System, in support of children without parental care in Moldova

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System in Support of Children without Parental Care
in the Republic of Moldova

One of state policy task is family and child protection issues. The Republic of Moldova has ratified the Convention for Child Rights and adopted a number of important laws and strategies in the given area, thus committing itself to observe and support the child’s rights to receive assistance and social protection from state’s and society’s behalf.

The present day child protection system is focused mainly on granting assistance to children in need and less to controlling the risk factor appearance. The support is offered through boarding schools system, thus family’s and society’s obligations in front of the child have enormously decreased. Although different social services are being implemented for socially vulnerable children, the legal framework for this area is only in its development stage thus hindering the financing and monitoring process for these services.

Taking into account that the main factor leading to children institutionalization is the bad financial situation, prevention of this phenomenon could assist in taking special measures for family’s social protection, offering corresponding services in health care area, providing educational services in the immediate place of residence ensuring thus the integration process of children with special needs within normal educational institutions.

I. CHILDREN CARE SYSTEM SHORT DESCRIPTION

After the Second World War, the Republic of Moldova, just like other former Soviet Union’s countries, has set up a system of specialized residential institutions for education and care after children with disabilities and children from disadvantaged families. The system was financed by the state budget and provided with personnel rendering services provisioned by these institutions’ corresponding documents (regulations).

Since 1990s state’s input in children social protection field was gradually decreasing. The economical crisis contributed a lot to lower the funding meant for the whole social area and particularly for the institutionalization system.

The actual children care system can be divided into thee components:

- institution placement
- alternative form for family placement (adoption, guardianship, family type homes)
- community based services

The main protection form for children at risk, orphanages and disabled, remains to be institutionalization – placement under specialized institutions for care provision separately from the family – which, presently, is not anymore the most adequate assistance mechanism provided to families with children at risk.

The analysis of the nowadays situation reveals that the main cause contributing to children’s placement within residential institutions is not only child’s poor health status and disability, but also poverty and factors associated with it, such as unfavourable environment in the family, children left without parental care and others.

In the Republic of Moldova there function about 68 different institutions from which 63 are under Ministry of Education and Youth and 5 under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. All in all the given institutions cover about 12 thousand children under 18 years old, that is
1.4% from the total number of children in the country (Annex Nr. 1). The number of children in an institution varies from 40 to 600 children; in average one institution cares after 250 children annually. On average there are 1410 children in state residential care per 100000 under 18 years old children.

Taking into account the number of factors inducing children’s institutionalization, the prevention of this phenomenon could lead to the achievement of measures taken for family’s social protection, offer of corresponding services in the field of health and education in the immediate place of residence thus ensuring the integration process of children with special needs within educational institutions.

Children’s placement in families is one of alternative forms for guardian care for children at risk and provides for placing the child in family type homes under guardian care and adoption. In 2005 the total number of children placed under this guardian care form was of 5655, that is 657.7 children per 100000 under 18 years old population.

Thus, the system of formal care covers a total of about **17 thousands children**. It should be noted that during the last five years the share of children covered by alternative forms of guardian care has increased; if in 2000 this indicator was of 28%, then in 2005 it increased up to 32%. Mainly this is due to increase in number of guardianship cases.

During the last years, the social services network started developing with support of international organization and civil society. The main goal of these services is the reintegration of children in biological family and prevention of institutionalization of children at risk. Unfortunately, there is no actual official statistics in the country regarding the number of children covered by the given services.

**II. BOARDING INSTITUTIONS SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS**

In the Republic of Moldova the boarding institutions system covers child homes and boarding institutions for orphans and children without parental care, boarding institutions for disabled
children and children with physical/mental disabilities, as well as boarding schools which provide full or partial state care for children form socially vulnerable and low-income families.

Thus, the total of such institutions in the republic would be of 68 facilities, from which 17 boarding schools for orphans, children without parental care, children from socially vulnerable families and other categories of children; 3 child homes, 3 infant’s homes and 2 boarding institution for disabled children. Besides, under the Ministry of Education and Youth there are: 3 sanatorium schools, 10 specialized schools and 28 institutions for children with physical/mental disabilities (Annex Nr. 1).

