

**System, in support of children without parental care
in Slovakia**

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The project to monitor the impact of economic and social change on children in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), the MONEE Project, was initiated at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in 1992. The project seeks to monitor, analyse and disseminate information on economic and social trends affecting children's rights and wellbeing in countries in the region. A key feature of the Project is a network of correspondents in the 27 National Statistical Offices (NSOs). On an annual basis these correspondents complete an extensive data template which in turn is used for calculating indicators, supporting research of the project and, in due course, being made publicly available as the TransMONEE database and in tables and graphs of the Innocenti Social Monitor.

For a number of years, each participating NSO prepared a Country Analytical Report based on extensive outline from UNICEF IRC on a different theme on the situation of children every year. These analytical reports have provided valuable input into the research at UNICEF IRC and, as significantly, have also served as important national documents on monitoring aspects of child wellbeing in the countries. Some of these Country Analytical Reports have been issued by the NSOs (in the national language) as part of their publication programme.

UNICEF attaches great value to these national assessments of the situation of children and is committed to promote the efforts, including through translating the reports into English (where the submitted report has been in Russian) and offering its website to make them accessible to a wider research audience. The Country Analytical Reports are owned and authored by the National Statistical Offices and are not the intellectual property of UNICEF (see below).

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SLOVAKIA

Statistical Template and Analytical Report

1. System in children support without parental care.

Hindered economic condition reflects the functioning the quality of the families. An increase of violence in the family was followed up, mainly in conjunction with alcoholism of the family member combining with family destruction. After the divorce the conditions leading to consolidation of life are complicated and being realized with difficulties. It is often unreal to furnish the separated lodging and if one of the partners is unemployed (sometimes both of them, too), then the problem is all the more serious. There is nothing to be solved by divorce, the partner henceforward live in the same household and the conflicts are deepened, nurture of the children is becoming to be troublesome, in many cases the point of departure is placing the children into the social service facilities, in better event into the alternate family care.

Social guidance helps to solve these serious family issues. The net of Advisory-Psychological Services Centre has delivered advisory services in this area for individual person, pair and family in Slovak Republic. This centre was entertaining the citizens, which found themselves in social safeguarding net, it helped to integrate the waifs into the new families, it helped to solve the problems of young people in searching life and career orientation through quantity boundary till psychical problems.

Extremely endangered group have been created teenaged clients by age between 15 – 18 years, which turned to **Advisory-Psychological Services Centre** as one place where the care and psychological aid are dedicated them, though within the frame of Advisory-Psychological Services Centre is not possible to deliver further care connecting whether with solving their social situation as well as with placing in medical facilities for drug dependence.

Most numerous groups of residential institutions supplying family atmosphere endangered children are **foster homes**. The care is possible to provide the endangered children in foster home since birth until full age attainment and further until independence, at longest till age of 25 years.

A care is provided to children in foster home supplying native family environs and as independence is regarding association the lodging in law on social aid. Apart from care, which involves alimentation, lodging, provision, upbringing as well as medical-upbringing, care. It is speciality activity centred on reduction mental evolution and social growth.

Further care is advisory, spare-time activity, cultural activity and recreation activity. Providing that child is provided yearlong care and the child has no personal furnishing is providing him it, too.

In the year 2005 there were 91 foster homes in the Slovak Republic of total capacity 3 935 places. From this number it was 75 state foster homes of capacity

3 583 and 7 churchly of capacity 188, 8 foster homes of capacity 164 places were built up by other legal entities.

From the total number 3 859 were 385 children health handicapped, 261 children were after 18th year of age. Girls were 1 730 and juvenile mother was 1. In the year 2005 there were 50 father- and motherless orphans and 540 one parentless orphans. The number of children until 3 years of age (former nursing institutes) was 636. During the year 2005 there were placed 1 136 of children into the foster homes. Of which were girls 470 and 140 were health handicapped children. Care and raising of the children in the foster homes were ended in the course of the year in 1 123 cases.

In 348 cases for the reason of unfolding into maturity

In 226 cases the children were returned to the original family

The number of 108 children were consigned to foster care, of which 43 children were in the age up to 3 years

The number of 178 children were consigned to pre-adoptive care, while the number of 43 children were in the age up to 3 years

The number of 24 children were consigned to other citizen than parental care

In 37 cases the care was ended for the other reason.

By 31st December 2005 there were 2 133 children in the foster homes with compulsory school attendance, of which 1 345 were attending ground school, 756 were attending the special school, 14 children remedial school and 18 children were attending other type of school.

Recently, there's pursuit of the more the better children from the foster homes growing up under conditions similar to family atmosphere. There were 181 children from the foster homes raised in so-called professional families and in individual groups 2 430 children in the year 2005. The professional family means married couples or individual person that are employees of the forest home securing the care of children. Number of the children and educators for individual hospital treatment are regulated remuneratively.

