education and Science.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

### 4.1.3 Coordination with government social protection policies

The Georgian government is currently reforming its social protection system to include targeted cash assistance to the most needy by providing the subsistence minimum to every household that requests and qualifies for it. The approach is thus shifting away from social, category-based individual assistance towards a needs-based assistance.<sup>26</sup> The State Agency for Social Assistance and Employment of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MLH&SA), administering the new programme, has already initiated a process of identifying beneficiary households. Assistance will be financed from the state budget. Households that apply for assistance will be selected on the basis of the evaluation of their status by MLH&SA social agents. The amount of social assistance will range from GEL 60 to 150 depending on family composition. Full implementation of the Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) programme is currently planned to start in July 2006, and it is estimated that about 150,000 families will benefit from this programme in the initial phase.

To ensure coordination between the TSA programme and government de-institutionalisation efforts, the MLH&SA is planning to retrain and certify (through tailor-made special training courses) up to 500 social agents as social workers of more general profile, who would also be able to cover such issues as prevention of abandonment and de-institutionalisation. The availability of hundreds of qualified social workers, paid by the government budget, has obviously a great potential for reforming the child assistance sphere and boosting the gatekeeping system. However, it is important to ensure that new social workers be properly retrained, in order not to lower the general (and child-assistance related) social work standard as MLH&SA social agents have a totally different background and work practices. Furthermore, strong cooperation mechanisms will need to be put in place, as the same social workers will fall under the authority of both the MLH&SA and the MoES.

In terms of the implications for the FS&FC and PIAD projects, the cash assistance scheme to be implemented under the TSA programme is planned to replace the assistance provided to the needy households (in prevention/reintegration cases) under FS&FC. Under the TSA scheme, however, beneficiaries will be selected on the basis of different general criteria, not necessarily coinciding with those used by the FS&FC, thus leading to potential difficulties during the transition period, including the possible exclusion of current beneficiaries. In the longer term it is planned, however, that the TSA, through its targeted effort to reduce vulnerability, will definitely reduce the overall risk of institutionalisation due to economic factors, and may therefore be considered as acting in strong synergy with PIAD and FS&FC.

### 4.1.4 Relevance of provided services

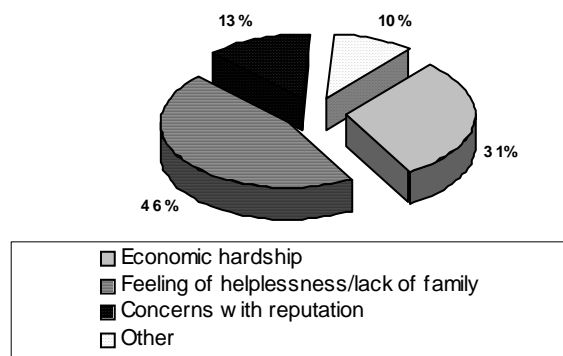
According to PIAD and FS&FC social workers, the most important reasons why parents recur to their services are poverty, lack of family support, disability of children making them a heavy burden and bringing social stigma to the biological family, and the fear of losing their reputation when it comes to children born out of wedlock. Graphs 1 and 2 show the main problems faced by mothers when they first get in touch with FS&FC and PIAD services.

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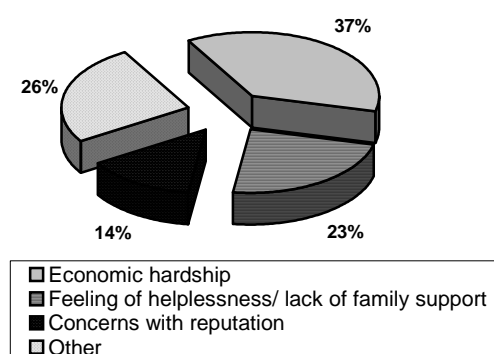
<sup>26</sup> Currently, social assistance is provided to the following (aggregated) categories of vulnerable individuals/households: lonely unemployed pensioners; orphans; disabled unemployed; blind persons (of the first category); disabled children under 18; and families with 7 or more children under the age of 18. Assistance entails both monetary allowances and other benefits (e.g. exemption or reduction of payment for telephone, gas).

## Graphs 1 & 2 Main problems faced by mothers using PIAD and FS&FC services

What problems did you face before the birth of your child?



What problems were you facing when you asked for FS&FC assistance?



Economic problems are prevailing. However, for PIAD users (single mothers at risk of abandoning their baby – graph 1), concerns with reputation and feeling of helplessness are relatively more important than for FS&FC users, who are on average older and have grown-up children. Many PIAD single mothers are afraid of domestic violence or rejection by a partner/family, and have a pervasive feeling of loneliness and inadequacy.<sup>27</sup>

It should be noticed that, although child disability is not mentioned among the main problems beneficiaries faced at their encounter with the projects, it is actually a major factor behind economic and psychological strain mothers have to deal with.<sup>28</sup> It is significant that 50% of FS&FC users in the evaluation sample had a disabled child.

The two projects seem to have chosen the appropriate strategy by addressing economic problems, although with different approaches: direct cash assistance in the case of FS&FC, material assistance, grants and support to employment and business development for PIAD. Many mothers are motivated and capable to keep their child, and a little financial or in-kind assistance at the right time can really make the difference.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, the PIAD Mother and Infant Shelter has proven to be extremely relevant as it provides enabling conditions for the establishment of emotional links between mother and baby. Mothers in the shelter receive various types of support from PIAD (counselling, life skill training, and medical assistance) that concur to increase their self-confidence and sense of belonging. This component of PIAD was praised by all stakeholders, as well as by beneficiaries, and the MoES recommends its expansion and replication.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, while the services listed above are important and much appreciated, it is obvious that the two projects alone cannot address the magnitude of vulnerable parents' needs. Many complaints on all sides refer to insufficient amount of temporary or one-time material assistance. Payment to fostering parents is also considered inadequate, especially given the recently accelerated inflation.

In addition, a number of other services than those provided by PIAD and FS&FC will be needed in the full continuum of services if national problems are to be addressed. Among them, the creation of day care services that should go in parallel with employment support services, to enable parents to work and keep their child; and inclusive education, including specialised centres

<sup>27</sup> Focus group with PIAD social workers in Tbilisi.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Tamari Golubiani, Head of Child Care Department, Ministry of Education and Science

and services for disabled children which are essential to address a major cause behind child abandonment and institutionalisation.

There is also a lack of temporary solutions for children waiting for fostering or adoption, to avoid an excessively long permanence in the infant house or other residential institutions. The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is currently planning to introduce short-term foster care to fill this gap. Finally, qualified psychological assistance and professional legal advice need to be more easily available. PIAD and FS&FC social workers have received a very focused training on casework, child care and institutionalisation issues, and they cannot be expected to deliver such diversified and specialised assistance.<sup>31</sup> This reflects a central issue for the evaluation: the need to develop a referral system between different services in the continuum of services to be established at national level, with PIAD and FS&FC services as an integral part. An effective referral system would enable PIAD and FS&FC service users to have access to the full range of services available in the community.

## 4.2 **EFFECTIVENESS**

### **KEY FINDINGS**

- The projects have succeeded in establishing sound case management practices, based on the use of standardised and comprehensive tools.
- The two projects have established good practices that can provide elements of a full-fledged gatekeeping system. These include: interdisciplinary decision-making bodies serving the best interest of the child, innovative employment services and an effective mother and infant shelter (see page 16 and Annex 5).
- The great majority of service users in the evaluation sample expressed high satisfaction with the assistance received.
- The number of self-referrals to projects' services is increasing as a result of effective information campaigns.
- The success of PIAD employment services shows that targeted employment policies should be an integral part of a gatekeeping system.
- Crucial challenges include weak referral system (because the continuum of services is not yet in place at national level), limited follow-up of cases, lack of an effective information system and limited institutional links between FS&FC and PIAD services.
- The current amount of cash assistance to foster parents is inadequate to motivate a large number of families.
- Social workers need additional training in communication, psychology, legislation, and other skills necessary to address complex needs.
- Social workers have little resources for transportation, communication and equipment.

<sup>31</sup> Interviews with Nino Shatberashvili, UNICEF APO-Child Protection-Child Development, and Mary-Ellen Chatwin, World Vision CEDC Programme Manager

#### 4.2.1 Number and characteristics of beneficiaries

**Table 1: total number of children served by the FS&FC and PIAD projects from 2000 until November 2005.**

	# of Children in Prevention	# of Children reintegrated in their biological family	# of Children in Foster Care	TOTAL # of CHILDREN
Tbilisi	118	39	29	186
Telavi	91	13	40	144
Rustavi	31	51	8	90
FS&FC (East Georgia)	240	103	77	420
Kutaisi	108	25	12	145
Batumi	92	21	22	135
FS&FC West Georgia	200	46	34	280
FS&FC for children with disabilities	0	5	28	33
Total FS&FC	440	154	139	733
PIAD	140	19	44	203
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>936</b>

Since 2003, about 100 mothers have used PIAD employment and business services. Statistics are not available on the profile of PIAD and FS&FC service users; however the evaluation survey provides some information on mothers using preventive services under the two projects. PIAD users are typically young mothers (26 year old on average) with a single child, while FS&FC users are older (41 is the average age), most of them in charge of one child as well. As expected, the economic conditions of most respondents is dire. 61.7% define their family as “extremely poor” and 21.3% as “poor”. The majority of respondents (73.9%) are unemployed. It is worth mentioning that about 50% of respondents have migrated to Tbilisi from other regions of Georgia, in search of a job. Distance from family and friends contributes to the feeling of helplessness and lack of support.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Quality of gatekeeping services:

As indicated in the previous section (see table in § 4.2.1), the two projects are fairly small-scale in terms of beneficiaries reached, nor do they represent the full range of the continuum of services needed at national level to enable a reform from a system of residential care institutions to a continuum of services. Their importance lies therefore in the value of the model they intend to provide and the extent to which the “models” are documented and shared to inform national policies and working methods. The following sections will discuss the quality of services put in place, with special attention given to the elements of practice that can potentially contribute to the establishment of a full-fledged gatekeeping system in Georgia (§ 4.2.2: strong points), as well as to those aspects that may become problematic when going to scale (§ 4.2.3: challenges).

#### **Sound case management practices**

Both projects have succeeded in establishing sound case management practices, based on the use of standardised and comprehensive tools. Such practices provide a good base for further expansion of gatekeeping services in Georgia. FS&FC and PIAD social workers have been trained by EveryChild and use the same methodologies and instruments. Standards of Care for prevention of infant abandonment services have been created and are practiced by PIAD social workers. Child and family needs assessment are carried out according to clear guidelines and

<sup>32</sup> Focus group with PIAD social workers, Tbilisi



timeframes, foster care recruitment procedures and standards are delineated and followed, eligibility to services and matching criteria are spelled out and accurately applied. Good social work practice is generally evident. For instance, all members of a foster family are interviewed (rather than just the mother), and social workers are quite active in monitoring the whole process. Children are well prepared to fostering and adoption experience through the use of Life books, psychological tests, and counselling.

### **Decision-making in the best interest of child**

The multidisciplinary panels established in each region by the Family Support and Foster Care project (FS&FC) play a key role in ensuring that the decision-making on each case serves the best interests of the child. In Tbilisi, for instance, the FS&FC panel is formed by healthcare specialists, lawyers, psychologists, representatives of MoES and local municipality, and Parliament members. Panel members have been trained by EveryChild on child rights, foster care, and related issues. The panels discuss all action plans developed by social workers, and make the final decision on the type of assistance to be provided. They are also responsible for the final decision in case of break-up of foster arrangements. The work of the panels contributes to transparency and to an appropriate matching between needs and services, and represents one of the most innovative elements of practice introduced by the FS&FC project. The panels are accountable to the MoES, although until now they do not enjoy an official status. It remains to be seen whether they will acquire official recognition within the institutional framework to be introduced by the new laws on de-institutionalisation, adoption and fostering.

