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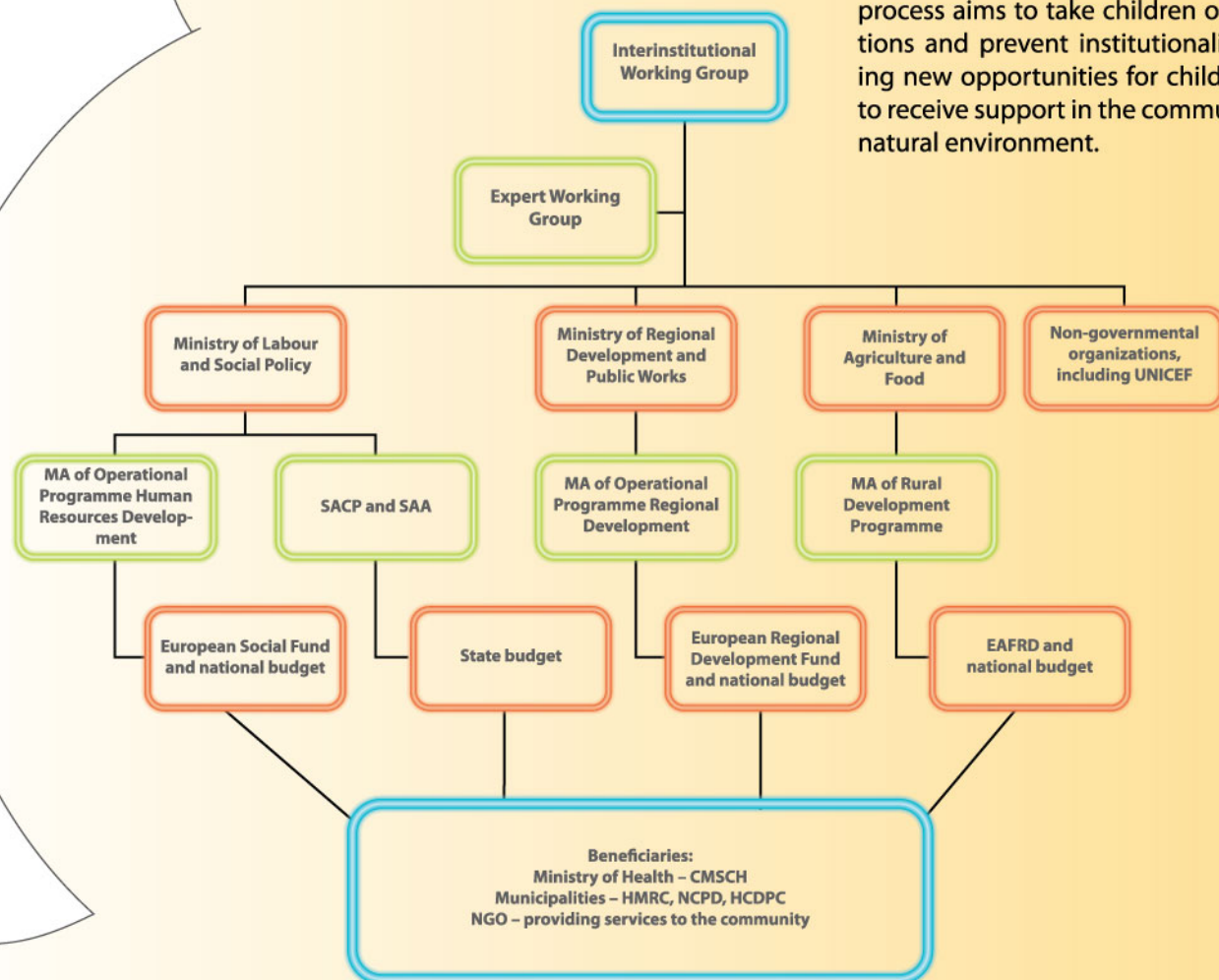
OPRD

Investing in your future!

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2007-2013

IN SUPPORT OF DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION
OF CHILDREN IN BULGARIA

Deinstitutionalization is the process of replacement of institutional child care by family care or family-identical care in the community. This process aims to take children out of the institutions and prevent institutionalization by creating new opportunities for children and families to receive support in the community and in their natural environment.



Institutional framework of the deinstitutionalization process in Bulgaria

Strategic Documents

On 24 February 2010 the Council of Ministers approved strategic document “Vision on Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria”. The document outlines the political commitment and will for reform of the child and family care system. The reform aims to prevent the placement of children in residential care and includes development of new services, including replacement of the system of classical boarding-type institutions with a network of community-based services. Main objective of the document is to guarantee the children’s right of a family environment and quality care and services according to their individual needs. All programmes and projects for deinstitutionalization and child and family services financed by the European Union or national budget should be guided by this political document.