All in total the system of residential institutions covered in 2005 about 12 thousand children, from which every second child was placed in child home or boarding institutions for orphans and children without parental care. Besides 39,0% from the total number were children with physical and mental disabilities, 5,3% were disabled children from boarding schools, and the rest of children - the ones from sanatorium schools.

Table 1. Number of children covered by the official system of residential institutions during 2000-2005 (end of the year)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of institution</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant's homes</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's homes</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>1,3</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>1,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding homes</td>
<td>6161</td>
<td>50,8</td>
<td>6039</td>
<td>50,5</td>
<td>5953</td>
<td>49,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orphan and children</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>4,1</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>4,3</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without parental care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding schools</td>
<td>4292</td>
<td>35,4</td>
<td>4184</td>
<td>35,0</td>
<td>4234</td>
<td>35,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for disabled children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special schools</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>5,6</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>5,7</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>5,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanatorium schools</td>
<td>12137</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>11961</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>11956</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12123</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>11941</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>11941</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although in 2005 there was registered a light decrease in number of children placed in residential institutions, it can be concluded that during the last five years the number of children under such institutions did not changed as the number of children left without parental care remain the same.

Family’s difficult financial condition and its deformation as a social institution were the main causes leading to the increase in number of children left without parental care. Annually there are revealed about 1,3 thousands of such children. Only in 2005, the Foster and Guardian Bodies have found out about 2111 children, from whom 68% placed under guardian care, 23% were referred to child homes/orphanages and boarding schools, 4% – to educational institutions and 4% were left unplaced.

As a rule children under 6 years old is to be placed in a infant homes under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. When children turn 4, a part of them and particularly those with mental or neuron-physical disabilities are transferred to boarding homes under the supervision of

* operational 2005 data provided by Ministry of Education and Youth and it may slightly differ of data presented yearly
the same ministry where care is provided to children with such serious illnesses as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, schizophrenia and serious mentality disabilities.

Besides it, within the Ministry of Education and Youth there are following types of institutions: child homes and boarding homes for orphans, children left without parental care; boarding schools for children with sensor-motor and mentality disabilities and children with different anomalies in physical and mental development. The main task of such institutions is to set up corresponding care, education and health protection conditions for children under 16-17 years old.

II. Infant homes, child homes and boarding homes for orphans and children without parental care

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection is responsible for the activity of child/infant homes which cover children with different illnesses and mental-physical disabilities and healthy children as well. Usually there are children without parental care and orphans. This kind of institutions provides care, medical treatment and rehabilitation to children from birth till they turn 6 years old.

Thus, at the end of 2005 the republic counted 3 child/infant homes for 455 places with children quota of 361 people. The whole number of inmates by age is distributed as follows: practically every second child is under 2 years old (52,8%), children in between 3 and 6 years old count for 43% and children over 6 years old – 4% (Annex Nr. 1). The ratio of girls within child homes varies from 37% in 2003 up to 55% in 1996; in 2005 the given indicator was of 42%.

During the year, practically every child was sick not less than four times, the most frequent being infections of respiratory tract. According to preventive examination indicators, the most vulnerable group was the one of children under 3 years old: the majority have anaemia, every fourth child – nutrition disorders, every seventh child – rachitis; from the total number of children, every fifth child has physical and every tenth – mental disabilities.

Annually, about two thirds of children leave infant homes. Starting with 2002, girls were leaving infant homes in a higher number than boys; if in 1995 the ratio of girls from the total number of children leaving the infant homes was of 40%, then in 2005 the given indicator accounted for 57%. Up till 1998, practically every second child leaving these institutions was under 2 years old. During the following years, including 2005, the ratio of under-two-years old children increased and reached the level of two thirds from the total number of children leaving infant homes.