### **Increased number of self-referrals**

An increasing number of parents get directly in touch with FS&FC and PIAD social services<sup>33</sup> without passing through the traditional referral sources. In Batumi, for instance, self-referrals – also linked to the results of previous projects - amount to 15% of all cases referred to FS&FC. This is apparently due to the effective information and awareness raising campaigns carried out by the projects. In the future, self-referrals are expected to further increase as a result of the recent abolition of the Commissions of Minors<sup>34</sup> which has until now been a major referral source for FS&FC project. Self-referrals allow social workers to reach a higher number of parents at risk of abandoning their child, or of placing him/her in an institution, thereby enhancing the preventive component of the projects. On the other hand, increased self-referrals may involve taking more general cases of children and families in difficult situation though not at immediate risk of institutionalising their child/ren. This issue will be further discussed in the conclusive section of this report.

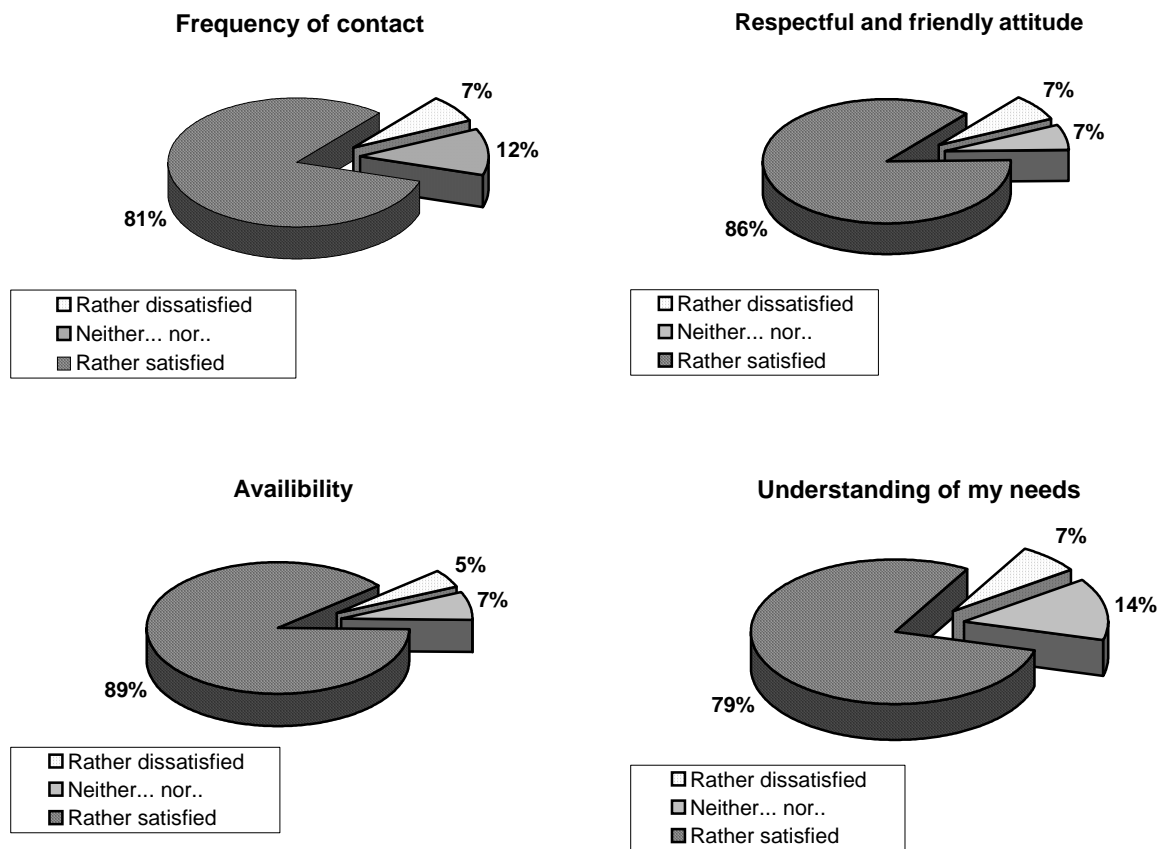
### **High users' satisfaction**

Stakeholders at all levels expressed many positive comments on FS&FC and PIAD social workers' characteristics: their personalities, common sense, and ability to nurture positive relationships, professionalism, and comprehensive training all contributed to make the project successful. The survey conducted among mothers using FS&FC and PIAD preventive services shows that respondents are highly satisfied with all aspects concerning the social workers they dealt with, as illustrated by Graph 3.

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<sup>33</sup> Focus groups with FS&FC and PIAD social workers; interviews with Maia Tsereteli, PIAD Project manager and M. Menteshashvili, Mother and Infant Shelter manager.

<sup>34</sup> The Commissions of Minors were local bodies that received parents' requests to place a child in an institution, and took decisions on placement. Their members included representatives of local authorities, paediatricians, directors of children institutions, inspectors of minors. The Commissions were recently abolished as part of the reform process.

**Graph 3: To what degree are you satisfied with the social worker you dealt with?**<sup>35</sup>

Overall, respondents expressed their satisfaction with the assistance received. 67.7% of respondents among PIAD beneficiaries, and 75.0% for FS&FC beneficiaries declared to be satisfied with the general quality of services they have received. Very few complaints emerged from qualitative interviews, and referred mainly to the amount of in-kind or cash assistance provided, especially in the case of foster parents.

### **Innovative employment services**

The evaluation has confirmed that unemployment, with its corollary of poverty and vulnerability, is the main reason behind parents' decision to abandon their child/ren. As a response, the PIAD project proposes an innovative approach to employment support, based on the involvement of specialised job counsellors, a package of diversified services, and an individualised, tailor made approach to clients. The Employment Support Centre (ESC) (see annex 5 'Good Practices' for a full description of the Centre) provides ongoing job counselling services and training in employment preparedness, to Mother & Infant Shelter residents, parents of Infant House residents, and, in some cases, to Infant House staff in need of redeployment.<sup>36</sup> These sessions assist them in identifying vocational interests and training needs in order to match their skills with the requirements of the employment market. In addition, the ESC has established a network of contacts with local employers, available to provide on-the-job training to beneficiaries. Small grants are given to employers to cover training expenses, usually working tools and raw materials.

<sup>35</sup> The graph refers to users of both FS&FC and PIAD services, as no significant differences were found in the degree of satisfaction under the two projects.

<sup>36</sup> With ESC support, 40 Infant House staff in Tbilisi has received vocation training in marketing, tourism management, cosmetology and other fields.

In spite of several constraining factors, such as beneficiaries' low qualifications, and the scarce labour market opportunities, the ESC is achieving remarkable results. Since the beginning of the project, 80 mothers have found employment through project services. In the last 3 months, out of the 50 mothers who received job counselling and vocational training, more than 40 have found a job.<sup>37</sup> It must be noted that employment services may be less successful in other regions, like Kutaisi, where the general economic environment is particularly harsh. Nevertheless, the ESC constitutes a promising example of employment services aimed at vulnerable categories. The model is highly needed in Georgia considering that, at present, MLH&SA employment agencies do not deliver targeted employment assistance.

#### 4.2.2 Quality of gatekeeping services: future challenges

##### Weak referral system

The weakness of the referral system is especially evident in the PIAD project, due to the unclear status of infant houses, and to the limited commitment of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MLH&SA) in enforcing cooperation of institutions under its authority. In the current transition phase, infant houses directors are not obliged neither to refer cases to PIAD social workers nor to release any type of information on resident children. In fact, agreements between infant houses and the PIAD project were taken when the institution was still under the authority of the MLH&SA. In Tbilisi, where the infant house director is remarkably uncooperative, social workers will not (and do not) have easy access to children's files, or to the institution premises, and will not do so until the transition under MoES authority is completed. This obviously hinders the gatekeeping function of PIAD social services. Still, there is slow progress, partly related to training of infant house staff as social work aides in Tbilisi and Makhinjauri, and the more cooperative attitude of the Makhinjauri infant house director.

<b>Sources of referral for FS&amp;FC and PIAD projects</b>	
<b>PIAD</b>	
<b>Prevention:</b>	<b>Reintegration:</b>
Maternity clinics	Infant houses
Parents (Self-referral)	
Infant houses	
Police	
MoES	
<b>FS&amp;FC:</b>	
<b>Prevention:</b>	<b>Foster care/adoption/reintegration:</b>
MoES	MoES
Local Education Department	Orphanages, boarding schools
Schools	
Parents (Self-referrals)	

Another crucial shortcoming is the lack of legal obligation for staff of maternity clinics and of other institutions falling under MLH&SA authority, to refer mothers at risk to PIAD social workers. In Batumi, there are no referrals at all coming from maternity clinics, seriously hindering the preventive component of PIAD. In Tbilisi, although cooperation is not institutionalised and enforced by the MLH&SA, the situation is better, owing to PIAD social workers' personal efforts to establish trust relations with health staff in key locations. The lack of proper regulations gives ground to illegal practices flourishing in maternity clinics, including parents adopting newly born children through a deal with the administration.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Maia Tatuashvili, Manager of PIAD Employment Services.

<sup>38</sup> Rumours about such practices are particularly widespread in Batumi (focus group with FS&FC social workers).

UNICEF and other stakeholders<sup>39</sup> recommend to train health staff on prevention of abandonment and case referral and to place functions similar to that of PIAD social workers at maternity clinics. This, however, will not be possible as long as the MLH&SA does not ensure its full support.

The situation has nevertheless improved since, following the abolishment of the Commission of Minors, a MoES decree has established that a child may enter an institution only with direct permission of the Ministry and social workers' assessment.

The system works more smoothly with regards to the FS&FC project, which main sources of referral are the MoES, the local Education Departments, and children institutions (in addition to self-referrals). It is a fact that most orphanages and boarding schools are reluctant to report about incoming children. On the contrary, they have an interest in keeping the number of children constant by encouraging admissions by legal and illegal means.<sup>40</sup>

Another aspect concerns referral from PIAD and FS&FC to other community services. A relevant part of social workers' time is actually dedicated to ease clients' access to available community resources, access that is made difficult by intricate bureaucracy and beneficiaries' disinformation about their entitlements. This, however, happens mostly on the base of personal and informal networks. There is no systematic cooperation between MoES and MLH&SA regulating access to social and health services for FS&FC and PIAD project beneficiaries, although there are isolated agreements, such as the one between PIAD and MLH&SA regarding access to a Child policlinic in Tbilisi.

In the absence of an institutionalised network of community services, social workers have to deal with a wide range of needs (including post-partum depression, or legal problems), in ways that go beyond their mandate and skills. In the PIAD project, the demand for admission in the Mother and Infant shelter – that has a limited number of places - could be reduced by appropriate referral to other services.<sup>41</sup> The situation looks better in Batumi and Kutaisi, were communities are smaller and the presence of FS&FC panels ensures some kind of informal inter-agency cooperation.

Legal provisions to regulate the referral system will become essential when services go to scale. Otherwise, the risk is to jeopardise the preventive component of social work (especially for PIAD), and to overwhelm social workers with cases that they are not fully able to deal due to lack of skills, time, and financial resources.

#### **Insufficient follow-up of reintegration cases (FS&FC project)**

In the Family Support and Foster Care project (FS&FC), reintegration cases are closed after 6-month delivery of cash assistance. No official follow-up is foreseen after that, although in some cases social workers keep in touch with beneficiaries by providing assistance on an informal, voluntary base. It is clear, however, that the reintegration of institutionalised children is a high-risk process that would require systematic monitoring.

“Reintegration cases are the most complicated and the consequences of unsuccessful reintegration particularly dramatic. Children who have lived in institutions for a long time tend to have behavioural problems, and the relation with parents becomes difficult to handle” *FS&FC social worker, Tbilisi*

Particularly worrisome is the possibility that the drive towards de-institutionalisation of children, encouraged by recent MoES policies, may lead to improper assessment of family situations.