The foster home develops an individual plan for child personality development, which comprises mainly the plan of the educational work with the child, plan of social work with the child and with his family developed in co-operation with the municipality and with the body of social protection for children and social curator or in co-operation with accredited subject.

In the year 2005 there were 2 913 children located **in the facilities of social services** – former social care facilities. These children are endangered as a consequence of their handicap, i.e. physically or mentally handicapped.

Special form of substitutive raising in family is **surrogate care**. Surrogate care as a legal relation results from lawfully judicial decision and expires by full age attitude of the child. Surrogate care of the child is allowed to give only to the married couple.

With effect from 1st January 1999 comes into force new legal regulation, which regulates the conditions of the surrogate care including the allowances

provision. The surrogate care is possible to perform in individual facilities based on written agreement with authorized body that have established the facility, possibly with municipality or independent subject. Regularly every month a payment is paid out to the surrogate as high as 1 430 SK per every child, regardless the age of the child.

Unlike the other forms of the alternate family raising, in foster care there doesn't come to end law relations to original family.

There were 2 677 children under foster care in the year 2005. Comparing with the year 1989, then were 2 348 children (by 12,3 % more).

Incoming parents after having been decided for adopting the children, in whole adoptive process aided above mentioned **Advisory-Psychological Services Centre**. Psychologist will assist the incoming adoptive parents in a decision-making. The first step in adopting the child was submitting an application for adoption in the local authority at social affairs department. The department's workers will submit the incoming adoptive parents an information concerning all forms of alternative family care and on administrative procedure.

When submitting the alternative care application, the criminal record statement, characteristics from employer, earnings confirm, characteristics from municipal authority, and medical report on whole state of health of incoming adoptive parents are needed. Except the application, a going through the psychological examine in above-mentioned Centre, as well as several sessions with psychologist. There is a drawing conclusion from these sessions, either recommending it or not recommending it to the district authority to record the incoming interested persons into the list of applicants for alternative family care.

Considering the workload of social affairs departments, where substantial work comprised the paying off the social benefits, it resulted in creating the civil groupings in individual districts, which aided in whole process of childe locating in alternative family care.

The last step was submitting the proposal to the court in legal proceeding, concerning the alternative family care, in the case when adoptive parents decided for the child that had been chosen.

There is a new legal amendment in the Slovak republic No. 305/2005 (Coll.) from **1st September 2005 on legal/social protection of children and on social curator**, as well as amendment of several laws. There is a law amendment on legal and social protection of the children and social curatorship for preventing the critical situations in the family, securing the legal protection child's interests protected by law, to prevent in deepening and repetition of mental evolution, of physical development and social development of children and adult individuals and to restrict an increase of social-pathologic phenomenon.

The set of measures for social/legal protection of children comprises of:

child protection, which is necessary for his well-being, respecting his best interest, according to convention, raising and prosperous development of the child in his normal family atmosphere, alternative environment for the child, who is not able to be raised in own family.

The social curatorship is the set of measures for elimination, ease and restrict endeeptening or repeton mental evolution, physical development and social development of the child and adult individual and providing the aid depending on seriousness of disorder and situation, in which the child is situated or adult individual.

The measures of social/legal protection of the children and social curatorship are carrying out for child (for every child, which is situated in the area of the Slovak Republic), for adult individual, for family, group and community, mainly by means of social work.

Considerable changes, when comparing to previous legislation, lies mainly in responsibility to offer the child physiological aid, whose parents are divorcing, in widening the possibilities to aid the endangered children, the families, as well as adults, in more detail amendment of preventive raise measures and administration of theirs, in putting the social curatorship in practice, in new legislation measures of custody and guardianship, in legislation of repatriation, as well as the aid for children without accompaniment, in legislation of securing the purpose of judicial decision performing in the facilities for protection of the children and social curatorship, in new legislation of measures for securing the alternative family environment including legislation concerning domestic regulations in affairs of inter-state adoption of the children and initiation of accredited subjects in procuring the alternative family care.

There is legislation, too, concerning the measures of social/legal protection having a financial character, which are oriented by preference for supporting the reconstruction of the families, of which the children were taken from the various reasons for forming the equivalent alternative atmosphere for children that are not allowed to grow up in own families and for the independence of young adults when leaving the foster home.

Territorial workplaces went under Labour Office Social Affairs and Family and Directorate CPPS went under Labour Centre Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVAR) as a domain of advisory-physiological services from 1st September 2005.

From the point of organization the social/legal protection of children and social curatorship are assigned in 46 Labour Offices Social Affairs and Family and its 33 workplaces (total 79 workplaces in the seats of districts) – authorities of social/legal protection of children and social curatorship.

There is the law being a newly amended, mainly in qualitative terms, the municipality's sphere of activity in the field of children support and by this law many measures can be done by law stated conditions, the accredited subjects as well.

