

Labor and Health Social Initiatives – LHSI

**PROJECT «GET YOUR CHANCE»:  
HISTORY OF SUCCESS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

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The publication will be helpful to national and international experts working in the field of child rights protection, including orphans and children deprived of parental care, to representatives of NGOs, international donors, social workers and students - future social workers, public officials and other stakeholders.

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## Table of Content

Preface.....	5
Introduction.....	6
Project relevance.....	7
Description of project activities .....	11
Project results .....	18
Recommendations.....	25
Appendices.....	27

## PREFACE

***Natalia Lukianova, Head of the Board of the NGO “Labour and Health Social Initiatives”, post-graduate degree in Political Studies:***

*The main feature of the international technical assistance provided by donor organisations is a response to the request of state, society, NGOs, communities and people who need help. As such the "Get Your Chance" project implemented by the International NGO "Labor and Health Social Initiatives» (LHSI) and the Dutch organization "International Child Development Initiatives» (ICDI) is a response to the needs of the state in comprehensive intervention for support of children leaving the state care.*



*The State Social Services for Family, Children and Youth assessed the needs of graduates of residential institutions, gathered feedback from social workers and teachers who work directly with these young people on the necessity of additional training, improvement of training modules, piloting of modern approaches to the work with orphans and children deprived of parental care, and then appealed to NGOs and donors for extra resources.*

*Government officials realized that such a large project can be implemented only in partnership with NGOs or charity funds involved in work on social issues and child protection. We feel that this collaboration between various governmental organizations and Ukrainian and international non-governmental organization has been an invaluable experience produced positive results.*

*All project partners see as their main task to supporting children and young people in need, and we all together have moved in a right direction to achieve this goal.*

*I believe that the best practices of the project will be widely distributed in Ukraine and that many more orphans can get qualified help and find their way in life.*

***Marisia Pechaczek, First Secretary of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ukraine:***

*The MATRA program, has initially, also focused on disadvantaged groups in society. And, in the case of Ukraine, this related very much to the vulnerable position of young people, especially when they do not live in a family situation together with their parents. These young people often grow up without the support a family would normally provide.*

*«Get Your Chance» was a project that, from diverse angles, tried to support young people in finding a place in the society in terms of self-image, confidence building, skills training and development. But, in addition, the project appears to have been successful in working with competent authorities and agencies of Ukrainian social services and building their capacity to better respond to the needs of these young people.*

## INTRODUCTION

The project «Get Your Chance: towards a better future for institutionalized children and graduates of state boarding schools in Ukraine by improving social services and strengthening life skills» funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (MATRA program) and implemented by the international NGO “Labour and Health Social Initiatives” in partnership with the international NGO “International Child Development Initiatives” (the Netherlands) is being realized in Ukraine during the period of 2010-2012.

As it has come to its final stage we can sum up and evaluate the results.

The project has implemented a variety of activities introduced at both national and regional and local levels. The type of activities ranged from doing research and developing strategic plans to providing direct assistance to the children of residential institutions.

The project included a lot of activities aimed at scientific and methodological support of social workers working with orphans and children deprived of parental care, in particular developing training modules and various techniques of individual work with orphaned youth.

We hope that outcomes of the project have positively affected the quality of life of young orphans and children deprived of parental care. As we are at the end of the project it is important to sum up its results, to highlight its achievements as well as challenges which should be taken into consideration in the future while working with these young people. In this publication we:

- present the impact on the lives of young orphans and children deprived of parental care;
- highlight the achievements, innovations and best practices of the project;
- explain how we disseminate ideas, achievements and best practices developed within the project

## PROJECT RELEVANCE

In recent years the child protection system in the Ukraine has been under constant reform: a regulatory framework and national program have been adopted; the reform of residential institutions has been under way, with efforts being focused on placing orphans and children deprived of parental care in family environment; services for children have been strengthened, etc.

Nevertheless there are still acute problems related to child care that need to be addressed.

According to the Ukrainian Statistics Service, the number of biological and social orphans in recent years has gradually reduced, but it still remains significant and requires attention and intervention of the government and the public.

Thus in 2010, when the project "Get Your Chance" was launched in Ukraine, there were 98.1 thousand orphans and children deprived of parental care, which amounts 1.2% of the children in the country. Of these children 64.3% were under the guardianship, 9% - in foster families and family-type homes, 22% - in institutions of different vertical subordination.

Children deprived of parental care and forced to live in orphanages and residential institutions have specific problems and issues that are less found with children growing up in biological homes. They may experience some challenges with general communication, overcoming barriers concerning finding the right employment, education and housing, managing relationships etc.

Supporting these young people, in particular graduates of boarding schools is a major priority of centers of social services for families, children and youth. Their role in social adaptation and training for independent living is enshrined in the Law of Ukraine "On organizational and legal conditions for social protection of orphans and children deprived of parental care".

Guided by the State Social Services, the centers of social services for families, children and youth have started this work since 2007. They initiated approval of the Agenda on Cooperation between Centers of Social Services for Families, Children and Youth and Departments of Education to train teenage orphans from residential institutions and schools of social rehabilitation in the skills of independent living.

Due to this Agenda the centers of social services for families, children and youth were able to enter such residential institutions as the boarding schools, and provide essential social services to their pupils as well as to monitor the staff approaches towards such issues as housing and further education of the children.

The monitoring of residential institutions has been held by the State Social Services on a regular basis since 2008. It found that orphans and children deprived of parental care couldn't be provided with free social housing (percentage of available own homes was less than 40%), they had problems with employment; they lacked confidence to start independent living etc.