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<sup>39</sup> Interviews with Giovanna Barberis, UNICEF Country Representative; Maia Tsereteli, PIAD Project Manager; M. Menteshashvili, Mother and Infant Shelter Manager; focus group with FS&FC panel in Batumi; interview with PIAD social worker in Batumi.

<sup>40</sup> Focus group with FS&FC social workers, Kutaisi.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Mary-Ellen Chatwin, World Vision CEDC Programme Manager.

“Social workers are more interested in family reintegration than in protecting children’s rights...how can a parent be more willing to raise a child just because he/she gets some money? There are psychological factors to take into account. Social workers need to be more accurate in their assessment.” *Nana Sakvarelidze Director of Makhinjauri Infant House*

Furthermore, it is not apparent that the projects have made any provision for emergencies, mismatches, or situations that go awry after family reintegration. Until now, such occurrences have not taken place<sup>42</sup>, which is a good indicator of success; however, a certain percentage of failure is to be expected with the expansion of the services.

### **Limitations in monitoring and accountability mechanisms**

Supervision within the two projects is in the hands of the project managers and managers of social workers teams, who report through their chain of command to central project management, and in the case of the FS&FC, to the respective department at the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). Monitoring is conducted according to forms elaborated by EveryChild. Such system seems to work well as far as it is relatively small scale, involves dedicated and honest persons and relatively low numbers of referrals. Until now, however, monitoring was based on quantitative, process indicators. The MoES has recently requested EveryChild to provide qualitative assessment procedures based on child’s development characteristics. The development of qualitative monitoring mechanisms will play a fundamental role in assessing the impact of services on child welfare, beyond the sheer number of placements under alternative care.

Furthermore, there is no institutionalised system, at present, of independent monitoring or audit of project activities, and no formalised mechanisms for handling independent complaints . With the increase of scale in activities such mechanisms appear to be absolutely necessary if mismanagement and abuses are to be avoided.

### **Inadequate information system**

To date, no joint, easily accessible information system related to the provision of alternative services to children deprived of parental care has been created in Georgia. The Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation project (PIAD) has started to develop its own computerised information system; the database, however, requires a number of improvements, as information is not always reliable and up to date. The Employment Support Centre (ESC) runs its own database on job vacancies and vocational training opportunities. At the MoES level, the information system is not computerised, although there is a database on children eligible for fostering or adoption parents. Thus, while there are some separate databases of beneficiaries, potential foster parents, or employment opportunities, in most cases data are not easy to use or to cross-reference, the databases are not regularly revised and checked and therefore often contain outdated information, particularly on contact details, and what is the most important, are not readily shared. As the gatekeeping system develops, the need for an information system where all cases are entered, accessible to all providers of alternative services, will become increasingly evident.

### **Narrow focus of social workers training**

Training delivered to social workers within the PIAD and FS&FC projects has been focused on the care of children in institutions, and case management tools. This is, however, “*just a small drop compared to the whole range of services and tasks comprised in standard social work*”<sup>43</sup>. According to stakeholders, as services are going to expand, social workers will need training in psychology,

<sup>42</sup> Except anecdotic evidence on the case of a child who, after being reintegrated in the biological family, was found begging in the street.

<sup>43</sup> Nino Shatberashvili, Founder of Georgia Social Workers Association.

communication skills, and legal issues. The latter are particularly important (and mentioned by many social workers as well) when dealing with foster arrangements, where it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between children's rights, and the rights of the biological family<sup>44</sup>. Social workers also need to develop a broader vision of their role within the social welfare system in Georgia, and to acquire more knowledge of how a referral system works. With technical advice from the Georgian Association for Social Work, the government of Georgia is planning to adopt a law on social work, and will develop a professional certification and training in order to regulate the profession of social worker in the country, (see section 4.3.3). This will provide a valuable chance for PIAD and FS&FC social workers to upgrade their skills.

#### **Little resources for transportation, communication, equipment (FS&FC)**

While the MoES ensures coverage of social workers' salary, not enough resources are allocated for office equipment and transportation/communication allowances. Office space is sometimes insufficient (in Tbilisi), and there are no landline telephones (in Batumi). Social workers use public transportation, which is very time consuming especially in the Batumi and Kutaisi area, and use their mobile phones for contacting clients. It is worth noting that although the FS&FC caseload in Kutaisi and Batumi is quite low (an average of 5-6 cases each), social workers claim to be overloaded in most cases because valuable time is spent waiting for minivans or other means of public transportation.

#### **Insufficient cash allowances for foster parents**

Stakeholders agree that the amount of cash compensation for foster parents has become inadequate as a consequence of accelerated inflation. The problem is particularly felt in urban areas where food is expensive.

“It is becoming increasingly difficult to find candidate foster parents for this amount of payment”  
*FS&FC social worker, Tbilisi*

This is obviously a crucial issue that will need to be addressed in the very near future, especially in view of the importance attributed by the MoES to foster care as a key alternative strategy to institutionalisation and of the introduction and promotion of foster care as a key outcome of the Family Support and Foster Care project (FS&FC).

#### **Limited coordination between PIAD and FS&FC projects**

So far no institutional link has been established between the services delivered under the two projects, or with other projects addressing families and children at risk. The PIAD and FS&FC have a diversified approach and provide different packages of services, although some are common (such as cash allowances to foster parents). The division based on the age of the target group, related to the different functional formats of the two infant houses in Tbilisi and Makhinjauri leads to some overlapping<sup>45</sup> and raises the question as to whether there could be a more effective division of labour (such as dividing children into pre-school and school age). Single mothers that benefit from PIAD's preventive services do not have automatic access to FS&FC cash assistance. By the same token, FS&FC social workers in Batumi may not be aware of services provided by World Vision through the income generating and employment support projects in the same region. Lastly, as anticipated, PIAD and FS&FC also run separate databases on clients and children eligible for fostering and candidate foster parents. The fact that there was no referral between the two projects is an indicator of the weak environment in which the projects were conceptualised.

<sup>44</sup> Focus group with PIAD social workers in Tbilisi.

<sup>45</sup> The PIAD target age group is 1-4 in Tbilisi, and 1-7 in Batumi (where the Makhinjauri infant house is located). Hence the overlapping with FS&FC target group, that covers 4-18 year old children.

### 4.3 **IMPACT**

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

- The projects have successfully introduced alternatives to residential institutions. All cases of prevention, reintegration, and fostering have been successful ones.
- Measurement of impact has been hampered by the lack of projects' logical frameworks establishing indicators of success at each level.
- Data on the total number of children in institutions are not reliable, and figures on projects' achievements are thus hard to put in context.
- The projects' services address key causes of children' institutionalisation i.e. economic hardship, feeling of helplessness and concerns about reputation. On the other hand, they do not provide an appropriate response to the needs of disabled children and their parents.
- The projects have successfully influenced government policies. The long-term involvement of UNICEF, EveryChild, and World Vision in advocacy and capacity building activities, and the strong donors' coordination towards a common goal have contributed to move the system in the desired direction.

#### **4.3.1 Achievements in prevention and reintegration**

It must be noted that neither the FS&FC nor the PIAD project are based on a logical framework that includes a monitoring and evaluation system with indicators of success at each level. As mentioned in § 1.3.2 (page 4), PIAD has established a limited number of quantitative objectives for service delivery.

The lack of well-developed indicators, including those related to family and child welfare as a consequence of service provision, makes it difficult to carry out an appropriate assessment of project impact. Up until now, the FS&FC project (in the 5 regions covered) has succeeded in preventing 440 children from institutionalisation, has facilitated the reintegration of 154 institutionalised children in their biological families, and placed 139 children in foster care. The PIAD project (in the 2 regions), has succeeded in preventing 140 infants from institutionalisation at the infant house, the reintegration of 19 infants in their biological families and has promoted the placement of 44 infants in foster families. Reportedly, all cases have been successful, meaning that, for instance, all mothers that benefited from preventive services have decided to keep their child, all family reintegration cases have been followed through, etc.<sup>46</sup> Given the previous absence of alternatives to residential institutions, these are certainly positive achievements.

Nevertheless, these figures must be analysed in the context of national trends in institutionalisation, to determine whether projects have made a difference in addressing vulnerability and preventing separation from the biological family. To this end, the UNICEF regional office uses two outcome indicators, namely:

- 1) The reduction in the total number of children in public care;
- 2) A change in the ratio between no. of children in residential care vis-à-vis no. of children in alternative family based care (e.g. foster and guardianship care) – this ratio should change in the favour of alternative family based care.

Unfortunately it is currently impossible to obtain accurate figures on the total number of institutionalised children in Georgia, let alone on the trends in admissions, mainly because of the tendency by the directors of institutions to inflate numbers.<sup>47</sup> According to some estimates, the

<sup>46</sup> Focus groups with FS&FC and PIAD social workers in Tbilisi, Batumi, and Kutaisi. As mentioned, the evaluation could not reach individuals who were eligible to receive services but could not be reached by those same services.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Andro Dadiani, EveryChild Country Director.

total number of children resident in institutions under MoES authority is approximately 5,000. This number, however, does not include institutions run by the private sector (legally or illegally) or by the Church.

The number of children in alternative family based care has certainly increased, as it was zero before the project<sup>48</sup>, nevertheless there is currently no way to determine whether the overall number of admissions in institutions is going down. On the contrary, the risk exists that in the future hasty closures may cause the transferral of children from one institution to another, leaving the total number of residents unchanged.<sup>49</sup> Donors are highly aware of this problem, and the EC has recommended a headcount of resident children as a basis for implementing effective policies.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, the information system developed so far by FS&FC and PIAD does not enable to measure child and family wellbeing once assistance has been delivered. It is not advisable to measure the projects' success only in terms of the quantity of children placed in alternative care or reintegrated into their family; especially considering that this could constitute an incentive for social workers to inflate "success stories" at the expenses of careful assessments of the child best's interest. The qualitative monitoring tools now being developed by EveryChild under MoES request will hopefully fill this gap.

### 4.3.2 Achievements in addressing the causes of child institutionalisation

The evaluation confirmed that the main reasons for children's institutionalisation are poverty and unemployment, followed by concerns about reputation and feeling of helplessness, especially when single mothers are involved.

Poverty is addressed by assisting with livelihood, job or other material help, training, or counselling. Interviews show that PIAD mothers who received assistance through the Employment Support Centre (ESC) have become less vulnerable as a result, both because they have gained access to an income source and because they have acquired more self-confidence. Figures from PIAD and the Department of Statistics of Georgia indicate that monthly revenues of mothers who found a job with ESC's assistance are (with one exception) above the Georgian official living wage in October 2004 (GEL 118.8)<sup>51</sup>.

Short-term actions like providing shelter, mediating with the family, or simply providing some psychological support may be decisive in increasing mothers' self-confidence, and in helping the development of emotional ties between mother and child, thus reducing the possibility of abandonment at a later stage.

The most challenging cases are those involving children with disabilities. Under the FS&FC project, MoES social workers have limited options in addressing the problem, namely providing higher cash allowances to parents who want to foster a disabled child, assisting parents in accessing the state benefits for which they qualify, and referring them to existing community services, such as day care centres, medical assistance, or humanitarian aid. Services for disabled children are scarce, and the government does not fund any of them. The MoES is currently working on a strategy for inclusive education; to date, however, there are no plans to support specialised non-educational services for disabled children, who are still viewed as a responsibility

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<sup>48</sup> Figures on children in alternative care in Georgia do not take into account the large diffusion of informal kinship care, especially by grandmothers.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Giovanna Barberis, UNICEF CO Representative.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Federico Berna, Food Security/Rural Development, EC

<sup>51</sup> World Vision, PIAD project Annual Report, September 2004



of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MLH&SA) or of the NGOs sector.<sup>52</sup> All this undermines projects' capacity to prevent an important cause of institutionalisation.

