Achievements and Challenges in De-institutionalization of Children below 3 years in Georgia

Sofia 2012

Ministry of Labor Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
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Country Profile

- Total population - 4.2 million
- Child population - 979.500
- Internally displaced persons – 300.000 (28% 0-18)
- Children not registered at birth – 8%
- Extreme child poverty (below 1 USD) -12 %
Children were Overwhelmingly Institutionalized Because of Poverty and Disability - 90% had a Living Parent
There were more than 5200 children at 47 institutions with no social and/or rehabilitation work available.
Three Main Priorities of Reform

✓ Reintegration of children living in the institutions into biological families

✓ Provision of various social benefits as a preventive measures against child abandonment

✓ Substitution of orphanages with alternative-family based services like small group homes and foster care
Overview of Reform

Deinstitutionalization and child care system reform launched in 2005

Several major steps have been taken under the framework of the Reform:

- Development and improvement of relevant legislation to reduce administrative barriers for child’s reintegration into biological family, adoption and placement in foster care;

- Strengthening the role of social workers;

- Establishment of regional guardianship and care panels;
Overview of Reform (Cont.)

- Adoption of the child protection and deinstitutionalization action plan by the Government of Georgia

- Opening of 37 small group homes throughout the country

- Supporting prevention and reintegration programs

- Provision of free health care for children 0-5 years

- Strengthening alternative services:
  - Foster care (emergency, regular, specialized)
  - Small group homes (for 6-18 year olds)
Quick Facts for 2009-2012

2916 CHILDREN RETURNED TO FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

✓ 742 children adopted
✓ 1330 children placed in foster care
✓ 923 children reintegrated to biological families
✓ 37 small group homes opened
✓ Number of social workers increased from 80 to 225
✓ The reintegrated families and children in foster care are provided with health insurance and cash allowance
✓ Number of orphanages reduced from 47 to 5 and the number of their beneficiaries from 5200 to 180
Children Living in Institutions Compared to Alternatives over a 5-Year Period
Inflow into infant homes versus emergency foster care in 2011-2012

- Emergency Foster Care: 83%
- Institutions: 17%
Present situation

➢ 991 children in foster care

➢ 320 children in small group homes

➢ 180 children in 5 institutions

➢ Remaining institutions: 2 for 6-18 years old children, 2- for disabled and 1 infant house estimated closing by 2013

➢ Number of children in infant houses decreased from 220 up to 80

➢ No large size institutions in Georgia by the end of 2013
# New Frontier of Family Support Services for Children 0-3 Supported by the State

2005 / 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Intervention service for children with disabilities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home care for children with disabilities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day care center for 0-2 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reintegration, prevention, food vouchers</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/baby shelters (places)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social work services (basic)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>225</td>
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Challenges in full DI and prevention of placement of children below three in institutional care

- Need for more preventive/family strengthening programs
- Lack of specialized foster care families for children with severe disabilities and health needs
- Problem with early identification and timely intervention for disabled children
- Disability stigma
Thank You!