Addressing these and other pressing problems the State Social Services resorted to a series of actions, namely they developed a network of social hostels, which serve as a temporary transitional place to live for orphan youth aged 15-23 who left boarding schools and does not have own housing and worked out a program to train boarding schools graduates for independent living. Nevertheless, this category of children still has urgent problems related to social integration in the mainstream in society.

Realizing the urgency of the problem and inability to solve it independently the State Social Services initiated and applied for this project.

***Ilona Yeleneva, Director of the NGO "Labor and Health Social Initiatives":***



*This project represented a new stage in the development of the organization (LHSI). Until 2009 we worked with young people in the workplace, with leaders and activists in the towns' and villages' communities across Ukraine, and the main goal of this work was to inform and protect boys and girls from negative behaviors, from careless acts that can lead to negative consequences: HIV, drug abuse, discrimination against people affected by HIV, tuberculosis and so on.*

*The "Get Your Chance" is aimed at building leadership, developing self-confidence in young people who need generosity and support above all – those who grow up in institutions.*

*The project is valuable because, firstly, the idea was initiated by the Ukrainian partners and is determined by the needs of Ukrainian community. Secondly, project is designed to support all social services in the state and serves as a pilot area for testing applied methods and practices of working with orphans and such persons.*

The main objective of the project is to support graduates of residential institutions in their adaptation to independent living by improving their life skills and social services provided. The main emphasis in the implementation of the main project goal was laid on increasing the motivation of clients to positive changes through the use of social work methods aimed at the client's needs and their right to self-determination.

The project was implemented in two pilot regions – the Odesa region (Kotovsk - boarding school and social hostel, Tarutino - social hostel, Izmail - boarding school), the Vinnytsia regions (Zhmerynka - social hostel, Tulchin - boarding school, Bratslav - boarding school).

**Project target groups:**

- 8-11th grade students in the boarding schools of the pilot regions;
- graduates of boarding schools living in social hostels;
- social workers of social services for families, children and youth, social hostels and target boarding schools in the pilot regions;
- regional and municipal administrations;
- employers in the pilot regions;

**The main areas of the project are the following:**

- assessing the situation in the regions participating in the project;
- studying foreign experience for its further adaptation in Ukraine;
- developing training modules to practice life skills (8 modules) and training of trainers on social adaptation;
- developing and testing techniques of individual planning to work with graduates of boarding schools;
- improving coordination among agencies that provide social services to young orphans and children deprived of parental care;
- supporting employment and job retention of the graduates of boarding schools;
- publication of information materials.

The project started with assessing the position and challenges of young orphans and children deprived of parental care in the pilot regions.

It was very important because today the government implements many initiatives to solve the problem of orphanhood, and we should know what it is done in this area to consider it in the future. Moreover, it was necessary to determine the characteristics of each pilot region for effective planning.

The Situation assessment was carried out by doing a research, the main objective of which was to identify promising solutions to the problems with social adaptation for orphans and children deprived of parental care after termination of institutional care. The research was done through five focus-group discussions with the pupils of boarding schools and social hostels for orphans and children deprived of parental care (43 participants) and 25 interviews with experts, officials, representatives of NGOs working in field of child rights protection. Alongside there was a desk study of the current Ukrainian government programs directed precisely to this category of young people, in particular the introduction and implementation of the State Programs Of Social Services For Families, Children And Youth On Social Adaptation Of Orphans And Children Deprived Of Parental Care (Order № 31 of 04.06.2008 of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Ukraine).

The research resulted in clarifying main risks and problems faced by pupils and graduates of boarding schools, including those living in social hostels.

The main risks arising after leaving institutional care are the following: unemployment, homelessness, health problems, dependence on social welfare, criminal illegal behavior, the risk to get into the situation of human trafficking, etc.

The identified problems of social adaptation result from the the lack of resources, as well as the lack of socio-psychological and life skills skills necessary for independent living.

Lack of resources related to such important human needs as housing (lack of funds for social housing, problems with documents on housing, impossibility of living together with relatives, etc.), employment and education.

Lack of socio-psychological and life skills related to:

- independent decision-making;
- personal responsibility;
- work motivation;
- models of family relationships and positive adult role models;
- correct gender behaviors that avoid seeing women only in passive roles;
- ability to control emotions, to communicate with strangers, to resolve conflicts in a constructive way;
- legal awareness, understanding the risks to life in society;
- everyday and household skills - budget planning, shopping, cooking, personal care (hygiene, cleaning);
- health care.

We analyzed the Program of Social Services for Families, Children and Youth on Social Adaptation of Orphans and Children Deprived of Parental Care and determined the ways to improve the approaches towards the organization’s clients.

The assessment of the situation in the pilot regions has enabled local professionals involved in the project to determine for themselves the basic problems they need to work with.

The assessment resulted in the main recommendations, which particularly concern the enhancement of state policy aimed at supporting family care; developing and involving graduates of boarding schools to an existing social network; creating living conditions that are close to the conditions of independent living; needs for educational training programs aimed at developing basic skills of independent life; further development of the social hostels network, apartment rental options; standardization of social services provided to youngsters in social hostels; application of training programs for professionals in social work; developing additional social services, improving the mechanisms for client’s referrals to appropriate services and professionals, including NGOs.



## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project involved a series of activities.

Special importance was given to studying international practices. When combined with national experience, they were helpful in the developing the methodologies used in this project.