1. 2. Authority's activities in social/legal protection of children and social curatorship		
	The number of cases	
	2004	2005
Terrain social work in normal atmosphere	56 567	59 054
Terrain social work - institutions	15 450	16 822
Propositions for instruction/cancellation of institutional care	494/99	255/61
Listed propositions and impulses in affairs of raising and alimentation of adolescents	18 671	22 073
Legal actions against fatherhood	390	294
Propositions and impulses on trial, release of provisional measure	1 167	2 284
Propositions for cancellation of raising measure imposed by court	69	202
Reports given in affairs of raising and alimentation by court and other state authority	54 231	56 201
Administration of measures in the interest of adolescents who are not citizens of SR	368	290
Participation in criminal act against adolescent	8796	9 991
Assistance for children in connection with activity diversely criminal	3323	3 957
Assistance for children in connection with searching the job	111	109
Assistance for children in connection with drug addiction therapy	236	246
Other form of assistance	954	1 411
Assign of return or translocation	X	11
Judicial trial in a case of adolescents	67 267	68 347
Applicants for adoption	511	342
Applicants for father foster care	340	282
Children whom the territorial authority was provided as a guardian (§ 56 act on family	279	74
Children whom the territorial authority was provided as a custodian (§ 60 act on family	416	2234
Children whom the territorial authority was provided as a collisional custodian	46/553	52 001
Group social work	66/1183	VI. 97

Department of advisory-psychological services within the frame of own activities continued in co-operation with the foster homes and Labour Offices, Social Affairs and Family in the process of international adoption. Sporadically and by request, Labour Offices, Social Affairs and Family has participated in reconstruction of biological families. Many representatives of the territorial workplaces of previous Advisory-Psychological Centres was being employed in regional commissions to prevent and eliminate social-pathologic phenomena.

Department of advisory-psychological services paid prime attention to the problems of alternative family care and tasks, which results from sections PPS by law 305/2005 during monitored period of time. Two work meetings took place on

nationwide level in attendance of psychologists of sections PPS, social workers of subdivisions SPO and SPK, in attendance of representatives of the department SPO and SK Labour Centre Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVAR), Ministry of Labour Social Affairs and Family of Slovak Republic and Centre for internationally-legal protection of the children and the youth. Program of the meetings was focused on creating the psychologists' teams – social worker within the frame of preparing the individuals for alternative family care (IAC) and for improving the quality of interaction process and preparing the children for international adoption. There were contributions of two foreign business trips together with Centre for International legal protection of the children and youth: participation in international conference in Venice, which was devoted for international adoptions organized by independent agency Famila e Minori as well as the stint at the state institution for international adoptions of region Piemont in Torino, al for improving the process of **international adoptions**.

The law No. 305/2005 concludes many new elements concerning the provision of advisory-psychological care not only in the problems of alternative parental care but also in the work with family and its members. Pursuant to the law, the provision of advisory-psychological assistance besides the adult individuals is to be intended for children and adolescents, too (previous centre for advisory-psychological services provided the services predominantly for adults population), so the sections of the departments of advisory-psychological of Labour Offices, Social Affairs and Family are widening their sphere of activity towards the children and youth. The proposal array of tests were elaborated for the needs of psychologists of sections of the department of advisory-psychological services for orientational psycho-diagnostic examination for children and youth and for the next time period educational and work meetings are prepared aimed to advisory, therapeutically procedures under the conditions of Labour Offices, Social Affairs and Family in the sense stated law.

Together with the object of transition of the rights and obligations based on labour/legal relations of Centre advisory-psychological services into Labour Offices, Social Affairs and Family are as well the rights and obligations based on agreements and contracts, and Centre advisory-psychological services made an agreement with Antidrug Fund (AF) and with Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic (ME SR). Till the end of the year of 2005 there were realized two projects:

From AF "Critical environment and social groups from the aspect of drug and other dependences in prevented activities of Centre advisory-psychological services". It was created by partial projects aimed to, on the one hand for specialized education of the advisors and psychologists in work with the family characterizing the dependence problems, and on the second hand for application preventing program "Say it straight" in terrain – for students, prevent co-ordinators, foster homes, e.t.c. from ME SR.

From ME SR from the sources of European Social Fund: Innovation specialized education in advisory and in social work for the family, partner relations personality problems. This project is also aimed to education of psychologists and advisors of Centre advisory-psychological services. In the beginning phase of realization was stopped and majority of the activities was shifted for the year 2006.

There were published 4 issues of the newsletter "Empatia", issue 3 and 4 within the frame of publication activities with heading of Labour Offices, Social Affairs and Family. The bulletin serves for communication of sections of the department of advisory-psychological services and gives information on form of work, on experiences in professional assistance to individuals, and family in critical live situations.

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