An **Action Plan** has been elaborated towards achievement of the objectives of the **Vision on Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria**. It sets specific measures and actions aiming at an integrated and comprehensive child and family policy and at amendments in the sector policies. Objectives of the Action Plan in implementation of the Policy Document include:

- to develop a system of family and community-based services across the country which exclude existence of specialized child institutions;
- to close systematically all classical boarding-type institutions in Bulgaria and guarantee for every child long-term and short-term placement in family-type care;
- to develop legal and regulatory framework needed to support the transition to family and community-based care;
- to improve the efficiency of the care system for vulnerable children and their families.

The plan is by 2025 to provide community-based services of high quality tailored to individual needs for all vulnerable children and their families in Bulgaria. Children should only be separated from their families where such separation is necessary for the best interest of the child according to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Objectives set out in the Action Plan will be achieved through implementation of five projects covering Children’s Medical and Social Care Homes (CMSCH), Homes for Children with Disabilities (HMRC, HCPD) and Homes for Children Deprived of Parental Care (HCDPC), development of foster care and social worker’s career development.

LEGEND:

SACP State Agency for Child Protection
SAA Social Assistance Agency
EAFRD European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development
MA Managing Authority

CMSCH Children’s Medical and Social Care Home
HMRC Home for Mentally Retarded Children
HCPD Home for Children with Physical Disabilities
NCDPC Home for Children Deprived of Parental Care
NGO Non-governmental organizations

Action Plan Projects

A large number of social services are to be developed in Bulgaria to replace the existing 127 institutions for children (as of June 2011). Steps for closing of institutions will be launched with the implementation of 5 major projects as follows:

Project 1 "Deinstitutionalization of Children from Homes for Children with Disabilities"

is under implementation and aims at deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities. It is implemented through supplementary financing by several EU funded programmes: OP Human Resources Development, OP Regional Development and Rural Development Programme. Main project objective is to plan and implement specific and effective measures for real deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities placed in specialized care institutions.

Under OP Human Resources Development, Operation "Not to leave a single child behind", the State Agency for Child Protection in cooperation with the Social Assistance Agency and the Ministry of Health is implementing the "Childhood for all" initiative. The project aims at planning and preparing all parties in the process for complete deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities above 3 years and young people from CMSCH and Homes for Children with Disabilities. The project's budget is to the amount of BGN 5 million. Adequate community-based social services to be developed as an alternative to institutional care have been identified and the children and young people in specialized institutions have been reviewed and analyzed. Based on this information was elaborated National Map for Residential Services envisaging construction of 149 Accommodation Centers of family Type (ACFT) and 36 protected homes located in 81 municipalities.

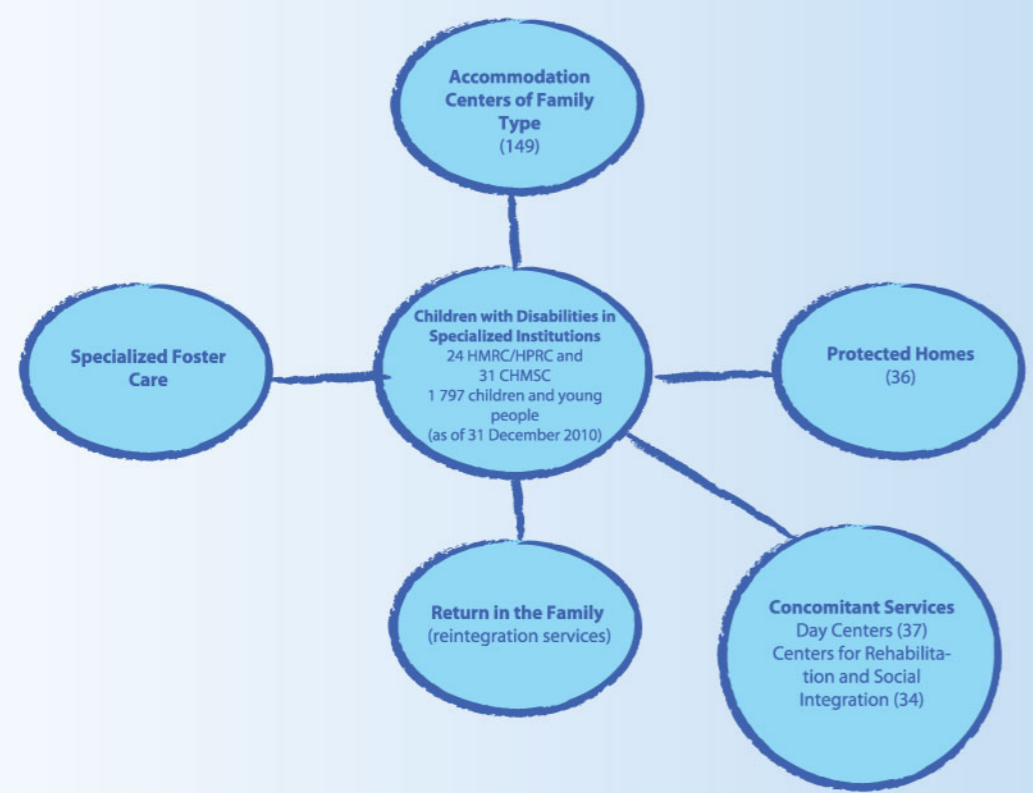
The building of an adequate infrastructure is of vital importance for the quality achievement of expected results in accordance with the National Map for Residential Services. Envisaged funds for construction in urban agglomeration areas are provided by Operational Programme Regional Development 2007-2013, and respectively for municipalities located outside urban agglomerations by the Rural Development Programme.