Within the study of international practices the following activities were undertaken:

- study visit of the Ukrainian delegation to Bulgaria, with the aim to learn from the process of reforming the child protection system after joining the EU, developing alternative forms of social services;
- analyzing Bulgarian and Romanian experience in the course of drafting assessment report;
- using the experience of the Netherlands in the area of individual work with children at risk as to developing their life skills;
- raising additional funds from the “East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program” of the International Renaissance Foundation and arranging educational visit to share experience between representatives of Ukraine, Bulgaria and the Republic of Belarus on the approaches to social adaptation of orphans and children deprived of parental care.

Developing training modules to practice life skills (8 modules) and training of trainers on social adaptation was a respond to the necessity to improve the Program of Social Services for Families, Children and Youth on Social Adaptation of Orphans and Children Deprived of Parental Care according to the needs of young people.

The life skills training manual consisting of 8 topics has been developed and published: “Interpersonal Communication”, “Conflicts Prevention. Behavior In Conflict Situations”, “Personal Development”, “Life Goals”, “Family Budget Planning”, “Gender Aspects Of Youth Behavior”, “Violence Prevention”, “Prevention of Youth Trafficking”. This life skills training program has been approved as an official program by the State Social Services. A further step was training the team of 17 trainers, certified by the State Institute for Family and Youth Policy. The trainers were chosen on a competitive basis from among social workers of social services for families, children and youth, case managers of residential institutions and representatives of NGOs. In the course of training the trainers the emphasis was laid on teaching them to reinforce social and particular strengths of young people, to develop skills in making effective decisions about their lives.



***Natalya Kokhanyuk, social tutor of the Zmerinka regional social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*Psychological atmosphere among residents has improved (this is my subjective opinion), because well-chosen module topics enabled us to look at each other from new angles, hear something new. Also children got some information – I can't say it was totally new for them, but all the same it was very important and effective.*

*I'd like to mention that the modules are useful not only for children of that category; they are good and meaningful for every teenager. The modules methodologically correct and, what is important, they have an efficient outcome; you can see the result of your work.*

The life skills trainings were held for high school students of the Tulchin, Bratslav, Kotovsk, Izmail boarding schools and youth living in Zhmerynka, Kotovsk, and Taruti-no social hostels for orphans and children deprived of parental care. Altogether 342 teenagers were trained in the terms of the training program.



***Yulia, the Kotovsk municipal social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*Firstly, I can plan my budget; find a way out of any situation. Well, I can go to a bank and open an account; I mean I can do it myself. I can submit documents.*

***Veronika, the Kotovsk municipal social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*I liked the topic about family. We were told how to set up relations with the family. I had some problems with my aunt, we always quarreled. The case manager explained that sometimes you shouldn't respond to scolding, I did so - and the quarrel ended.*

*We also wrote out how to spend money. My scholarship is 800 hryvnas, I need some money to buy things, food, and the remaining – to the savings account, so that I'll have interests. Next month I needn't buy things, so I can save more on my account. And I am saving money for housing, some time I'll buy a house. I've seen some in our village; they cost 6, 10 or 15 thousand. Just a little repairing – and you can live here.*



***Ivan, the Kotovsk municipal social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*Now I know how to get out of a conflict, how to hold my temper, be calm and resolve everything peacefully.*

A practical step was the development, testing and approval of the individual action plan methodology to prepare residents of social hostels for orphans and children deprived of parental care to independent living.

According to the given methodology of individual planning the following documents have been developed: Form of Initial Assessment, Form of Social Network Assessment (Network Diagram, VIP Card, "Who-for-what?" list), Forms of IAP and Final Report, Form of Meeting Report, Form of Competence Assessment, Goal Cards, Final Assessment of Client's Situation and Needs.

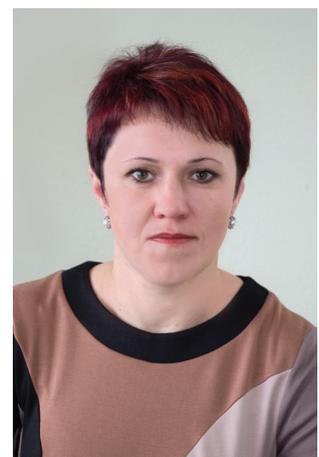
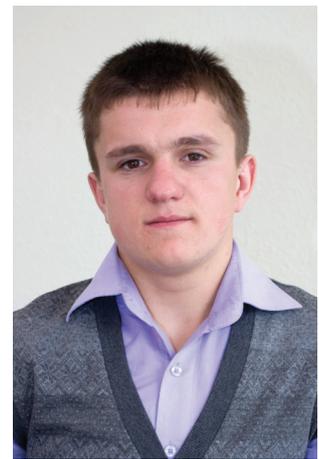
In March, June and October 2011 there were trainings for social workers according to the methods of individual action planning to meet the needs of institutional graduates in their preparing to independent living. The methodology was presented by the Netherlands' non-governmental organization «Cardea Youth Care»

The social workers' attitude to the techniques of individual planning and goal cards was very positive as they were considered to be effective and convenient tools in working with youngsters. It is important that these techniques redirect the work from a passive form (case manager over client, "teacher - student") to an active one (equal participating of case manager and client, "equal to equal", equivalent duties and responsibilities).