The majority of children leave infant homes because they are adopted. It should be mentioned that during 2004-2005 the number of cases when children were reintegrated within biological families increased and reached 46% in 2005 as compared with 25-30% during the previous years; besides the ratio of children placed under guardian care also increased – up to 6%.

Thus, the majority of children leave infants homes for family placement and in the last years this indicator increased up to 83% comparing to 70% in 1996 and 80% in 2000.
The main leaving reason of children from infant homes in 2001-2005

The Ministry of Education and Youth also supervises 3 child homes and 19 boarding schools, which provide care and education for respectively 165 and 5,6 thousands of orphans, children without parental care and children from disadvantaged families. The causes leading to such an increase are the following: parents’ death or missing, parents deprived of parental rights, abandoned children, and children with unknown mother. In a majority of cases this situation is due to difficult situation of families which come to a moment when they just cannot educate and care after the child.

II.11 Boarding schools for disabled children

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection also supervises the activity of 2 boarding institutions for mental deficient children with 720 places; at the beginning of 2005, these facilities covered 640 children in between 4 and 18 years old. During the last 10 years the number of children in these boarding homes was annually increasing, except for 1999-2000 when there was registered a decrease down to 496 children, practically the level of 1995 (493 children).

Every year, these institutions enlist from 40 to 82 children. The number of children per 100 places varies in the scope of 70 people. From 1995 up till 1998, the majority of children would be girls, about 63%. During the following years, the tendency changed and the ratio of girls counted from 40% in 1999 up to 50% in 2005. Practically every second child is in between 7 and 15 years old and every tenth child in between 16 and 17 years old; at the same time, not less than 20% are young people of 18 years old (Annex Nr. 2).

It should be noted that during the last five years, the ratio of children in between 4-6 years old decreased from 11% in 2000 down to 6,6% in 2005; children of the given age are usually transferred to these boarding institution only if they need specialized care which is not provided within child homes.

Among boarding homes’ inmates, every fourth child cannot move – a fact causing additional difficulties for provided care and needing considerable efforts from support personnel behalf.

When turning 18 years old, two thirds of young people are transferred to similar boarding institutions for adults which are under the supervision of the same ministry. Thus, children grown up without parental care and having no specialization at all, besides the number of serious health problems, they have to face such problems as social isolation and aloofness which by the end lead to impossible integration in normal life.
**II.III Special schools and boarding schools for children with physical and mental disabilities**

In addition to child homes and boarding institutions for orphans and children without parental care, the **Ministry of Education and Youth** supervises the activity of 38 special schools and boarding institutions for children with mental and physical disabilities. In 2005 this kind of institutions covered 4,6 thousands of children, from whom 80% were children with mental disabilities.

Besides, every tenth child is late-deafened, 2,5% - children with bad sight, 4,1% - children with consequences of cerebral palsy and 4,2% - children with mental retardation. Girls count for less than a half of all the children - 39%. The majority of children (86%) with physical or mental disabilities are in between 7 and 15 years old.

**Table 2. Number of children with mental or physical disabilities within special schools and boarding institutions during 2004-2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total of children</td>
<td>4896</td>
<td>4676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including girls</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children distribution by age, %:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under 6 years old</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>0,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-15 years</td>
<td>85,6</td>
<td>87,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17 years</td>
<td>10,9</td>
<td>10,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 and above</td>
<td>2,8</td>
<td>2,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children with mental or physical disabilities per 100000 under 18 years old children</td>
<td>547,0</td>
<td>528,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 528,5 children with disabilities per 100000 under 18 years old children; for girls this indicator accounts for 424 children, as for boys – 628 children per 100000 male population of the given age group.

The problem of special education is stipulated in such documents as State Program for Education Development during 1999-2005 (Republic of Moldova Government Decision Nr. 984 dated 26.10.1999), Education for All Strategy, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and others. But the implementation of these programs is still under discussion.