### 4.3.3 Projects' contributions to system change

#### Influence on policies

The primary objective of the PIAD and the FS&FC projects was to introduce family and community-based alternatives to children institutions as a stepping stone towards a government strategy for reforming child protection services. To a great extent this has been achieved, and in particular the FS&FC services are actually run by the government (i.e. by the Ministry of Education and Science [MoES]), which also contributes to PIAD in the form of foster care payments and social workers' salaries. The services provided - and personnel trained - within the framework of the two projects have to a significant extent become part of the new Government reform process. The Government has adopted the principle of de-institutionalisation as the cornerstone to deal with abandoned children. As mentioned in section 1.2, a Child Welfare Interministerial Committee has been set up; several draft laws concerning de-institutionalisation, foster care and adoption are under consideration, and EveryChild and UNICEF are playing a key advisory role in this process. Standards of care developed by the PIAD and FS&FC projects are being taken into consideration by the Committee's working groups that are now developing minimum standards for child care services. The MoES has fully recognised the role of social workers in the reform process, and is planning to introduce a BA and MA University degree in social work, which contents will take into consideration EveryChild training curriculum. A certification system will be established and it is planned that PIAD and FS&FC social workers will get credits for the training already received.

It is worth noting that a number of players have concurred to encourage the government's strategic shift. The European Union has become a prominent actor after the election of Saakashvili in 2004. During the 2001-2004 period, however, under unfavourable political conditions, UNICEF, World Vision and EveryChild have all been actively involved in capacity building activities, advocacy, and networking with those government elements that were supporting de-institutionalisation, using the lessons learned from projects on the ground. Not only did these projects include FS&FC and PIAD, but they also included other UNICEF-funded initiatives in the alternative child care sector, such as the World Vision projects Learners for life (LFL), and Sustaining Child Welfare (SCW), and the First Step Foundation's initiatives dealing with child disability. EveryChild, through its extensive experience in child welfare and social work issues has gained a significant leverage with the MoES during those years.

All this contributed to prepare the ground for the political shift that took place once the new government had come to power. In 2005, timely high level technical assistance to the government, provided by UNICEF, was crucial to put in place a number of mechanisms, such as the establishment of the Interministerial commission on Child Welfare and De-institutionalisation, the work on standards for alternative child care services, and the government's Optimisation Plan on institutions, that have allowed for placing these two pilot projects in a larger national context. Without the development in 2005, when the Government agreed on an operational plan for the reform of the child care system, these two projects, together with many other projects currently being implemented in Georgia, would have lacked the national governmental framework that would allow for scale up and future impact.

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Andro Dadiani, EveryChild Country Director

In addition, the good cooperation established among donors (see for instance the De-institutionalisation Working Group) in pursuit of a common strategic objective has been determinant in moving the system towards the desired direction.

On the other hand, there are still obstacles that need to be overcome for the FS&FC and PIAD projects to fully achieve their goals at policy level, first of all the government's "short institutional memory", as some key-informant described it. Due to the political changes and reshuffles that have taken place in recent years, important projects' achievements (or services) have been forgotten and/or were never implemented. For instance, direct referral to PIAD of infants presented for admission to the Infant House for assessment by the social work team, which the project was working towards with the previous MLH&SA and MoES, had to be renegotiated after the Rose Revolution. In 2003, the MLH&SA issued a decree making it compulsory for maternity clinic staff to provide information on PIAD services to expectant mothers, but after new officers came into place, it was never enforced.

### **Elements of practice**

The projects have introduced "elements of practice" that are already contributing to system change towards the creation of a gatekeeping system in Georgia. As mentioned, EveryChild has established sound case management practices, based on the use of standardised and comprehensive tools. The current development of national minimum standards for childcare services is taking its inspiration from standards elaborated within the PIAD and FS&FC projects. In particular, national standards are being thought around the concept of the child's best interest, and the quality of services will be assessed against services' capacity to safeguard children's self-esteem, privacy, etc., rather than on rigid environmental and physical parameters. PIAD's and FS&FC's experience have played a pivotal role in making standards more realistic and child-based.<sup>53</sup>

The Mother and Infant Shelter has proven to be a highly effective way to deal with the complex needs of single mothers, that besides poverty are suffering from isolation, low self-esteem and lack of family support. The MoES considers it as the most important PIAD contribution, and as a model to be widely replicated.<sup>54</sup> Finally, PIAD employment services constitute an innovative and effective practice: a lesson learned is that a gatekeeping system should include employment support among preventive measures. However, due to their relatively high cost and the lack of MLH&SA funding for active employment policies, there seem to be little perspective for such services to be undertaken by the government.

## **4.4 EFFICIENCY**

### **KEY FINDINGS**

- It is not possible at present to draw conclusions on the comparative costs of alternative services versus institutional care in Georgia.
- Estimates provided by implementing agencies are not totally reliable, because 1) they are based on comparing costs of different types of services; 2) they only consider existing alternative services, and not the costs of a full-fledged continuum of services and gate keeping system; 3) there are no certain data on the number of children in institutions, and therefore no estimate can be done on the actual cost per child of residential care.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Nino Shatberashvili, UNICEF APO-Child Protection-Child Development.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Tamari Golubiani, Head of Child Care Department, Ministry of Education and Science.

It is a widely accepted belief in Georgia that alternative services are highly cost-effective in comparison to residential care. Up until now, however, no systematic study on this subject has been carried out by government or donors. Projects implementers have attempted to estimate comparative costs: according to EveryChild, for instance, the FS&FC services have proven to be about one half of those of institutional care<sup>55</sup>, while the PIAD project 2004 annual report indicates that the Infant house average unit cost per client is approximately 12 times more than PIAD average unit cost per client<sup>56</sup>.

However a number of considerations invite to interpret those figures with caution. First of all, the nature and cost components of alternative services and residential care – for instance cash assistance to parents versus accommodating and feeding children - are different, and it is therefore not easy (if at all possible) to compare costs in a justifiable way. The cost of residential care includes the provision of services (such as medical assistance, or schooling in some cases), that the government should otherwise cover through a different budget, and that would not disappear after closing down institutions.

Secondly, the mentioned estimates are based on the current costs of a limited number and types of small scale alternative services, while available data is not sufficient to calculate the total cost of alternative versus residential care countrywide. Regarding institutions, the only figure available on their cost is the amount of government funding and in the absence of reliable information on the total number of resident children, however, it is impossible to determine the real cost per child that institutions bear.

Thirdly, with regards to alternative services, estimates should reflect the costs of a full-fledged gatekeeping system and a continuum of services, as compared to having only a network of residential care institutions. The unit cost of existing alternative child care may increase in the future as a consequence of quality improvements -higher social workers' salaries, maintenance of information systems, larger cash assistance, and development of a full range of services in the continuum of services, that is currently not in place in Georgia.

In the words of an MoES officer:

“If we compare the cost of institutions with alternative services currently provided by MoES , the latter are less expensive. But if we think of all the range of alternative services we want to implement (day care centres, temporary shelters, emergency assistance, specialised assistance to disabled children, etc.), it is going to cost much more.” *Tamar Golubiani, Head of Child Care Department, Ministry of Education and Science*

Finally, considering that the old design of the system (limited to the network of residential care institutions) was underdeveloped in terms of prevention- and gate keeping services, there are good reasons to believe that once a full continuum of services is in place the number of users of the system will increase and include also categories of users that today are underserved. This assumption is confirmed by experiences in other countries and in Georgia by the increase in the number of self-referrals to PIAD and FS&FC services.

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<sup>55</sup> Comparative costs were calculated as follows: the total cost of the FS&FC project in years 2004 and 2005, for a total number of 413 active cases (children), was GEL 918,550 (US\$ 502,436.91), including cash assistance and administration costs (management, social workers' salaries, transportation, consumables). The number was compared with the standard institution daily budget per child, which is GEL 7.2 (US\$ 3.9), that includes food, staff salaries, utilities, building maintenance, medical expenses, consumables), time the same number of children (413) for two years. The resulting total was GEL 2,170,728 (US\$ 1,187,487), about 2.36 times higher than the care provided by FS&FC.

<sup>56</sup> PIAD unit cost per client is reported to be equal to US\$ 344 and represents actual service costs excluding transitional costs, such as WV administration, while the Infant House Unit cost per client is reported to be equal to US\$ 4,000 and is based on the national average length of stay in residential care of 44 months.

At present, as it is impossible to close down or restructure all institutions immediately, two parallel systems coexist. The cost of keeping institutions is made of such components (e.g. utilities) that should remain constant regardless of the number of children, to avoid a further decline in the living conditions of residents. Therefore, in the transition phase, the development of a continuum of services simply adds to the costs already born by the MoES<sup>57</sup>.

The above-mentioned considerations highlight the fact that given the information currently available it is impossible to draw conclusions on the comparative costs of alternative services versus institutional care in Georgia. Furthermore, speaking in economic terms, it would be more correct to judge the cost-effectiveness of the reform not (or not only) in terms of immediate expenditures, but rather in terms of the long-term benefits that arise from having healthier, less risk/crime prone children, and having better value in the employment market. From all these viewpoints the project outcomes seem to be highly beneficial, though these benefits are currently difficult to calculate.

#### 4.5 **SUSTAINABILITY OF SERVICES / COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECTS**

##### **KEY FINDINGS**

- The MoES has put in place mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of FS&FC services. Its budget is covering social workers' salaries and cash allowances to parents. The Ministry provides an office space for the social workers and pays the utility bills.
- PIAD's integrated approach (with diversified services and involvement of many specialised staff) is more expensive and currently unsustainable. While the MoES is committed to take over the project's basic components (social workers, Mother and Infant shelter, medical assistance, foster care, and the information system), alternative measures will have to be sought to ensure continuity in the provision of employment services.
- The lack of MLH&SA targeted employment policies hinders the sustainability of PIAD's employment support component.
- The perspectives of sustainability of a full-fledged gatekeeping system and a continuum of services are still undetermined, as the institutional mandates in service delivery and financing are still to be established.
- Cultural resistance, including fear of loss of employment, by institutional staff is a major obstacle towards developing a gatekeeping system.

##### **4.5.1 Institutional sustainability**

The Georgian government has put in place a number of mechanisms to ensure the continuation of projects' activities.

The services provided by the Family Support and Foster Care project (FS&FC) have been taken over by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). According to the MOU with EveryChild, the Ministry agreed to cover social workers' salaries and cash allowances to parents, to provide office space and a training room for the project social workers in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Telavi, Kutaisi and Batumi, and to cover the utility bills of the offices assigned to the project. The role played by EveryChild has changed and the assistance provided is now limited to methodology, training, and

<sup>57</sup> The annual budget of the government for child care institutions and alternative services amounts for 2006 to GEL 7.2 million. (Source: MoES).

consultancy. Social workers are now considered part of the government system. The law on social work, now in the pipeline, that also includes training and certification procedures, will contribute to strengthen the institutional role of social workers. On the other hand, the future status of FS&FC panels is not clear. Although panels are supervised by the MoES, there are no Ministry regulations establishing and regulating the existence of similar panels in the context of national reform. The matter will have to be discussed as part of the reform process.

In the near future, the coverage and sustainability of the services provided through the FS&FC project may be enhanced through improved coordination with the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MLH&SA) Targeted Social Assistance Programme (TSA). A likely scenario is in fact that the delivery of cash assistance to at-risk families would be partly or fully taken over by MLH&SA social agents, while MoES social workers would focus on foster arrangements, family reintegration, and other alternative services.<sup>58</sup>

PIAD's integrated approach entailing different services and the employment of highly specialised staff (psychologist, job counsellors, trainers, etc.) brings about greater challenges in terms of sustainability. While the MoES is paying for social workers' salaries, it is very unlikely that the government will take over all components currently covered by a number of different donors. As to the Employment Support Centre (ESC), the situation is not encouraging at present: the only form of cooperation with the MLH&SA is that state employment agencies regularly communicate their list of job vacancies to the ESC. As anticipated, the MLH&SA is not planning, at least for this year, to carry out active employment policies or to establish synergies with the ESC services. The alternative is for ESC services to achieve cost-recovery. In Batumi, where World Vision is funding the same type of activity,<sup>59</sup> there are plans for employment services to become self-sustainable through commercialising and becoming a private employment agency. In such case questions are raised as to how the project beneficiaries could be using such service, so that it does not harm the economic profitability and hence the viability of the service.