***Natalya Shalashna, social tutor of the Kotovsk municipal social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*The project has contributed to my professional growth, acquiring skills and techniques of individual planning – I especially liked the method of goal cards.*

*When the young people were invited to individual sessions, it was very important to involve a client to set his or her own goal and to follow it. The technique was clear and simple to use: we subdivided goals into small tasks that a youngster will perform. A week later we met and discussed what each of them had done, what was a success and what was a failure, what demands attention.*



***Natalya Kokhanyuk, social tutor of the Zmerinka regional social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*Here we had quite a different individual approach: it was a youngster, not a social worker who should focus efforts on attaining his or her goal. It was important, and I liked it, that we wrote a report on goals, we determined if the goal had been achieved or not, - it was a client's point of view. In my case it once happened that the goal wasn't achieved, and the client understood that at that stage the results would be different. The advantage may be in the fact that we write down all goals and tasks, and greater responsibility falls to the client. He/she knows that support will be given, but he/she must work himself because it's his/her life.*



***Maria Kashchy, Director of the Tarutino District Centre of the State Social Services for Family, Children and Youth***

*Individual action plan is focused and effective. I really liked the goal cards and needs assessment. This method let us identify strengths and weaknesses of the children. It is so comprehensive and purposeful that we did not need to split apart, that's why we started to use it for working not only with orphans, but with families in difficult circumstances, with foster children.*

*It is very convenient to work with goal cards, with drafting a social network because children themselves take part in it. We could compare their vision and our opinion: that made possible to perceive better their needs, as sometimes an adult pictures one thing, and children see it quite differently. The scale suggested by Catelijne Sillevs is very useful. This scale let us determine our actions in advance, how we can go up step by step and move towards a result.*

Under the decree of the State Social Services the individual action plan methodology was piloted in the Vinnytsia region on the basis of the Vinnytsia regional social hostel and the Odesa region on the basis of Tarutino district social hostel and Kotovsk municipal social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care. The project experts provided the social workers with 6 field supervisions; drafts of methodological procedures and forms of documentation were placed for discussion at the forum of social workers administered through LHSI web-site.

Methodology of individual action planning helped children set a goal and achieve it - this is probably the most valuable of the skills they can have as it allows a person to feel confident in different periods of life and under different circumstances which every person come across from time to time.

***Ivan, the Kotovsk municipal social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*To set a proper goal, we, for instance, had a notebook and wrote what we had done, then we moved to another goal. I had a goal – to write a final paper. I wrote it. Then next goal – to open a bank account. I did it. Then – to get a passport. Then – to submit papers to External Independent Assessment. We got an answer: registered.*

***Brothers Serhiy and Dmytro, the Zhmerynka regional social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*We were helped to find our goal in life, and it is very important for us. As for me, I have to graduate from the school to become a train conductor - this is important to me because I want to work in this profession. Now, I can say, it means much to me – to get a degree and find a place in this country – to work and earn, to start a family - I think those are my goals in life.*



***Lilia, the Tarutino social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*The goals I had – they all have been achieved. I had such goals, a dream – to take my sisters from the boarding school, to become their guardian, to find a job and to buy a house. I did it! I've bought a house; I've repaired and furnished it. I've taken my sisters from the boarding school, enrolled them in school.*



***Natalia, the Tarutino social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*I didn't get any help from my father, on the contrary - he needed help. I've set a goal - to go on learning and get a higher education. I think I'll help my father. In summer I'm going to work, earn money. Then I will pass External Assessment (I've already applied) and continue to study.*



A kind of innovation was the development of a mentorship model for a graduate of boarding school at a new workplace.

To ensure the applicability of this model the following actions were taken:

- a memo for a mentor of a new employee at the workplace and instructions for social workers on working with a mentor of institutional graduates in the workplace has been developed;
- a training was organized for social workers of social services for families, children and youth and case managers working in the social hostels for orphans and children deprived of parental care in the Vinnitsia and Odesa regions on the application of mentorship model and supervision for mentors.

Also there was an instruction workshop for mentors from among the representatives of the Ukrainian Trade Union of Railway Workers and Transport Constructors. At this workshop the participants were introduced to the mentorship model and peculiarities of its application; the ways of cooperation between mentors and social workers/case managers were determined with a view to adapt/maintain institutional graduates at the workplace.



***Oleksadr Hnatiuk, Head of the Department for organizational and personnel work of the Council of Ukrainian Trade Union of Railway Workers and Transport Constructors:***

*We had two reasons to enter this project: economic and social.*

*The economic one was the reason that orphans and children deprived of parental care go for professional training in our departmental vocational schools, so we pay for it and therefore we want them in due course to work for our company well and effectively.*

*A social reason is that we would like to revive the system of mentorship, known in Soviet times, because this model allows a young boy or girl rather fast to adapt in the team and adjust to the work. In the frame of the project we assigned a mentor – a skilled and highly respected specialist – to a youngster who came to work in a structural unit. Besides there was a social worker who helped a youngster cope with social and psychological problems.*

During testing the model there was developed a set of recommendations for finding a mentor and working with him or her. It includes searching and selecting a potential employer, arranging with him (the head) a job for a graduate of boarding school, searching and selecting a mentor (obligatory questionnaires, interviews), previous joint meeting with a potential mentor, then - with a mentor, a social worker and a client, allocating and recognizing roles, coordinating arrangements and organizing meetings, conducting an agreement and cooperation during the mentorship.

***Olha Boroday, Director of the Odessa Regional Centre of the State Social Services for Family, Children and Youth***

*The mentorship was also very important. We involve the public, we are talking about mentors, their role in children's lives. We see mentorship as a prevention of possible professional burnout of mentors as they got timely psychological support from the social workers when deal with difficult circumstances or behaviors of the young employees .*

The model is still being piloted, but some recommendations for further use can already be made.