Up to now, there are no developed activities to be taken for integration of children with special needs in a regular school, which currently can not provide adequate conditions for these children. Besides, some special schools encounters a lot of difficulties among which one of the most important being special schools’ technical-material base and the need to improve educational analytical programs which un- doubtfully influence upon the quality of education offered to children with disabilities and decrease their possibilities for social adaptation.
III. ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM FOR GUARDIAN CARE

Taking into account the number of factors leading to children’s institutionalization, it should be noted that prevention of such a phenomenon is possible only when creating and developing conditions for alternative forms of guardian care provided to children.

In accordance with the UN Conventions for Child Rights, the optimal form for protecting the child at risk provides for taking control measures for the need to care after children outside the family. Thus, the alternative forms for children placement are those forms that suggest family environment conditions or at least conditions closed to the family ones.

The alternative system for guardian care in force in the Republic of Moldova covers the following forms:

- Guardian care, adoption and family type homes
- Establishment of different community based social services: day centres and centres for temporary placement.

At the present moment guardian care is the main form of alternative care provided to children without parental care. According to article 142 from the Family Code of the Republic of Moldova, the guardian and foster care can be provided for children under 15 years old without parental care so as to offer these children the possibility to receive education and to protect their legal rights and interests. Whenever children reach the mentioned age, guardian care turns into tutelage for children up to 18 years old, with no additional decision to be taken by the Guardian and Foster Bodies.

Annually, the Guardian and Foster Bodies refer to guardian care not less than 1000 children. Each year the number of children educated by guardians was constantly increasing, thus accounting by the end of 2005 for 5,3 thousand children or 614 children per 100000 of under 18 years old population. Two thirds of children who entered guardian care usually are under constant tutelage of their close relatives (brother/sister, aunt/uncle) or grand-father/grand-mother; besides about 17% of children go back to their families.

Family type homes as alternative form for children institutionalization emerged for the first time in 1989-1990 according to the Decision of SSRM Ministries Cabinet. But because of lack of financial means, during the subsequent years the given form for orphans’ education did not developed.

According to article 148 under the Family Code of the Republic of Moldova, family type homes represent private institutions created on family basis for partial care and education of orphans and children without parental care.

Family type homes are set up when parents-teachers submit a request and all afferent documents to the local public administration, which takes a decision that subsequently has to be approved by the Guardian and Foster Bodies. Family type homes can educate from 3 to 7 children.

Parents-educators can be persons with permanent residence on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, who have turned 25 years old and prove moral qualities and health status which are necessary for fulfilling corresponding duties. Parents-educators are entitled to a payment for the work performed and allowances provided according to the regulations established by the Government.
The family type homes can take care of and educate orphans and children without parental care under 18 years old. The preliminary selection of children for family type homes is undertaken by parents-educators together with Guardian and Foster Bodies. Whenever deciding to place children under family type homes, it is prohibited to part sisters and brothers, except for cases when this would be in children’s best interests. Children who turned already 10 can be placed under family type homes only with their own consent.

At the present moment, there are 23 family type homes in the republic which educate and care after about 140 children. During the last five years the number of these homes remained practically unchanged. In 2000, there were 22 family type homes which were caring after 120 children. The majority of children placed under family type homes are 3 years old and over.

**Community based social services and temporary centres**

Development of community based social services for children at risk is one of the priorities for the national policy in the field of social protection and institutionalization prevention. At the present moment in different localities of the country there are different public social services (PSS) which were established by non-governmental organizations (NGO) with the assistance of international organizations in collaboration with the local public administration authorities (LPA).

Taking into account the fact that the process of establishment, development and general implementation of the given services is not regulated well enough by the legislation and due to lack of well developed mechanism for their assessment and accreditation, a number of services develop spontaneously with no adequate evaluation and monitoring from state’s behalf; that is why public’s awareness about social services’ activity is very limited.

As there is no complete information about providers of community based services for the whole country, Ministry of Health and Social Protection together with the “Social Services Quality evaluation at Community Level” Project tried to analyze the information about the 33 services established with the assistance of different international organizations and local public administration authorities. The number of beneficiaries these services are rendered up to 1623 persons.