Summing up, the following scenario seems likely for PIAD services:

- a) PIAD basic components, such as social workers, Mother and Infant shelter, medical assistance, foster care, and the information system, will be fully covered by the government. The MoES is actually planning to take over the Mother and Infant Shelter within one year, and to transform the Infant House in a hub of alternative services including a day care centre and a temporary shelter for children. The Ministry also has plans to hire additional social workers and place them at maternity clinics, to improve referral and enhance preventive activities.<sup>60</sup>
- b) Employment services may become self-sustaining through commercialisation. In such case, however, the MLH&SA should develop a mechanism to cover employment (and vocational training) services provided to programme beneficiaries.
- c) Some non-essential services (e.g. small grants and gifts) will remain dependent on international donors and private initiatives.

#### 4.5.2 Financial sustainability

A MoES budget line has been earmarked for "Alternative services for children deprived of parental care", for a total GEL 800,000 (for 2005). The Ministry is planning to increase the budget by an average 50% a year, with the target of de-institutionalising 500 children by 2007. Hopefully the rising budget allocations will also be directed to increase cash allowances to foster parents and to sustain social workers' daily operations.

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with Tamari Golubiani, Head of Child Care Department, Ministry of Education and Science

<sup>59</sup> In Batumi, World Vision employment services are not part of PIAD project.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Tamari Golubiani, Head of Child Care Department, Ministry of Education and Science

Although significant progress has been made in ensuring the financial sustainability of FS&FC and PIAD services, it is not clear yet how the government is going to finance the whole range of alternative services necessary to develop a national gatekeeping system. A licensing system is not in place yet, and there are still no indications as to which services the government would provide and which services would need to be outsourced. Estimates of the cost of different types of services, and of the government capacity to cover them, are currently limited by the absence of minimum reference standards. It is hoped that after February 2006, when recommendations for standards are due to be approved, further progress will be made in defining mandates and financial mechanisms to sustain the continuum of services and gatekeeping system.

#### **4.5.3 Cultural sustainability**

To date the projects have partially succeeded in “changing the minds” of caregivers in institutions in favour of de-institutionalisation, though the resistance is still strong. The cultural resistance of institutional employees still constitutes a major obstacle to gatekeeping in Georgia, and is closely related to the fear of losing funding and/or employment. PIAD strategy of training 4 infant house staff as social work aides has been instrumental in improving trust and facilitating social workers’ access to premises and children’ files. Endorsements of the FS&FC programme by the MoES, and the project information and awareness raising campaigns have contributed to slowly improve cooperation with orphanages and boarding schools. Nevertheless, the relations between projects’ social workers and staff of institutions are still generally marked by mutual distrust, or by a “cold war”, as a stakeholder puts it.<sup>61</sup> In the worst cases, social workers accuse institution directors of concealing information, or of corrupt practices, while institutional staff think that social workers are not sufficiently qualified to carry out their job. The situation appears worse within PIAD, due to the shifting legal status of infant houses and uncertain accountabilities. The implementation of government redeployment plans for institutions’ staff will hopefully contribute to improve institutional cooperation.

Regarding public opinion, both projects have put significant efforts in mass-media information and awareness raising campaigns. Greater public knowledge of the availability of alternatives to institutionalisation has led to an increased number of self-referrals to FS&FC and PIAD social workers. Child institutionalisation is traditionally considered shameful in the Georgian society, while foster care is easily accepted and grounded in Georgian culture that values extended family ties and kin solidarity.<sup>62</sup> It is therefore expected that as information on the availability of good quality services spreads, more parents will use them.

Cultural negative stigma towards out of wedlock births and particularly towards children with physical and mental disabilities appears to persist. Changing these prejudices through mass media and other forms of public education campaigns could become a fundamental gatekeeping tool.

#### **4.6 HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH**

The main objective of the Family Support and Foster Care (FS&FC) and of the Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation (PIAD) projects is to establish family-based alternatives to institutional care, and through these, to encourage the adoption by the government of family and community-based child protection policies. In other words, the projects intended to assist the Georgian government in fulfilling its mandate in child protection, as foreseen by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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<sup>61</sup> Focus group with FS&FC social workers, Kutaisi

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Gogita Gegelashvili, Parliament Deputy Chair of Health and Social Committee.

Especially within the FS&FC, implementing agencies were therefore careful to avoid stand-alone, unsustainable initiatives, but on the contrary, they paid particular attention to building MoES capacity to deliver alternative services. EveryChild started right away to channel funding the project through the Ministry apparatus, so as to facilitate financial take over. The project strategy entailed creating a cadre of social workers within the MoES, with the mandate of providing alternative childcare and family support services. At the same time, UNICEF and the implementing agencies were involved in advocacy and ongoing technical assistance to assist the government in the reform process leading to the establishment of a full-fledged gatekeeping system in Georgia.

The evaluation indicates that the Government has adopted the principle of de-institutionalisation, based on the best interest of the child, as a basis to deal with children deprived of parental care. The projects have also contributed to introduce the concept that children deprived of parental care, or those who cannot live with their biological families, have the same right as others to live in a family environment.

With regards to social work practices, EveryChild training to social workers and FS&FC panel members included awareness on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and on the need to related to it as a parameter in case management and decision-making.

The evaluation found that birth families and their children are clearly respected and prioritised as the placement of choice if possible. Continuity is valued in the care plans, children are not moved haphazardly from one place to another, attachments are honoured, transfers seem to be happening in a non-traumatic way, siblings are placed together, and standardised tools are used to consult children regarding their wishes in relation to foster placement or family reintegration.<sup>63</sup>

#### **4.7 RESULTS BASED MANAGEMENT**

The evaluation team has found that the FS&FC and PIAD projects had not been developed based on a complete logical framework or SWOT analysis. None of the projects have established detailed indicators of process, results, and impact. The FS&FC documents do not provide reference to expected quantitative outcomes. The PIAD project has established only a limited number of performance indicators (% reduction in infant institutionalisation, etc.). No systematic -or consistent -reference is found in either project documents on the relation established between activities and results. No evidence was found, within both projects, of a risk analysis and the presence of formalised risk mitigation strategies. The lack of a logical framework, and therefore of a base for monitoring and evaluation, has made the task of assessing the projects' impact much more complex. More generally, the lack of indicators may hinder the implementers' capacity to assess the outcome of delivered services in the future. EveryChild current efforts to develop performance indicators and standard assessment procedures will hopefully address this gap. Finally, FS&FC project documents made available to the evaluation team only include an evaluation and a final narrative report, besides a technical advice report and a case study, that do not provide sufficient information to document the entire project cycle. In particular, no annual reports were found on this project.

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<sup>63</sup> Focus groups with FS&FC and PIAD social workers; focus group with FS&FC panel members in Batumi.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The central purpose of the evaluation was to assess the two projects' contribution towards the development of a full-fledged gatekeeping system and continuum of services in Georgia. Therefore, the following conclusions are drawn at two levels: i) on the achievements of the two projects only, and ii) on the projects in the broader context of the national reform.

### 5.1 ACHIEVEMENTS OF FS&FC AND PIAD PROJECTS

The FS&FC and PIAD projects have achieved their expected outcomes in terms of number of children prevented from institutionalisation, reintegrated and/or placed under alternative care. The scale of both projects is very limited, and their impact cannot be expected to make a significant difference in national institutionalisation trends. The projects, however, have introduced elements of practice that constitute the basis for the development of a full-fledged gatekeeping system in Georgia, including the training of the first cadre of social workers in the country, sound case management practices, and standards for child care services that are becoming the basis for national ones. The multidisciplinary decision-making panels constitute one of the promising practices pioneered by the FS&FC project, establishing a mechanism for transparent decision-making in the best interest in the child.

PIAD's added value has been the introduction of innovative practices to handle the complexity of beneficiaries' needs. The evaluation showed in fact that poverty is not the only reason why parents want to place their child in an institution; single mothers especially suffer the consequences of low self-esteem, limited skills, isolation, and other psychological or behavioural problems. The lesson learned is that **cash benefits are not always the right or sufficient instrument to support parents in raising their children. An integrated package of services, including shelter and employment support, may be more effective in addressing the complexity of beneficiaries' needs.**

EveryChild's competence in raising the MoES' capacity and ownership of the project was a central element in making FS&FC services part of the government system. The NGO's choices to channel project funding through the Ministry, to house social workers right away in the Ministry premises, etc. were part of this approach.

In the case of the PIAD project, the more articulated and expensive approach makes the perspectives of government takeover more uncertain, hence the need to single out its more effective components and streamline PIAD and FS&FC services. The future sustainability of PIAD employment services is particularly at risk, due to the limited MHL&SA cooperation. **A lesson learned is that government employment policies targeted to vulnerable groups are an essential part of a gatekeeping system.**

The projects have been successful in introducing family and community-based alternatives to child care institutions as a stepping stone towards a government strategy for reforming child protection services. The government has adopted the ideology of de-institutionalisation, based on the best interest of the child, as a basis to deal with abandoned children. Advocacy and high level technical assistance provided by donors, including UNICEF, were crucial to put in place a number of implementing mechanisms, that have allowed for placing these two pilot projects in a larger national context.

The lesson learned is that **the sound cooperation towards a common objective and the effective division of roles established between UNICEF, implementing agencies, and other donors in the country has been a powerful tool in leveraging government support and moving the system in the direction of child welfare reform.**



## **5.2 THE PROJECTS IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL REFORM**

In order to build on the results of the two projects and work towards a full-fledged gatekeeping system and continuum of services in Georgia, a number of challenges will have to be addressed.

Many steps are still required to establish a national regulatory framework, including a definition of mandates and accountabilities for the provision of different types of services. In the meantime, a number of priority needs remain unmet, such as day care centres, temporary shelters for children, short-term foster arrangements, and, finally, rehabilitation and other specialised services for disabled children.

The new Targeted Social Assistance Programme has a great potential for boosting the gatekeeping system by reducing the risk of institutionalisation due to economic factors. A condition will be, however, the establishment of synergies between the TSA and de-institutionalisation policies, through proper retraining of MLH&SA social agents, and clear division of labour with MoES social workers.

Mechanisms for public funding to institutions, depending on the number of resident children, still provide incentives to institutionalisation.

The cultural resistance of institutions' employees still constitutes a major obstacle to gatekeeping. Although the MoES optimisation plan foresees measures to re-deploy institutions' staff, there is no large-scale evidence of successful implementation.

The existing referral system is weak due to lack of inter-agency cooperation and, particularly, to insufficient MLH&SA commitment. With currently small number of beneficiaries, social workers are able to fill the gap by establishing personal connections with referral sources and community services. If services are to expand, however, institutionalised cooperation and legal provisions regulating the referral system, backed by strong MLH&SA support, will be required.

The number of self-referrals to MoES social workers is likely to keep increasing. Although referrals initially concerned families at risk of leaving their child/ren in an institution, it seems that in the future more parents will be likely to request assistance because of widespread poverty in the society. A redefinition of social workers' mandate, also in relation to those of MLH&SA social agents in charge of cash benefits to vulnerable families, may be needed in the near future.

The follow-up procedures established by the projects (especially within FS&FC) are not adequate to monitor whether the rights of the child are met after family reintegration. Furthermore, the projects have not made any provision for emergencies, mismatches, or situations that go awry after family reintegration. With MoES services expansion, a certain percentage of failure is to be expected, whereby more systematic follow-up procedures need to be introduced, based on the use of child welfare indicators.

At present there is no system of independent monitoring or audit of project activities, as there are no formalised mechanisms for independent complaint handling. With the increase in the number of service users, such mechanisms appear absolutely necessary in order to avoid possible mismanagement and abuse.

The absence of a well-developed and computerised information system at MoES level, shared by all providers of alternative services and relevant agencies, is an obstacle towards developing effective internal and external monitoring mechanisms. It is currently almost impossible to obtain complete, reliable and comparable figures on services' outcomes, as data are scattered among different implementing agencies.