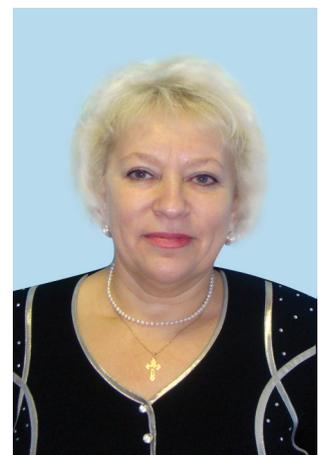
A significant share of time during the project was given to the development and publishing of informational and methodological materials:

- Report on the results of the study "Perspectives of solving current problems of social adaptation of orphans and children deprived of parental care after their leaving the institutional care system";
- Manual "Developing Life Skills" for working with senior pupils and graduates of boarding schools for orphans and children deprived of parental care;
- Workbook to the Manual "Developing Life Skills" for working with senior pupils and graduates of boarding schools for orphans and children deprived of parental care;
- Regulations "Individual planning in social work" on providing social services in the social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care;
- Regulations for social workers on working with institutional graduates' mentors at the workplace;
- Brochure for graduates of boarding schools "At The Doorstep of Independent Life";
- Booklets for mentors "Memo To a Mentor of a New Employee" and for employers " Socially-responsible state – the way to the personal welfare ".



***Vira Shynkarenko, Head of the Department of Inclusive Education and Boarding Schools at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Ukraine:***

*Residential care staff has shown great interest to the manuals «At The Doorstep Of Independent Life», «Memo to a Mentor of a New Employee», «Developing Life Skills».*



## PROJECT RESULTS

The project results can be viewed at different levels.

First, each activity has its own specific outcome: trained social workers, developed training materials, provided social services.

Second, the project has had an impact both at the regional and at the national level, has changed a national methodology of working with graduates of boarding schools, because its methodologies are recommended for implementing in the system of social services for families, children and youth in Ukraine.

It is also important that the project has not only gathered, but also combined resources of governmental and nongovernmental institutions, national and local authorities, national and international experts.



***Rutger van Oudenhoven, Senior Programme Manager at the International NGO "International Child Development Initiatives" (ICDI, the Netherlands):***

*The project is supported by a strong (international) network of representatives from local and national government, the Ukrainian and International NGO sector, academic field, business and practitioners working in social services and youth care. People in this network have a common goal, trust each other and have shared knowledge and experience, and provided each other access to each other's "territory". This is, I believe, the main achievement of the project.*

Such collaboration within the project made it possible to develop a number of practical tools for everyday activities of a social worker, which have been piloted and proved to be effective for working with graduates from among orphans and children deprived of parental care. It was distinctly underlined by the specialists themselves.

***Serhiy Zuev, Director of the Alchevsk town center of social services for families, children and youth:***

*"Get Your Chance" has given experts of the social services such tools that let us professionally assess the client's needs, diagnose his/her situation here and now, plan the work with a view to get a positive result, overcome a difficult situation changing it to the positive. It is important that we have been shown how to do it.*

One of the main achievements of the project is development, piloting and approval of individual planning methodology for residents of social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care with the aim to train them to independent living.



The developed system of individual planning is based on a client's motivation to independently set goals and tasks, and then work on them and taking responsibility for results.

**The main features of the methodology are the following:**

- focus on client's strengths;
- identifying life goals, not problems;
- client's motivation to set life goals as well as support in their achieving;
- close interaction between a client and a case manager;
- assessing the level of life skills and competence;
- involving social networks.

The method got positive feedback from practical social workers who work directly with adolescents - orphans and children deprived of parental care. And above all, these tools proved to be quite effective, which contributed to the adoption of their elements at the state level.

The State Social Services by Decree №29 of 13.10.2011 approved the Regulations for Provision of Social Services in Social Hostel for Orphans and Children Deprived of Parental Care. They include requirements for the provision of social services; steps in providing social services; the process of developing an individual action plan of a client; forms of documentation.

Given the tools of the method, their usability and flexibility it should be noted that the suggested methodology can be used with other categories of clients of social services for families, children and youth and social service institutions – social centers for mothers and children, centers of social and psychological support, centers for HIV-infected children and youth, centers of social and psychological rehabilitation of children and adolescents with functional disabilities.

***Yulia Pylypas, Expert at the Project "Get Your Chance" of the non-governmental organization "Labor and Health Social Initiatives", Head of the Social Work Department at the State Social Services for Family, Children and Youth (2010 – 2011):***

*An important feature of these methodology is that the process of identifying needs, planning the work and evaluation of the progress take place in close cooperation between a client and a social worker, thus increasing the responsibility of the youngster for decisions taken and results achieved, as well as teaching him to be independent.*

*One of the important stages in the application of these tools is to identify life goals of an institutional graduate before drafting an individual action plan.*



*The approach is focused on life goals, life plans and ways to achieve them, but not on problems that need solving.*

*This approach creates a positive foundation for the work and increases motivation of a client to gain independence, to improve his/her life and ensure independent living in future.*



***Lilia Duma, Senior Lecturer at the Prof. Poltavets School of Social Work at the National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy":***

*I know that experts agree that individual planning with residents of social hostels for orphans and children deprived of parental care can be widely disseminated. Thus, the experience has shown that such activity is appropriate and useful in the course of social support and enables to attract young clients to planning goals of their own lives.*

Another important achievement of the project is the development of a mentorship model for graduates of boarding schools at a new workplace. This is an innovation for Ukraine because the legal framework does not specify the need for a mentorship and there is no model of trilateral cooperation: employer - social worker - new employee from among the graduates of boarding schools.

This model was developed to strengthen the project component that concerns the problem of employing graduates of boarding schools because most of them face difficulties during internship, vocational and practical training, while adapting to a new workplace.