The existing community based social centres can be divided by target destination in day care centres and temporary placement centres.

Besides, within the framework of TACIS Project “Enhancing Efforts for Social Protection Reform” in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Education and Youth and with the support of Every Child, the following services were implemented in three pilot rayons of the country:

- development of family’s support and control of children abandon
- development of professional parental assistance (foster care)

**Family support and children’s abandon control services.** This service aims to offer social assistance to families at risk that have children. The main tasks are the following: to keep the child in family environment, to prevent children placement under residential institutions, to meet the specific needs, to settle behavioural, health and family relations problems.

Within family support and abandon control service framework it is possible to reveal the socially vulnerable families and to suggest means for preventing child’s separation from his/her family. According to individual plans for family and child protection and taking into account the specific
problem, the family may benefit different kind of assistance such as cash payment, medicines, payment for utilities etc.

During 2005 the given service from the pilot rayons has covered 164 families with a total of 434 children, from which in 11 cases children’s abandon was successfully prevented.

Another type of services implemented within pilot rayons as alternative means for children’s institutionalization would be the professional parental assistance (foster care) – a new family type service similar to family type homes. Resulting from the principle for protection of legal rights and interests of a child in need, this assistance supports child’s upbringing within the family of a professional parental assistant in order to offer education and living conditions for children in a family related environment and also the reintegration in biological or adopted family.

Currently the country numbers 35 parental assistants’ families who provide care for 85 children and 17 children were successfully reintegrated within their biological families.

During the implementation of new services the situation of every single child is analysed by a special commission organised on a local level and which is responsible to take a decision for children in difficulties.

The primary goal of the commission is to place children in family type homes, reintegration in biological family and to prevent the placement of children in state residential institutions which eventually should be the ultimate arrangement for child’s social protection. Every case of placement outside the family is discussed thoroughly within Commission’s framework. The decision to place a child under boarding type institution is taken with a lot of care. This protection form is used only when there is no other way out, for instance when child’s life and health is under risk

Thus, the accumulated experience shows that if Commissions from other rayons have satisfied almost all requests for placement under social institutions during the 2005-2006 school year, the pilot rayons Commissions have considered only 158 out of 215 requests regarding placement under social institutions and only 43 children were recommended for placement under boarding type institutions.

**IV. Adoption Process**

According to the Family Code of the Republic of Moldova, the under-age children may be adopted till they turn 18 whenever they are orphans, their parents were deprived of parental rights or parents have abandoned them and have given their consent for adoption procedures. It is prohibited to adopt brothers and sisters separately, except for cases when this provision comes against children’s interests or when one of the brothers (sisters) cannot be adopted because of health condition.

The accountability for children under adoption is taken by the Guardian and Foster Bodies and the central institution for child protection, which in Moldova’s case is the National Committee for Adoption (NCA) established under the Government of the Republic of Moldova in 2005\(^1\). According to the Regulation regarding the NCA, the given committee represents the central

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\(^1\) Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova №162 dated 10.02.2005
public administration body subordinated to the Government which is developing the state policy in the field of child rights protection, including the adoption area. Thus, the information about adoptions is focused firstly within the guardian bodies and afterwards is transferred to the NCA which receives directly citizens wishing to adopt a child.

Child’s adoption is proceeded by the court based on person’s request for adoption. The request for adoption is analyzed with obligatory presence of representatives from Guardian and Foster Bodies. The adoption procedures stipulate a certain probation term for parents for a period not less than 6 months and only by the end of this term the child is officially referred for adoption. In some cases, adoption can be allowed without probation period, indicating the reasons for this within court’s decision.