The amount of cash assistance provided by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) is insufficient to motivate a large number of people to become foster parents. It is particularly urgent to address this issue, as the government considers fostering as a prominent alternative form of care.

As services expand and possibly broaden their mandate, the skills of social workers will become insufficient to deal with the complexity of users' needs, and to effectively use the referral system.

The points above indicate that, **in order to create an effective gatekeeping system, a number of institutional changes should happen at the same time.** Limited changes in one sector (such as hasty closure of institutions while delaying the establishment of alternative services, or expanding services without upgrading social workers' skills) can only have negative consequences on child and family welfare.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation suggests a number of recommendations to government, UNICEF, and implementing agencies (World Vision and EveryChild) on how to improve existing services and contribute to the development of a gatekeeping system, also based on the lessons learned from the projects.

### TO GOVERNMENT:

#### Streamline institutional framework

- Develop an implementation plan for the Child Welfare National Strategy (including time and logical frames, codification of procedures, resource mobilisation, mandates, accountabilities, monitoring, etc.).
- Regulate the referral system, establishing legal obligation for cross-referrals and exchange of information between social workers, maternity clinics, residential institutions, and other relevant agencies. This should be achieved through strong governmental coordination and action, and increased involvement from the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs.
- Reform the current mechanisms of funding of institutions so that they depend less on the number of children admitted.
- Introduce follow-up procedures to assess the longer-term outcome of the intervention. Cases should not be formally closed as soon as cash assistance is stopped (FS&FC) but they should be followed on a standardised basis for a longer period. At the same time, given the increasing inflation rates, the amount of cash assistance provided to beneficiaries and especially to foster parents should be increased, particularly in urban areas.
- Ensure implementation of re-deployment policies for institution staff (MoES).
- Ensure timely draft of the law regulating social work, including the training and certification system.

#### Secure transparency of action

- Establish independent and effective systems of monitoring, evaluation, supervision and complaint handling based on the best interest of children.

#### Improve information system

- Support the Government's capacity to collect more accurate and reliable information, and to better analyse it, so as to contribute to informed decision-making. Develop a number of indicators to assess project impact and outcomes, not only in terms of services provided and outputs, but also in terms of long-term child welfare. Information system should become better organised, precise, and computerised.
- Information management systems should support both projects equally, but also other planners, decision-makers, and implementing agencies by ensuring a continuous flow of detailed information. Standardised formats and procedures for information exchange need to be adopted.

#### Reform in social welfare should address the needs of families and children at risk

- The Targeted Social Assistance Programme should closely coordinate with the de-institutionalisation efforts and adequate professional support and resources should be

provided to ensure effectiveness of the Programme so that it can be extended to children at risk. FS&FC services should in turn be harmonised with the TSA programme, and should maximise possible synergies.

- Pro-active employment policies, targeted at vulnerable families, are needed to effectively address the causes of child institutionalisation. There should be an institutional link established between MoES social services and services provided by state employment agencies. MHL&SA employment policies should also aim at providing alternative jobs to institutions' staff.

#### **To UNICEF:**

- In partnership with World Vision, advocate with the government for the integration of PIAD services in the de-institutionalisation process, with MoES taking over its basic components.
- Support the MoES in the development of a modern information system on alternative care services.
- In partnership with EveryChild and World Vision, assist the MoES to develop a system of monitoring, evaluation, supervision and complaint handling based on the best interest of children.
- Advocate for a stronger cooperation between MoES and MHL&SA and a closer link between de-institutionalisation and targeted employment policies.
- When funding future projects, ensure that logical frameworks are in place, including indicators of project's impact on child welfare, that can provide the base for monitoring and evaluation. In addition, ensure that ongoing regular reporting is provided by implementing agencies.
- Invest more efforts in documenting UNICEF role in influencing the reform process in Georgia, and in divulging lessons learned from projects on the ground. This will contribute to ensure continuity of action and to strengthen institutional memory, increasing the visibility and strategic role of the organisation.

#### **To implementing agencies:**

- Define qualitative and quantitative indicators of projects' success, and the respective sources of verification, that can constitute the basis for future evaluations. Indicators should take into account the impact of delivered services on child and family welfare.
- Improve the projects' information system so that updated and reliable information can be gathered immediately – and made accessible to interested agencies - on delivered services, such as typology of clients, social workers' case load, number and sources of referral, beneficiary profile, duration of cases, service provided and their outcome, and the result of follow-up activities.

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**ANNEX 2: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED AND SITES VISITED****TBILISI**

Andro Dadiani	EveryChild Country Director
Federico Berna	EC- Food Security/Rural Development
Giovanna Barberis	UNICEF Country Representative
Ingrid Kolb-Hindarmanto	UNICEF Programme Coordinator
Nino Shatberashvili	UNICEF APO-Child Protection-Child Development/ Founder of Georgia Social Workers Association
Maia Tatuashvili	Manager of PIAD Employment Services
Maia Tsereteli	PIAD Project Manager
PIAD social workers (focus group)	
Miriam Menteshashvili	Mother and Infant Shelter Manager
Mary-Ellen Chatwin	World Vision CEDC Programme Manager
Miranda Adeishvili	Director of Tbilisi Infant House
Tamar Golubiani	Head of Child Care Department, Ministry of Education and Science
Victoria Vasileva	Social Policy department, Ministry of Health Labour and Social Affairs; member of Child Welfare Interministerial working group;
Gogita Gegelashvili	Parliament Deputy chair of Health and Social Committee
Nino Kupadaze	Technical Coordinator of Child Welfare Interministerial working group
Guguli Magradze	Parliament Education Committee

**BATUMI, AJARA AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC**

Shorena Makhachadze	First Deputy Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Ajara Autonomous Republic, FS&FC panel members in Batumi
Nugzar Surmanidze	First Deputy Ministry, MLHS of Autonomous Adjara Republic, member of FS&FC panel
Archil Totochava	MP (National Party), Ajara Autonomous Republic, FS&FC panel members in Batumi
Maia Katamadze	Employment Manager for World Vision LFL
Aleko Rukhaia	Employment Consultant for World Vision ECCW
Nana Sakvarelidze	Director of Makinjauri Infant House
Nino Tsetskladze	Social Workers Manager
PIAD social worker at Makhinjauri Infant House	
FS&FC social workers (focus group)	
World Vision social workers - PIAD, LFL and ECCW projects (focus group)	

**KUTAISI, IMERETI REGION**

Lado Pataridze	FS&FC panel member
Natia Gorgadze	Director of World Vision Youth Community Center
Temur Sulakvelidze	Manager of World Vision Employment and Business Services
FS&FC social workers (focus group)	
World Vision social workers (LFL and ECCW projects)	

## ANNEX 3: FINAL GUIDELINES

### 3.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH WORLD VISION AND EVERYCHILD PROJECT MANAGERS

#### A. Relevance

1. Were the PIAD and FS&FC projects based on a needs assessment? What were the main findings?

#### B. Effectiveness

2. What are the available figures on PIAD and FS&FC outcomes so far (i.e: amount and characteristics of target population reached; n. of children provided with social work assessment; n. of children reunited with family, n. of children in foster care, reduction in n. of abandoned infants; n. of women informed about prevention of unintended pregnancies and HIV/AIDS etc.)?

3. Have the PIAD and FS&FC projects established an information system for gatekeeping purposes?

4. If yes, how does it work in practice?

5. Does the information system allow to review and monitor cases?

6. What are the child assessment and other case management tools introduced by the PIAD and FS&FC projects?

7. Have PIAD and FS&FC projects established a formalised system to follow-up cases after child placement or family reintegration? If yes, what are the general trend emerging?

8. Have PIAD and FS&FC projects establish mechanisms to cope with negative changes in the foster family or in biological family after reunification?

9. What is the social work supervision system established by the PIAD and FS&FC projects?

10. Do the PIAD and FS&FC establish objectives and performance indicators for service delivery?

11. Are there gaps in social workers capacity? If yes, in which areas, and are there plans to address those gaps?

12. What are the capacity building resources available to social workers?

13. What are the number, type and quality of alternative services developed by community groups?

14. In general, what are the aspects of PIAD and FS&FC service provision that need improvement?

#### C. Impact

15. In your opinion, does Georgia draft law on de-institutionalisation (and other regulations in the child protection area) create the bases for the establishment of a gatekeeping system? If not, what are the shortcomings? (Prompt questions: do the laws or drafts law:

Provide arrangements to coordinate national responsibilities on child protection?

Provide a framework for planning services for children? If yes, what does it cover?

- Establish objectives of service delivery to ensure that it is based on the needs of children?
- Establish a high threshold for entry to public care?
- Establish an official professional qualification for social workers?
- Establish job descriptions, power and duties of social workers?
- Establish national training programmes and an ongoing capacity building system for social workers and other government services? If yes, are the training content targeted to strengthen the gatekeeping role of social services?
- Regulate the role of private sector and NGOs in service delivery (including licensing, standards)? If yes, in which ways?
- Encourage the involvement of parents/families with children in care?
- Encourage participation in decisions by parents/family?)

16. In which ways are the FS&FC and PIAD projects contributing to influence legislation so to incorporate the elements so far mentioned?

17. In your opinion, are the PIAD and FS&FC projects effectively addressing the cause of child abandonment? What other services could be put in place to strengthen the preventive component of the projects?

### **3.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH MOES REPRESENTATIVE (CHILD CARE DEPARTMENT)**

#### **A. Relevance**

1. How are the PIAD and FS&FC projects situated in the MoEd strategic framework on child protection?
2. What national policies, laws, and budget lines still provide incentives to institutionalisation, and how is the MoEd planning to address them on its part?
3. How is the MoEd planning to deal with employment issue and conflicting interests raised by staff in institutions under its authority?

#### **B. Impact**

1. What is your general assessment on PIAD and FS&FC achievements and short-comings so far?
2. In your opinion, is the PIAD project effectively addressing the causes of infant abandonment? What other services could be put in place to strengthen the preventive component of the project?
3. Have the PIAD and FS&FC projects contributed to influence MoEd policies? If yes, in which ways?

#### **C. Sustainability**

4. How is the MoEd going to provide ongoing support to FS&FC social workers and local government partners, including capacity building, equipment, running expenses, etc.?
5. Is the MoEd able to ensure regular payment to foster families and financial support to vulnerable families?
6. Are there MoEd plans to decentralise the above financial responsibilities to local governments?



### 3.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH MHL&SA REPRESENTATIVE (SOCIAL POLICY DEPARTMENT)

#### A. Relevance

1. How is the PIAD project situated in the MHL&SA strategic framework on child protection?
2. What national policies, laws, and budget lines still provide incentives to institutionalisation, and how is the MHL&SA planning to address them on its part?
3. How is the MHL&SA planning to deal with employment issue and conflicting interests raised by staff in institutions under its authority?
4. What forms of coordination exist between the PIAD project and MHL&SA Social Protection policies?

#### B. Impact

5. What is your general assessment on PIAD achievements and short-comings so far?
6. In your opinion, is PIAD project effectively addressing the causes of infant abandonment? What other services could be put in place to strengthen the preventive component of the projects?
7. Has the PIAD project contributed to influence MHL&SA policies? If yes, in which ways?
8. What steps is the MHL&SA taking to implement a gatekeeping system in Georgia? In particular, what steps is the MHL&SA taking towards:
  - Provide a framework for planning social services for children
  - Establish objectives of social service delivery to ensure that it is based on the needs of children
  - Establish an official professional qualification for social workers
  - Establish job descriptions, power and duties of social workers
  - Establish national training programmes and an ongoing capacity building system for social workers and other government services
  - Regulate the role of private sector and NGOs in social service delivery (including licensing, standards)

#### C. Sustainability

9. How is the MHL&SA going to provide ongoing support to PIAD social workers and local government partners, including capacity building, equipment, running expenses, etc.?
10. What will be the impact of the MLH&SA decree requiring “all infants referred for state care to receive a social work assessment”? Will public resources be sufficient to cover the additional workload?
11. What are the employment services provided by the MLH&SA? Are there services targeted to vulnerable groups?
12. Is there a referral system in place between MLH&SA welfare and employment services?
13. If not, are there plans to establish it?