Therefore, when developing the model, the possibility of its application both during internship and after employment was considered.

**The project mentorship model has included the following interrelated components:**

- planning and implementing activities of professional and personal development for the successful internship, vocational and practical training, probation and adaptation of a new employee in the workplace;
- information and advisory meetings of a mentor and a trainee, intern or new employee;
- organizing consultative supervision of a social worker / case manager with a mentor;
- developing the Regulations for Social Workers on working with an institutional graduates' mentor at the workplace which include recommendations for implementing the model (agreement with an employer; searching and choosing a mentor; previous work with a graduate of the boarding school) and its direct use in a specific case.

- working out a memo for a mentor of a new employee that includes tips, advice and recommendations for a mentor regarding his role, tasks and functions to adapt a beginner at the workplace;

The Regulations include the Questionnaire for a Potential Mentor; the Questionnaire for a Member of the Program "Mentor at the New Workplace" (for graduates of boarding schools); the Form of Sample Agreement, which should be signed between a social worker / case manager and a mentor and a new employee, and in some cases – between a mentor and a new employee; the Questionnaire for a New Employee on the process and results of his/her adaptation in the workplace.

***Ilona Yeleneva, Director of the International NGO "Labor and Health Social Initiatives":***

*Perhaps the most interesting thing proved to be the model involving trade unions, their youth councils to support and mentor young specialists - graduates of boarding schools. This model involves all aspects of social dialogue – a worker (young specialist) and his agent (trade union), an employer and a social worker (the State Social Services) who helps find work for an orphan or youngster deprived of parental care. The purpose of this in-depth work is not only providing a first job, but a young specialist's successful completion of the probation period and his/her adaptation at the first workplace thanks to mechanisms of trilateral social partnership.*

***Oleksadr Hnatiuk, Head of the Department for Organizational and Personnel work of the Council of the Ukrainian Trade Union of Railway Workers and Transport Constructors:***

*Now we are doing a series of actions so that the project will continue to live in our system, we are selecting future mentors considering their personal and professional qualities. We also use financial resources to motivate these mentors.*

*That is, when the project is over, we want to extend its achievements in the field of mentoring, namely through developing our regulatory legal acts, introducing amendments to the labor collective agreement. We will do everything possible to make this model exist and develop.*

At the regional level, namely for the pilot regions, a very important step was developing strategic plans on coordination among agencies that provide social services to young orphans and children deprived of parental care, particularly graduates of boarding schools.

The project provided technical assistance in developing plans that were based on an evaluation of the situation in the region. These strategic plans have contributed to strengthening links between different agencies and institutions, made local authorities understand what should be done to support the graduates of boarding schools, and outlined for the near future the plan of actions for all involved organizations and structures.



***Olha Slobodyanyk, Deputy Director of the Vinnytsia Regional Center of Social Services for Family, Children and Youth:***

*The greatest achievement of the project is indisputably a new level of cooperation of social services for families, children and youth with social partners working with orphans and children deprived of parental care (departments of education and science, health and resorts; regional employment center; NGOs). Important role in this process was given to creating the Strategic Plan and functioning of interdepartmental working groups.*

Another achievement of the project was the creation of a professional team of trainers which can prepare respective professionals both at the level of their region and Ukraine.



***Ruslan Kraplych, Chief Editor of "Visnyk Blagodiynytstva" ("Bulletin of Charity"), a consultant on development of charity funds and socially responsible corporations:***

*In my opinion the main achievement of the project is the training of trainers who work in different regions of Ukraine and are able to train not only using a ready-made manual – a training textbook, published under the project, but also have received practical skills of training graduates of boarding schools. They've learned how to develop own copyright training courses (instructions for sessions and sets of handouts).*

These training skills, knowledge and practices will help more than one generation of people. Even now, during working visits to different regions I hear positive feedbacks from social workers and officials about our team of trainers.

We believe that the success of the project «Get Your Chance: towards a better future for institutionalized children and graduates of state boarding schools» was determined by comprehensive combination of various activities: from development to direct provision of social services; by cooperation with the government, so that all elaborated methods have been implemented in the national system of working with orphans and children deprived of parental care. But the main achievement is changing the attitudes of both professionals and young people to methods and forms of work, the basis of which focuses on strengths, on personal responsibility, partnerships and motivation to set and achieve own goals and make the dreams to come true.

***Yulia Chorna, Project coordinator of the «Get Your Chance» project, non-governmental organization “Labour and Health Social Initiatives”:***

*Personally I see three main attributes of the project success.*

*Firstly, it is important that we’ve relied on the philosophy of social work – belief in the ability of person to change for the better provided he or she get timely support and help in difficult moments of life.*

*The second important component is building up a committed team of national and international experts, trainers, social workers and case managers from social services for families, children and youth and residential institutions in the pilot regions of the project.*

*Thirdly, I should mention the crucial role of developing partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders and organizations. Willingness to cooperate on the side of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Ukraine made it possible to strengthen partnerships between departments and institutions of education and social services for families, children and youth in the pilot regions.*

*In addition to practical results, almost all project participants noted achievements in the sphere of moral and ethical principles.*

***Rutger van Oudenhoven, Senior Programme Manager at the International NGO “International Child Development Initiatives” (ICDI, the Netherlands):***

*We created a sense of common understanding between all those involved in working for children growing up in social hostels and boarding schools. Not only that, we have included new stakeholders, such as businesses and media. And, we took a big step towards listening and involving youth in this network.*