According to article 121 under Family Code, adoptions can be performed by persons (male and female) who have turned already 25 years old, except for the following categories of persons:

- deprived of parental rights;
- without active legal capacity or limited legal capacity;
- with previous trials to adopt children and adoption procedures were stopped because of their fault;
- whose guardianship (tutelage) duties were removed because of their improper fulfilment;
- with immoral lifestyle or with no possibility to fulfil parental rights and duties for adopted child’s education and care because of their health state;
- wishing to conclude pseudo adoption;
- submitting forged deeds;
- 50 years old (this rule is not observed if the persons wishing to adopt a child are spouses and one of them has not yet turned 50 years old, in case when the spouse is adopting the child the other spouse and in cases when the child lived in the family of his/her adoptive parents till the moment they turned 50).

Unmarried persons cannot adopt a child. Besides, the age difference between the adoptive parents and the child should be not less than 15 years old, except for cases when the adopting person is one of the spouses (the age difference can be decreased down to 5 years at maximum).

Whenever a child is adopted there should be an official statement of his/her parents’ approval duly authenticated by the notary office or the Guardian and Foster Bodies from child’s or his/her parents’ residence place, or the parents can make an official declaration directly during the file trial in the court. Parents have the right to withdraw their statement approving the adoption of their child any time prior to court’s adoption decision rendition. Parents’ approval is not necessary in cases when parents are deprived of their parental rights, have no legal capacity, are missing, are not known or do not live together with the child and back out of child’s education and care for more than 6 months due to no reasonable excuse.

For adopting 10 years old and over children, it is necessary to have in the court child’s approval as well. The adoption can be carried out with no child’s approval in case when he/she already lived in adoptive parents’ family and does not actually know that adoptive parents are not his/her biological parents.

Adoption procedures can be stopped in case of negative impact on children’s interests. As a rule, these would be the cases when adoptive parents do not fulfil their obligations regarding child’s education and care, suffer from chronic alcoholism and drug addiction, prove violent treatment towards children, and when adoption was done with no approval from parents’ or the other spouse’s approval.
He/she may be adopted by foreign citizens only in cases when it was clearly established that the child during the 6 months cannot be placed under guardianship or tutelage of his/her relatives.

According to the NCA’s data, there are 24 adoption agencies accredited on the territory of RM, from which 11 are from Italy, 7 from USA and the rest from Spain, Israel and other countries. The accreditation and activity conditions for international adoption agencies are regulated by the Government Decision regarding “Children Adoption by Foreign Citizens”. The given regulation stipulates accreditation procedures and accredited organizations’ rights and obligations. According to the regulation regarding NCA’s special funds establishment, each foreigner has to pay a fee of 1500 euros per each adopted child plus transportation fees for the trip to the country the child was taken when adopted so as to study and assess his living conditions after adoption.

During 2000-2005 there were adopted 1614 children and compared to 2000 the number of adoptions is actually decreasing, thus the annual number of adoption varies from 178 children in 2001 up to 349 cases in 2004 and 290 – in 2005.

In average the number of adopted children per 100000 under 18 years old children is of 17,6 adoptions in 2001 up to 39,0 in 2004. In 2005, the given indicator accounted for 33,7 children less with 5,3 children per 100000 under-age population of given age as compared to the previous year.

The majority of adoptions are intercountry ones accounting from 169 up to 266 cases per year. The ratio between intercountry and international adoptions depends a lot on state’s regulatory policy in the given field. Thus, due to the fact that during 2000-2001 the international adoptions were suspended so as to verify previously adopted children’s further on life abroad, the indicator for international adoptions during the given period respectively decreased down to 5%; in 2000 the international adoptions accounted for 40%. Starting with 2003, when international adoptions were recommenced, practically every fifth child was adopted by foreign citizens.

Starting with 2003 the number of intercountry adoptions was annually increasing and in 2005 there were registered 244 such cases. International adoptions accounted for 46 cases in 2005 - that is one third of adoptions registered in 2000. During the last five years, there were counted approximately 23 intercountry adopted children per 100000 under 18 years old children.

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2 Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova №62 dated 03.02.1994
3 Decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova №475 dated 03.05.2006
International adoptions represent from 5.5 children per 100000 of given age persons in 2005 up to 12.8 children per 100000 under 18 years old persons in 2000; as for the period when international adoptions were suspended, the given indicator was not more than 0.9 children.