### 3.4 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH COMMISSION ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE, AND COMMISSION ON HEALTH, LABOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE.

#### A. Impact

1. In which ways does the Georgia draft law on de-institutionalisation (and other regulations in the child protection area ) create the bases for the establishment of a gatekeeping system? (Prompt questions: does the law/s:

Provide arrangements to coordinate national responsibilities on child protection?

Provide a framework for planning services for children? If yes, what does it cover?

Establish objectives of service delivery to ensure that it is based on the needs of children?

Establish a high threshold for entry to public care?

Establish an official professional qualification for social workers?

Establish job descriptions, power and duties of social workers?

Establish national training programmes and an ongoing capacity building system for social workers and other government services? If yes, are the training content targeted to strengthen the gatekeeping role of social services?

Regulate the role of private sector and NGOs in service delivery (including licensing, standards) ? If yes, in which ways?

Encourage the involvement of parents/families with children in care?

Encourage participation in decisions by parents/family?)

2. In which ways have the FS&FC and PIAD projects contributed to inform the draft legislation?

3. What is the current status of government efforts to establish national standard for social services?

4. In which ways do the standards contribute to strengthen the gatekeeping nature of services?

### 3.5 FOCUS GROUP WITH PIAD AND FS&FC SOCIAL WORKERS

#### A. Effectiveness

1. What is your case load right now?
2. How do you keep record of your cases?
3. Do you ever use the aggregate data on users to identify trends, assess service performance, etc.?
4. What are the most common types of parental difficulties that you encounter in your work with service users?
5. What are the main challenges you face in carrying out a need assessment?
6. Are there models/tools that you use for need assessment?
7. How do you make sure that services proposed match needs?
8. What are the type of services you most commonly refer your users to?
9. Do you have regular access to information on existing referral sources in the community?
10. How do you gain such information?
11. How do you follow-up cases after child placement in alternative care or family reunification?
12. How do you intervene if negative changes occur in the foster family or biological family after child placement?
13. Are you satisfied with the supervision you receive? How could it be improved?
14. If applicable: In your opinion, are the job description for social workers appropriate?
15. If applicable: What is your opinion on the incentive/internal evaluation/ system?
16. Are your office resources (equipment, space, transportation means, etc.) adequate to provide good working conditions?
17. Would you need more training/information to strengthen your service? If yes, in which areas?
18. What are the most rewarding and challenging part of your relation with service users, and why?
19. In general, what are the most rewarding and challenging parts of your work?
20. What aspects of social service provision (in the child protection area<sup>64</sup>) need improvement in your view?

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<sup>64</sup> Most countries in CEE/CIS define child protection as “protection of children with special needs or in difficult circumstances”. UNICEF however, defines child protection differently, namely protection from violence, abuse, exploitation, deprivation of parental care and from deprivation of liberty. The difference is that in UNICEF terminology and definition, a child protection system should act as well in **prevention** of violence against children

### 3.6 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

#### A. Effectiveness

1. What is your opinion on the information system established by the FS&FC and PIAD projects?
2. Are aggregate data ever used to identify trends, assess service performance, etc.?
3. In your opinion, are the capacity building resources available to social workers adequate and sufficient?
4. Are there unmet training needs among social workers? If yes, in which areas?
5. What is your opinion on the way social workers are supervised under the FS&FC and PIAD projects?
6. In your experience, what are the most common types of parental difficulties among social service users?
7. What is your opinion of the need assessment models/tools used by social workers in the FS&FC and PIAD projects?
8. What is your opinion of the referral system established by the FS&FC and PIAD projects?
9. Is there a formalised system to follow-up cases after child placement in alternative care, or family reintegration? If yes, what are the general trend emerging?
10. What is the average case load for social workers in the FS&FC and PIAD projects?
11. In your opinion, what will be the impact of the MLH&SA decree requiring “all infants referred for state care to receive a social work assessment” on social services workload and resources?
12. If applicable: In your opinion, are the job description for social workers appropriate?
13. If applicable: What is your opinion on the incentive/internal evaluation/ system?
14. Are social workers resources (salary, incentives, equipment, office space, transportation means, etc.) adequate to provide good working conditions?
15. From what you hear from your members, what are the most rewarding and challenging part of social workers relation with service users, and why?
16. In your opinion, what are the aspects of social service provision (in the child protection area <sup>65</sup>) that need improvement?

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(and all the other issues outlined above), as **early identification, referral and reporting of cases and provision of appropriate services**. In CEE/CIS countries however, child protection systems are defined **only** in a reactive manner, only responding to risks and not preventing them or addressing the early on. Answers to the above question are likely to reflect the local definition of child protection.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

### **3.7 FOCUS GROUP WITH MEMBERS OF FS&FC PANELS**

#### **A. Effectiveness**

1. What kind of models/tools does the panel use to assess users' needs? Are they adequate? How could they be improved?
2. In the panel experience, what are the most common types of parental difficulties among social service users?
3. What is your opinion on the functioning of the referral system established by the FS&FC and PIAD projects?
4. Has the panel a formalised system to follow-up cases after child placement in alternative care, or family reintegration? If yes, what are the general trend emerging?
5. In your opinion, what are the aspects of social service provision (in the child protection area <sup>66</sup>) that need improvement?

### **3.8 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH INFANT HOUSE DIRECTOR**

1. What is your general assessment of the PIAD project achievements and shortcoming so far?
2. In your opinion, is the PIAD projects effectively addressing the cause of infant abandonment? What other services could be put in place to strengthen the preventive component of the projects?
3. What is your assessment of the training received by the Infant House staff under the PIAD project? What changes did you notice in their way of working as an effect of the training?
4. How do you see the Infant house role in the future, given the government increasing efforts towards de-institutionalisation?

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

### 3.9 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH FOSTER PARENT

Name

Gender

Age

Marital status

N. of children

Residence

Provider of service

Type of service

Date first contact with service

Date service finished

1. What are the reasons that made you apply to become a foster parent?
2. How did the social worker assess your eligibility?
3. Were you satisfied with the social worker attitude, and the way you were treated?
4. If not, what were the reasons for disappointment?
5. Were you satisfied with the training and counseling received?
6. If not, what were the reasons for disappointment?
7. How can you describe your experience as a foster parent so far? What are the main gratifications and challenges?
8. Do you receive your financial allowance regularly?
9. Did you have any other contacts with the social services after the child was placed under your care?

**3.10 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH SERVICE USER (FS&FC REINTEGRATION CASE)**

Name

Gender

Age

Marital status

N. of children

Residence

Provider of service

Type of service

Date first contact with service

Date service finished

1. What are your education background and past work experiences?
2. What reasons led you to the first contact with the social service?
3. Can you describe your family and economic conditions at the time?
4. What kinds of request did you make?
5. How did the social worker assess your situation?
6. What type of service was proposed?
7. Was the service proposed responding to your need?
8. If not, what else would have been needed?
9. Were you satisfied with the support received throughout service duration?
10. Were you satisfied with the social worker attitude, and the way you were treated?
11. If not, what were the reasons for disappointment?
12. Are you satisfied with the final outcome of the service?
13. If yes, in which ways has your/your child situation improved as an outcome of the service?
14. If not, what are the reasons for disappointment?
15. Did you have any other contacts with the social services after your case was closed?

**3.11 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH SERVICE USER (PIAD EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)**

1. What is your current employment situation?
2. If you have a job, is it a permanent or temporary contract?
3. Are you satisfied with your job? If not, why?
4. Do you feel you may need additional support in the future (further vocational training, counselling, other)?

If you do not have a job:

5. What kind of support would you need to find one?
6. Are you registered with the Employment Centre?
7. If not, why?



**3.12 QUESTIONNAIRE TO MOTHERS USING PIAD AND FS&FC SERVICES**

This survey is carried out by the Institute for Policy Studies on the request of UNICEF. The aim of the survey is to assess the satisfaction with the services of 'social workers' and other services provided in the framework of the 'Prevention of Infant Abandonment and De-institutionalisation' project carried out by World Vision Georgia and of the 'Family Support and Foster Care' project implemented by Every Child. The answers that you will give will be confidential, and presented only in aggregated form, i.e. the frequency of each answer will be presented in the report.

Please answer all the questions sincerely. In case of need please contact us by phone at 22 00 60. Thank you for your cooperation!

Number:

Interviewer:

Date:

Programme: 1.PIAD 2.FS&FC

1. Your name:

2. Your age:

3. Number of children:

4. Marital status:

- 4.1. At the moment have a spouse
- 4.2. I have a spouse but live separated
- 4.3. I am divorced
- 4.4. At the moment do not have a spouse
- 4.5. I live with a partner
- 4.6. Widowed

5. Your education:

- 5.1. Primary
- 5.2. Basic (9 grades) completed
- 5.3. Secondary completed
- 5.4. Vocational
- 5.5. Began University
- 5.6. Completed University level studies

6. How would you evaluate your health now?

- 6.1. Bad
- 6. 2. Neither bad nor good
- 6. 3.Good

7. Did you work before your child's birth/participating in the programme?

- 7.1. Yes
- 7.2. No

8. If you worked -Where did you work (town or region and type of job)? -----

- 8a. -1 Tbilisi 2.region
- 8b type-list

9. If worked -On what position did you work?

10. Do you work now?

- 10.1. Yes
- 10. 2. No

11. If respondent works -Where do you work now? -----

12. If respondent works-On what position do you work? -----

13. If respondent works - How did you get the job?

13.1. With the help of the programme

13.2. With the help of State Employment Agency

13.3. With the help of kin/friends

13.4. From announcements

13.5. She/family members created the job (e.g. trading in the street)

13.6. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. If respondent works - are you satisfied generally with your job?

14.1. I am rather dissatisfied

14.2. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

14.3. I am quite satisfied

15. How satisfied you are with the following aspects of your work

#	Aspect	Rather unsatisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Rather satisfied
15.1	Salary			
15.2	Work conditions			
15.3	Stability			
15.4	Attitude of both/employees			
15.5	Character of work(it is interesting )			
15.6	Other			

16. How many persons live in your household? -----

17. Who are for you the members of your household?

17.1. Own child/children 1.Yes 2.No

17.2. Spouse or partner's children 1.Yes 2.No

17.3. Spouse/partner 1.Yes 2.No

17.4. Own parent(s) 1.Yes 2.No

17.5. Own siblings 1.Yes 2.No

17.6. Spouse's parents 1.Yes 2.No

17.7. Spouse's siblings 1.Yes 2.No

17.8. Other kin 1.Yes 2.No

17.9. Other non-kin 1.Yes 2.No

18. How many members of your household have an income of any kind ----

19. What would you call your economic condition now?

19.1. Extremely poor

19.2. Poor

19.3. Of medium affluence

19.4. Affluent

20. How many years have you lived in Tbilisi:

21.1. Since birth.

21.2. \_\_\_years

21. With whom did you live before the child birth/participation in the programme?

22. Close kin -----

23. When did you leave family of origin? (Year/month)-----
24. Who are the members of your family of origin?
- 24.1. Mother 1.Yes 2.No
- 24.2. Father 1.Yes 2.No
- 24.3. Sister, number -----
- 24.4. Brother, number -----
- 24.5. Brother/sister in law, number -----
- 24.6. Grandmother 1.Yes 2.No
- 24.7. Grandfather 1.Yes 2.No
- 24.8. Other kin, number -----
- 24.9 Other, non-kin -----
25. How many members had an income? -----
26. What would you call your economic condition at the birth of the child/programme participation?
- 26.1. Extremely poor
- 26.2. Poor
- 26.3. Of medium affluence
- 26.4. Affluent