On 26 January 2011 under OP Regional Development, within the framework of Operation 1.1 is implemented grant scheme "**Support for deinstitutionalization of social institutions providing services to children at risk**" with budget to the amount of BGN 107 million. Specific beneficiaries are 62 municipalities in urban agglomerations. The scheme is aimed at **support of construction/reconstruction of an adequate infrastructure on the territory of urban agglomerations** to replace institutional care and contribute to provide new opportunities for children with disabilities and their families to receive support within the community and their natural environment. **Envisaged is the establishment of 133 ACFT and 27 protected homes.**

RDP is to provide target funding for construction of 16 ACFT, 9 protected homes, 1 day center for children with disabilities and 8 centers for social rehabilitation and integration in 19 municipalities located outside urban agglomerations in accordance with the National Map for Residential Services. Within the January-May 2011 period are made amendments in Ordinance No 25 stipulating the conditions and routine for provision of grants under Measure 321 related to planned deinstitutionalization measures.

Within the framework of OP Human Resources Development, Operation "Not to leave a single child behind" also envisaged are funds to the amount of BGN 23 million for opening of social services by stages in an adequate infrastructure built with financing by Operational Programme Regional Development. Support will be provided to social services identified as appropriate to address the needs of each child. Target municipalities will develop project proposals for provision of recommended social services in parallel with finalization of construction works under OPRD, in order to start activities for providing social services in due time.

Deinstitutionalization of children from Homes for Children with Physical and Mental Disabilities



Deinstitutionalization of children from Medical and Social Care Homes for Children aged 0-3 years

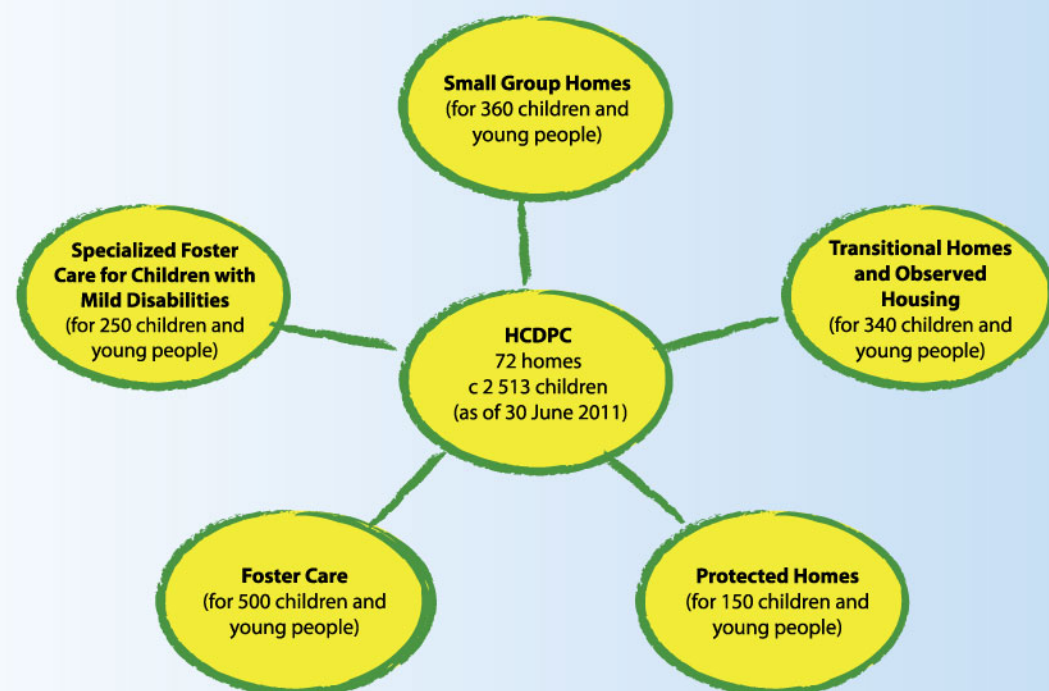


Project 2 "Deinstitutionalization of children from Children's Medical and Social Care Homes"