When analyzing adoptions from child’s age point of view, it can be concluded that the most favoured children are the ones from 1 to 4 years old, as they account for one third from annual total number of adoptions. During the last two years there were registered fewer cases of under one year old children adoptions (from 33% in 2000 down to 17% in 2005) and more cases of elderly children adoptions (23% in 2005 as compared to 12% in 2000). Besides, every second adoption case occurs for over 5 years old children when every fourth child is under 10 years old. In 2000 adoption of 5 years old and over children accounted for more than 30%, out of which 16% of adoptions were for children in between 5 and 9 years old.

Child’s age varies a lot in the case of international adoptions. Thus, annually every second child adopted by foreign citizens is in between 1 and 4 years old, and the percentage of under 1 year old children adoptions decreased from 31% in 2000 down to 4% in 2005. At the same time, there were registered more cases of 5 years old and over children adoptions, including children over 10 years old (from 5% in 2000 up to 28% in 2005).

Within intercountry adoptions structure the ratio of under 1 year old has decrease. In 2000, this category of children accounted for one third of such adoptions and in 2005 only every fifth intercountry adopted child was under 1 year old. Besides, in 2004-2005 were also registered more adoption cases for children of 5 years old and more – practically every second child.

![Distribution of intercountry adoptions by age during 2000-2005](image1)

![Distribution of international adoptions by age during 2000-2005](image2)

Practically there are no big differences by child’s gender. Nevertheless, boys’ adoptions (52-53%) slightly overpass girls’ adoptions, except for 2001-2002 when girls’ adoptions accounted for 54-56%. The same trends are characteristic for intercountry adoptions and no tendency at all is actually felt within international adoptions – there is no favour either for girls or boys; thus for girls the ratio would vary from 34% in 2003 up to 57% in 2001 and 45% in 2005.

From the total number of international adoptions made during 2000-2005, 95.8% of children were placed for adoption from child’s home or boarding institutions. Two thirds of adopted children went to USA, 14.5% - Italy, 4.7% - Canada, 3.7% - Switzerland, 2.7% - Spain.

From 19.4 adoptions in 2001 up to 38.7 in 2004 were registered per 100000 under 18 years old girls; in 2005 the given indicator accounted for 33.4. As boys’ natality is less and they are more frequently adopted, annually about 31 adoption are registered per 100000 under 18 years old boys, except for 2001-2002.
Conclusions

The present day child protection system for children without parental care along with placement of children under specialized institutions provides family home based services.

Although recently different social services for children under risk started developing, the main form for children’s protection remains to be placement under residential institutions. Annually, the given institutions shelter about 12 thousands children, that is 1,4% from the under 18 years old population. On average there are 1410 children in residential care per 100000 under 18 years old children.

Along with different diseases or disabilities, the main cause favouring children’s institutionalization would be poverty and afferent factors as abandoned kids, negative family environment and others.

Every second child within boarding institutions system is placed under child’s homes or boarding facilities for orphans and children without parental care. Besides, 39,0% are children with mental or physical disabilities, 5,3% disabled children and 5,6% are children from sanatorium schools.

Children’s placement in families represents an alternative care form for children under risk and it previews child’s placement in family type homes, under guardianship/tutelage or under adoption. During the last years, the ratio of children care alternative forms proved a tendency to increase and accounted in average for 30%.

The most wild spread alternative from for child care is guardianship. Annually, the Guardian and Tutelage Bodies place under guardianship about 1000 children. Every year the number of children educated by guardians is constantly increasing and by the end of 2005 it accounted for 5,3 thousands children or 614 children per 100000 under 18 years old population.

Family type homes was not fully developed as an alternative form for child care because of the low financial resources and remained practically just at the level established in 90s. In 2005 there are 23 family type homes in the republic which educate and care after about 140 children.