**Questions concerning the child for whom you have received assistance from the programme.**

27. When was the child born? Month and year -----
28. The sex of the child 1. Male 2. Female
- 29a. What problems did you face before the birth of your child (PIAD)

	Problem	Yes	Notes
29.1	No means to feed the child		
29.2	No/bad housing		
29.3	Child father was against		
29.4	Spouse/partner/family did not want the child		Who?
29.5	My family did not want the child		Who?
29.6	Was afraid of domestic violence		From whom?
29.7	I was afraid of losing/not finding the job/studies		
29.8	I was afraid that nobody will marry me with the child		
29.9	Poor health		
29.10	Disability of child		
29.11	Had no money for medical care of the child		
29.12	Was afraid of losing reputation		
29.13	Was afraid that for family losing of my reputation will be hard blow		For whom?
29.14	Father does not admits that the child is his		
29.15	My family did not know that I had/have a baby		Who?
29.16	Was afraid that could not look after the child		
29.17	Other		

29b. What problems did you face at the moment of your participation in the FS&FC project

	Problem	Yes	Notes
29.1	No means to feed the child		
29.2	No/bad housing		
29.3	Did not want the child to be exposed to domestic violence		From whom to whom?
29.4	I was afraid of violence towards the child		From whom?
29.5	The child was alone, without supervision the whole day		
29.6	No means to buy textbooks		
29.7	No means to buy cloths for the child		
29.8	Could not control the studies of the child		
29.9	Could not control child's behaviour		
29.10	Your Poor health		
29.11	Disability of child		
29.12	No means for medical care of the child		
29.13	Could not work because of the child		
29.14	Nobody to help me in upbringing the child		For whom?
29.15	Other		

30a. Who wanted you to have the child? (Roles, e.g. mother, friend)

30b. Who you can rely on when having problems with the child? (Roles, e.g. mother, friend)

-----

31. How many days after child birth/writing application were you contacted by the social worker \_\_\_\_\_

32. Where did you meet her first?

1. At the maternity house
2. At a women's consultation
3. At home
4. At PIAD/EveryChild office
5. Other place \_\_\_\_\_.

33. Did you have any information on possibilities for getting social assistance before child birth/participation in the programme?

33. 1. Yes
33. 2. No

34. If yes, where or from whom did you get it? \_\_\_\_\_

35. What type of assistance did you get from the programme (Check below)

	Type of assistance received	Duration		
		Still having assistance	Once only	Period of assistance (month/year-month/year)
35.1	Cash			
35.2	Food/baby food/ Cloths for child/pampers			
35.3	Medical assistance			
35.4	Means of production (e.g. sewing machine)			
35.5	Micro credit/grants for small business			

35.6	Legal advice/getting documents			
35.7	Psycho-social counselling			
35.8	Vocational/life-skills training			
35.9	Staying in the shelter			
35.10	Visits of social worker			
35.11	Housing/renovation/heating			
35.12	Reconciliation with family members			
35.13	Reconciliation with child's father			
35.14	Smoothing relations with kin and friends			
35.15	Transportation to the village and introduction to local authorities			
35.16	Creating support system for child			
35.17	Other			

36. Please, choose from the listed above up to three types which were the most important for you and indicate how satisfied you are with them (right numbers from the list above) -----

No	Type	Rather dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Rather satisfied
36.1				
36.2				
36.3				

37. What other kind of assistance would have been important for you to receive? \_\_\_\_\_

38. Have you received/receiving any state assistance? 38.1. Yes 2.No

39. If yes, what kind -----

40. After your participation in the programme how did the following change:

No.	Issue	Worsened	Did not change	Improved	Does not apply
40.1	Relations with the spouse/partner/baby's father				
40.2	Relations with the family of origin				
40.3	Relations with the spouse's/baby's father's family				
40.4	Self-confidence				
40.5	Relations with kin/friends				
40.6	Economic conditions				
40.7	Your health				
40.8	The fear of the future-own and child's				
40.9	Feeling of happiness				
40.10	Child's behaviour				
40.11	Child's studies				
40.12	Child's feeling of happiness				
40.14	Other				

41. How would you characterise the mood of your child

1. Basically sad
2. Neither sad nor happy
3. Basically happy

42. How would you characterise the health of your child

36.1. Not good

36.2. Neither bad nor good

36.3. Good

43. Right now what do you need the most? \_\_\_\_\_

44. In your opinion what should the state offer the mother to avoid the institutionalisation of the child? \_\_\_\_\_

45. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the programme?

No	Aspect	Rather dissatisfied	Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	Rather satisfied
45.1	Frequency of contact with social worker			
45.2	Availability of social worker when needed			
45.3	Respectful and friendly attitude of social worker			
45.4	Understanding my needs by social worker			
45.5	Amount of the offered services			
45.6	Quality of the offered services			
45.7	Other			

## **ANNEX 4: CONTENTS OF EVERYCHILD TRAINING TO SOCIAL WORKERS**

### **Introduction**

#### **Acknowledgements**

#### **1. Children's rights and needs**

- a) Notes on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- b) Maslow's hierarchy of needs

#### **2. Theories of Child Development**

- a) Sheridan's chart of development aged 0-5
- b) Erikson stages of psychosocial development
- c) Piaget's theory of cognitive development

#### **3. The importance of attachment in child development**

- a) The attachment cycle and the importance of attachment
- b) Assessing attachment – observation checklist
- c) Effects of lack of attachment
- d) Chart of effects of disrupted attachment on development
- e) Some additional difficulties for children with a history of rejection
- f) Ways to encourage attachment
- g) Separation and loss
- h) Living with grief
- i) Permanence and Identity
- j) Effects of institutionalisation
- k) Anti-social and conduct problems

#### **4. Child abuse and child protection**

- a) Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect
- b) Why abuse happens?
- c) How children send signals that they have been abused
- d) Some key things to say to a child when they tell you about abuse
- e) Facts about sexual abuse
- f) Sexual behaviour of children and young people

## **5. Direct work with children**

- a) Some purposes of direct work
- b) Some aids and techniques
- c) Life story work

## **6. Essential social work skills and techniques**

- a) Ten key areas of professional social work
- b) An assessment framework
- c) Collecting information for your assessment
- d) Genograms
- e) Report writing
- f) Interviewing
- g) Methods of family support
- h) Assessing and preparing children and families for reintegration
- i) Counselling
- j) Group work
- k) Dealing with aggressive behaviour
- l) Coping with stress
- m) A framework for reflective practice

## **7. Team work and Supervision**

- a) Healthy and Unhealthy teams
- b) Techniques of professional supervision
- c) Purposes of professional supervision
- d) Three components for a system of high quality supervision
- e) Skills of professional supervision: giving feedback

### **Suggestions for further reading**

#### **Appendix one - The values, knowledge and skills of social work**

#### **Appendix two - Kolb's learning cycle**

#### **Appendix three – Notes for trainers**



## ANNEX 5: GOOD PRACTICES

### 1 THE PIAD EMPLOYMENT SERVICE CENTER

The PIAD Employment Services Centre (ESC) is located in Tbilisi, within the PIAD referral centre, in the same building where the Infant House is located. The staff includes the ESC manager and two job counsellors.

The centre manages and monitors the development, design, and delivery of employment counselling and job placement services, addressed to Mother and Infant Shelter's residents as well as to parents of Infant House's residents. Its services include:

- Ongoing job counselling.
- Training in employment preparedness, covering core issues of job seeking, such as: first contact with the employer, interview tips, preparation of CVs, dress style, conversation skills and other tools associated with job search. Training increases mothers' self-confidence and provides them with the opportunity to explore their life skills and employable skills, which will be the basis for developing an employment strategy for each individual case.
- Labour market studies.
- Database of vocational training services and providers in Tbilisi
- Database of vacancy announcement sources, regularly updated. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs cooperates with the ESC by regularly communicating job vacancies recorded by state employment agencies. In addition, the centre has developed regular contacts with local businesses, from which it systematically receives information about vacant positions.
- Negotiations with local employers about project beneficiaries' employment. The Employment Support Centre (ESC) provides small grants to employers to cover the expenses of on-the-job training to beneficiaries.
- Networking with community resources, such as local NGOs and international organisations working on women's issues.

The ESC represents a unique model of employment services targeted to vulnerable categories in Georgia. Services of state employment agencies are in fact tailored to the needs of young graduates, and mainly consist in standard vocational training. The typical PIAD beneficiary (young single mother, with limited education and skills, and low self-confidence) very rarely finds a job through state agencies<sup>67</sup>. The key of ESC's success seems to be the individualised support that increases women's self-esteem and awareness of their professional skills and aspirations, both necessary conditions to undertake any job-seeking initiative. Job counselling provided by the ESC takes into account that psychological and behavioural aspects (such as communication skills, time management skills, etc.) are as important as job skills in facilitating access to the labour market. On-the-job training provided by owners of local small business is also deemed more effective than standard vocational training. The close contact established between beneficiary and employer enables to establish reciprocal knowledge and trust, and creates favourable conditions for hiring. The intense networking with employers and negotiation activities carried out by ESC staff are instrumental in achieving job placement results.

Finally, ESC services are successful because they are integrated, that is, they address different facets of beneficiaries' needs (information, mediation, training, psychological support), at the same time, enhancing the overall empowering effect.

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<sup>67</sup> Interview with Maia Tatuashvili, Manager of PIAD Employment Services

## 2. THE PIAD MOTHER AND INFANT SHELTER

The PIAD Mother and Infant Shelter in Tbilisi is an emergency transitional service for mothers at risk of abandoning their infants. It can accommodate 6 mothers with their babies. The shelter provides short term residential services to women who have not definitely decided to relinquish care of their infants, and women who may be under pressure from their family to abandon their infant, making it difficult for them to remain within the family home with their new-born. The shelter is also available to mothers who have decided to relinquish care of their child and need a residence during the six weeks before they may legally consent to adoption. This is a period during which many infants are abandoned. Social workers assess beneficiaries' situations, provide referral to appropriate support services available through PIAD and the local community and assist them in developing a long-term plan that is in the best interest of the child. The shelter is considered as a last resort to prevent abandonment after the mother and social worker have considered other options.

During their stay mothers receive counselling, psychological support, training on life skills and childcare. PIAD staff includes a nurse, an educator, a paediatrician and a psychologist who can provide professional advice and support to residents. All mothers are assisted in finding a job by the Employment Services Centre, through job counselling, vocational training, and help in making contacts with local employers or, when appropriate, they receive small grants to start a small business.

Sources of referral to the Shelter comprise Tbilisi maternity clinics, churches, and NGOs. The Shelter has codified entry and exit procedures. Upon referral, social workers evaluate the situation of the mother and the possible reasons for abandonment. The case is discussed with the Shelter Manager, Employment Service counsellors and the educator. The Shelter Manager makes the final decision. In case of admittance to the Shelter, a written agreement is signed between the Shelter Manager and the temporary shelter resident, in which the latter accepts the responsibility to follow the shelter's internal rule, and to cooperate with the staff. Mothers can remain in the Shelter for at maximum of 6 months, and the average length of stay is around 4 months. Exit procedures include making sure that the conditions established in the life plan, enabling the woman to take care of her child, to live independently, or to be reunited with family, are met.

According to this and previous evaluations<sup>68</sup>, the Shelter is one of the most effective PIAD components, because it provides a safe environment within which mothers develop a bond with their children and are given considerable support to develop confidence and life skills.

In terms of challenges, some areas need consideration. The Shelter has become the mainstay of services for the PIAD project, however the work there is very intensive, making it both expensive and at the same time creating a risk of dependency. A number of women residing in the shelter may have been better referred to community services. To deal with these issues the project may consider making stays at the shelter shorter and making it more of a crisis resource. One way to achieve this would be to help mothers find accommodation and provide assessment and training on a day care basis. Social workers should develop their capacity to use the referral system, through updated knowledge of community resources, and increased ability to direct mother to the appropriate services.

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<sup>68</sup> See **Report on Evaluation of PIAD Project**, January 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2004, by Andy Bilson and Frances Young