Under OP Human Resources Development, Operation "Chance for a happy future" aims to create and realize a sustainable model for permanent deinstitutionalization of children aged 0 to 3 years, placed in CMSCH through provision of integrated healthcare and social services to support the family and prevent the risk of abandonment of children. The operation is aimed at preparation for restructuring of CMSCH with BGN 2 million budget and opening by stages of innovative integrated services for deinstitutionalization and prevention of the risk of abandonment of children aged 0 to 3 years with BGN 14,5 million budget. After an analysis the Ministry of Health in partnership with

SACP and SAA determined eight pilot CMSCHs (Montana, Pazardjik, Pernik, Plovdiv, "Sveta Paraskeva"-Sofia, Targovishte, Gabrovo, Russe) to be restructured. For implementation of the operation will be used mutually complementing financial resources under two operational programmes – OPHRD and OPRD. For restructuring of CMSCHs are provided funds to the amount of BGN 10 million by Operational Programme Regional Development 2007-2013 within component 2 "Restructuring of Children's Medical and Social Care Homes for children aged 0-3" under scheme "Support for renovation and modernization of state medical and healthcare institutions in urban agglomerations". Specific beneficiary is the Ministry of Health. The grant contract is signed on 21.07.2011 and will be implemented for 24 months.

Deinstitutionalization of Homes for Children Deprived of Parental Care



Project 3 "Deinstitutionalization of children from Homes for Children Deprived of Parental Care"

Indicative budget of BGN 9 million is required for project implementation for development of new services and BGN 28 million are required for construction of necessary infrastructure. Within OPHRD is envisaged Operation "Life in the Community" aimed at development of social services in support of social inclusion of persons placed in HCDPC.

Project 4 "Foster Care Development"

The project envisages expansion of foster care, specialization of professional foster families and development of services in support of foster families. Indicative budget of **BGN 44 million** is required for project implementation.

Under OPHRD is implemented Operation "Take me" with beneficiary Social Assistance Agency in partnership with municipalities on the territory of the country. Main objective of the operation is to support the deinstitutionalization process in order to create and realize sustainable model for development of substitute family care for children placed in specialized institutions and children at risk of abandonment. Within the framework of the operation a project "I also have a family" is implemented to the amount of BGN 15 million. It will appropate a new model for "foster care" social service provided by municipalities and deliverers of social services.

Project 5 "Social Workers Career Development"

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the departments for child protection and Social Assistance Directorates. Indicative budget of BGN 10 million is required for project implementation. Under OPHRD is implemented scheme "Strengthening the capacity of the Social Assistance Agency for improving the quality and effectiveness of social work" with indicative budget of BGN 10 million.

Expected results by 2015

Expected results of the implementation of the Action Plan by 2015 include:

- **Adequate infrastructure** for provision and maintenance of services;
- **Sustained services** – total costs of new services will not exceed current costs of the 127 institutions;
- **Improved quality of services** – improved personnel-children ration, lower number of children placed in residential care, increased number of children in foster care;
- **Improved results for children** – improved general health and physical development; educational achievements; acquired social skills, etc.;
- **Decreased number of children using residential care services and increased number of community-based services;**
- **Significantly lower number of children in the care system;**
- **Improved effectiveness and efficiency of state investment in social and health-care services.**

All programmes and projects aimed at deinstitutionalization of services for children and families, funded by the European Union and national budget should be guided by the Policy Document **“Vision on Deinstitutionalization of the Children in Bulgaria”** and the plan for its implementation. **By adopting this integrated approach Bulgaria intends to present one of the best models for joint implementation of infrastructure projects aiming at provision of new services.**





Elaborated under project: BG161PO001/5-01/2008/056
Production and distribution of informational materials for the Operational Programme
"Regional Development" 2007-2013 (OPRD)
Priority axis 5: "Technical assistance" OPRD. The project is financed by the European Regional
Development Fund and state budget of the Republic of Bulgaria.