*I think the main lesson learnt from not only this project, is that we are never alone in what we do. We have to realize that the mission we have-in this case improving the chances of graduates- is shared by many others. Related to this, People at various levels of society, from government ministers to social workers, from NGOs to the business community, are concerned about these children in one way or another.*

*In short this project has shown that trust, openness, shared responsibility and recognition of the value of one’s own resources and experience are essential elements of any project.*

*Also, many participants have pointed out a very important aspect - considering the personality of a social worker. It is necessary to listen to his/her opinions, to provide full support because social work is very complex, and those doing it are rather vulnerable. This project has been aimed at the professional and personal support of social workers. All the tools were developed together with them, their opinions were always taken into account - so it is also one of the project achievements.*





***Cateljne Sillevs, Child Psychologist of the NGO (Cardea Youth Care, the Netherlands):***

*A powerful element that made the outcomes of the project so positive is the fact that the skilled, experienced and dedicated professionals involved played an active role in developing the tools and the methodology by using newly gained skills and knowledge and fitting that in with the good practices that they already had.*

*Another lesson learnt is that every little step forward (no matter how small) is an important one.*

*Important lesson is the acknowledgement that working with deprived children is often hard. Professionals have a high risk of burnout syndrome. Supporting networks in which professionals discuss their cases and their functioning are important. Employers should provide a structure for intervision and supervision.*

*The dedication of the Ukrainian colleagues to their work with orphans and children deprived of parental care made a deep impression on me. What would the Ukraine be without these people? It stressed again to me how important it is for us as managers/supervisors to cherish our social workers and look after them well.*



***Ivan, the Kotovsk municipal social hostel for orphans and children deprived of parental care:***

*Project helps children who come to social hostels because in boarding schools they may not have learned this lesson. Social tutors work individually with each child, so this professional is a person you can rely on. She will tell you the proper way and will guide on the right life road.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that the ideas, achievements and developments acquired in the course of project have shown their effectiveness and necessity, and therefore they are worthy of further dissemination.

According to the experts of the project «Get Your Chance: providing a better future for children and graduates of residential institutions» further steps in improving the social adaptation of young orphans and children deprived of parental care, including viability of the project should be the following:

- changing the state policy concerning graduates of boarding schools for the greater autonomy, less depending on social welfare system, the emphasis on training self-care skills and self-life planning;
- thoughtful approach to reforming the residential institutions, so that not to lose the premises provided for children, instead using the buildings for starting up social housing programs where orphan youth might start independent living;

***Vira Shynkarenko, Head of the Department of Inclusive Education and Boarding Schools at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Ukraine:***

*In my view, it is the project that raised the problem of social adaptation of orphans and children deprived of parental care. We should continue discussing social housing options that could be the base for training graduates of the given category to further independent living using the premises of residential institutions and rehabilitation schools which are intended to be eliminated (Donetsk, Lviv, Luhansk, Mykolaiv regions).*

- proposal submitting to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to create a pilot site for testing the program developed as part of the project. This will allow for its wider dissemination in residential institutions, schools, higher educational institutions;
- training specialists of social services and social institutions according to these techniques and programs; involving workers of residential care and services for children in this trainings, which contributes to ensuring a single approach to working with orphans and children deprived of parental care towards their social adaptation.

***Iryna Zvereva, Chief Executive of the All-Ukrainian Charity Fund "Child Well-Being Fund Ukraine", Doctor of pedagogical sciences, Professor:***

*The main and very topical ideas of the project are improving life skills of pupils of boarding schools through training both them and social workers, increasing the quality of social services and providing orphans access to them, and promoting their employment. All ideas are worthy of further dissemination.*



- dissemination of the developed and published materials in all regions of Ukraine;
- introducing a common approach to case management of orphans and children deprived of parental care who are going to graduate from the boarding school. After graduation – rendering the information about the case, the filed results and the needs of the client should be available to social services/social institutions responsible for the client’s case. This will help a case worker to consider previous achievements and problems of the client and thus ensure succession in a case management;
- developing, piloting and implementing institution of supervision for social workers of Ukraine.

***Lilia Duma, Senior Lecturer at the Prof. Poltavets School of Social Work at the National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy":***

*I think it would be wise to extend the project by introducing external supervision for practitioners who will continue to hold training sessions for senior pupils of boarding schools and graduates - residents of social hostels.*



## APPENDICES

### Individual Action Plan Methodology

The methodology of individual planning includes the following components.

1. Assessment of client's current situation (proceeded within 14 days after starting work with a client ):
  - initial assessment (health, education, experience from the residential institutions, housing, property, level of basic life skills (social and daily routine, communication, safe behavior, representation of interests, job search, etc.).
  - social network assessment (study of client's social environment, including socially important people, need to restore or establish relationships, range of people that can provide support).
2. Drafting Individual Action Plan (IAP) by:
  - identifying priority needs and highlighting issues that lead to problems with adaptation and which require immediate action;
  - defining specific tasks and activities necessary to achieve the goals. Setting deadlines and dividing responsibilities between a client and a caseworker.

The main focus of the approach is on the strengths of a client, his/her participation in drafting and implementing the plan which should be agreed and signed by both parties. No more than 3 relevant and realistic goals are set for the period of three months. Goal cards are used in help to formulate the goals.