During the last years, the social services network started developing with international organization and civil society direct involvement - a fact contributing to future control of children under risk institutionalization. Besides, the development of community based services through day centres and temporary centres, one of these services is the professional parental assistance which represents a new family type service. The legal framework regulating the newly developed services is under elaboration. At the moment there is no official statistics regarding the number of children covered by the given services.
Literature

9. RM Government Decision №62 dated 03.02.1994 on "Children Adoption by Foreign Citizens".
10. RM Government Decision №812 dated 02.07.2003 on "Approval of minimal quality standards for family type homes".
11. RM Government Decision №344 dated 23.03.2005 on "Approval of changes to regulation on family type homes".
15. Operational data from diverse ministries.
68 institutions
Total number of children - 12123 (0 – 18 years old)

Ministry of Education and Youth
63 institutions
Total / children - 11122

1. Boarding schools of general type, for orphans and children without parental care
17 facilities (7-18 years old)

1a) Boarding schools - 2 facilities
(6 – 18 years old)

16) Child homes for orphans and children without parental care
3 facilities (3 – 16 years old)

2. Special schools – 9 facilities, 1046 children (7 – 18 years old)
2a) 2 schools for children with visual problems
2b) 5 schools for children with hearing problems
2a) 2 schools for children with locomotor problems
2r) 1 school for children with psychological problems

3. Sanatorium schools - 3 facilities
(7 – 18 years old)

4. Boarding schools for children with psychological disabilities
28 facilities (7-16/17)

Ministry of Health and Social Protection
5 institutions
Total / children - 1001

Municipal Child Home
1 facility (0 – 6 years old)

Boarding homes for children with physical/mental disabilities
2 facilities (4 – 18 years old)

Infant’s homes
2 facilities (0 – 6 years old)
### Number of children in infant’s homes during 1995-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total of children by the end of the year</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>361</td>
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<td>Including girls</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>171</td>
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<td>138</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Children distribution by age, %:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 2 years old</td>
<td>45,1</td>
<td>41,4</td>
<td>56,6</td>
<td>54,8</td>
<td>64,9</td>
<td>45,9</td>
<td>58,5</td>
<td>58,3</td>
<td>64,0</td>
<td>63,1</td>
<td>54,0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6 (7) years old</td>
<td>54,9</td>
<td>58,6</td>
<td>43,4</td>
<td>45,2</td>
<td>35,1</td>
<td>54,1</td>
<td>41,4</td>
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<td>36,0</td>
<td>36,9</td>
<td>46,0</td>
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<td>Number of children placed in child homes during the year</td>
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<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>166</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>201</td>
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<td>147</td>
<td>203</td>
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<tr>
<td>Including girls</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>Distribution of children leaving the child homes by age, %:</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43,3</td>
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<td>56,2</td>
<td>67,2</td>
<td>63,9</td>
<td>63,7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6 (7) years old</td>
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<td>37,0</td>
<td>33,3</td>
<td>43,1</td>
<td>32,8</td>
<td>36,1</td>
<td>36,3</td>
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<td>Distribution of children leaving the child homes due to drift, %:</td>
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<td>return to family</td>
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<td>30,5</td>
<td>34,9</td>
<td>27,6</td>
<td>40,6</td>
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<td>45,6</td>
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<td>5,7</td>
<td>6,1</td>
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### Number of children in boarding institutions for children with physical/mental disabilities during 1995-2005

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<tr>
<td>Total number of children by the end of the year</td>
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<td>515</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>610</td>
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<td>Including girls</td>
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<td>328</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>217</td>
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<td>320</td>
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<td>Distribution of children by age, %:</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6 years old</td>
<td>10,5</td>
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<td>49,6</td>
<td>48,0</td>
<td>47,5</td>
<td>48,9</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>12,4</td>
<td>12,4</td>
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<td>12,9</td>
<td>11,4</td>
<td>13,1</td>
<td>12,5</td>
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<tr>
<td>over 18 years old</td>
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<td>24,2</td>
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<td>33,7</td>
<td>33,1</td>
<td>32,0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of children placed in child homes during the year</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of children leaving child homes during the year</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Including girls</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
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