3. Working on the IAP is monitored through individual meetings which are held at least once a week during the first three months of the client's receiving services; at least once every two weeks during the period following the first three months of the client's receiving services. The meetings include sharing observations and conclusions about the individual action plan progress, defining the problem issues, marking the actions performed and, if necessary, correcting the IAP.
4. Strength-based competence assessment focuses on what can help in achieving certain goals. It determines those aspects that should be developed (what should be worked on), the client's levels of possessing certain skills such as setting up relations, involvement with education and work, utilizing leisure time, meeting housing needs, dealing with authorities and bureaucracy, taking care of health, building and maintaining social contacts, intimate and sexual needs.
5. Result analysis. Completion of the IAP tasks results in a final report for each goal (concrete actions with clear indicators; outcomes; conclusions about the need for further work or the lack of such). The final report is a supplement to the client's individual action plan. The scaling question technique is used for supervision.

## **Results of the Survey on the Need for the Program "Mentor at the Workplace"**

The survey based on the analysis of responses of potential mentors and graduates of boarding schools indicates the relevance of introducing the program "Mentor at the Workplace".

The program involved eight mentors (11 persons took part in the pre-intervention survey).

The mentors fall into the following age categories: 2 persons of 25-35 years old, 3 persons of 36-45 years old, 12 persons of 46-55 years old. As to the gender, all mentors are women.

They are workers with substantial professional experience. Most of them are the masters of apprenticeship, so they have a previous experience working with adolescents who get professions.

For most potential mentors, mentorship is, first of all, the embodiment of their desire to help people, an opportunity to support a new employee in learning the profession. In addition to this the mentors thought about recognition of their professional qualifications, opportunities for career growth. So this approach allowed for enhancing their social status.

Interacting with their apprentices the mentors were willing to share practical knowledge and skills, to demonstrate professionalism and know-how, to cooperate with people and help them.

The program involved those graduates of boarding schools that got mostly blue-collar occupations, namely: 6 cooks, 3 train conductors, 2 livestock breeders, 1 welder, 2 tractor-drivers – a total of 12 participants. The survey involved residents of social hostels and clients of social services, a total of 19 graduates of boarding schools.

The decisive factors for choosing a trade for those surveyed were: interests – 5; opportunity to make good money – 3 (the welder and the 2 train conductors); caregivers' and teachers' advice – 1; friends' advice – 0; the profession I've chosen is interesting – 7; I had no choice – 9; other respondents mention - the desire to get this particular profession.

The survey shows that in most cases the choice of profession didn't meet the interests of graduates, which may also affect the motivation to perform qualitatively professional duties and to acquire professional skills. This situation is also proved by responses to the question about expectations of a newfound profession. When asked whether their expectations had come true, 8 respondents answered "Yes", 5 - "No" 4 - "Partly come true". Two of them explained that their expectations had partly come true because at the time of the survey they had only theoretical knowledge and did not have enough practice to realistically assess the trade. One of the respondents

answered that he was disappointed, and he would like to get a new profession. However, this graduate was interested to take part in the mentorship program.

Those surveyed had an interest in the program "Mentor at the Workplace" because, first of all, they wanted to get help in learning a new profession (8) and to have a person who you can turn to when you have any questions or problems (7). Besides, it is important for graduates to be sure that there is someone who can help you solve problems if they happen at work (6), which may speak about certain immaturity and lack of experience in making independent decision and resolving conflict situations. Also, the program members are seeking to get advice on how to better communicate in a team (5) and to have a support (5). Only 3 members indicated that they wanted the program to help them become professionals in future.

In the list of skills that they would like to get, the survey respondents named the following: professional skills (10), communication and conflict resolution in the workplace (9), managing relationships with colleagues (9). What is also very important for the program members are time management skills: not being late for work and being on time for meetings (8), efficiently distributing time for tasks (7), keeping the work schedule (7), organizing a working day (7). These results demonstrate that the graduates give priority to establishing positive relationships with a new team.

The mentorship model was built on trilateral cooperation of a social worker or a case manager, a mentor that can be a master of apprenticeship or an employee of any company, institution or organization which employed a graduate of boarding school, and a trainee, intern or new employee from among the graduates of boarding schools. Actions to help graduates of boarding schools integrate into the workplace are implemented alongside with individual action plans. Also individual work includes social support, providing specific social services or opportunity to temporarily live in social hostels for orphans and children deprived of parental care.



## Mentorship skills

A mentor in this model is a person who supports a new coworker to effectively adapt to the workplace, contributes to his/her becoming an employee and developing his/her ability to work independently and efficiently.

Mentorship has specific features that allows to use it as a part of a labor process:

- It is a permanent training which provides psychological and social support for employees at the workplace;
- It undergoes directly in a team of an institution or a company;
- A mentor by his/her personal example demonstrates the correct approach to work serving as a role model.

Activities to help a new employee to adapt at the workplace should focus on developing and strengthening his/her labor and professional skills; establishing links with the team (accepting values, attitudes, behaviors); mastering characteristics and conditions of the job; acquiring professional skills and abilities.



**Activities on adaptation of a new employee at the workplace are organised in 3 stages with a recommended time frame:**

- preparatory (2 weeks before the employment);
- providing practical assistance to adapt at the workplace (3–4 months);
- final (2 weeks before the end of the mentorship contract).

The developed model includes supporting activities for both a new employee and a mentor.

**These activities are as follows:**

- information and advisory meetings of a mentor and a new employee that can be aimed at supporting, encouraging a new employee, discussing his/her working problems, summing up interim results of joint work for adapting a beginner;
- advisory supervision carried out by a social worker / case manager of a mentee (in case he/she is a client of state social services) with a mentor to support him/her; to discuss issues that require coordination with social services in the course of adapting a beginner at the workplace; to search new ideas and solutions that will ensure effective adaptation of a new employee at the work place; to prevent emotional burnout of a mentor.

