

**Keeping the door open:
Resources for children and youth leaving institutional care in the
Baltic Sea region**

Mapping Report

Prepared for the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, WGCC.
Council of the Baltic Sea States
by Rasa Erentaitė

Vilnius 2008

CONTENT

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE WGCC 3

INTRODUCTION 4

METHODOLOGY 6

RESULTS BY COUNTRY 7

DENMARK 8

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Denmark
Special projects and programmes

ESTONIA 12

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Estonia
Special projects and programmes

FINLAND 16

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Finland
Special projects and programmes

GERMANY 20

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Germany
Special projects and programmes

ICELAND 22

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Iceland
Special projects and programmes

LATVIA 27

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Latvia
Special projects and programmes

LITHUANIA 31

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Lithuania
Special projects and programmes

NORWAY 36

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Norway
Special projects and programmes

POLAND 40

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Poland
Special projects and programmes

RUSSIA 44

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance, special projects, programmes and institutions in four Russian regions

SWEDEN 52

Legal provisions
Institutions and organisations involved
Aftercare assistance available in Sweden
Special projects, programmes and institutions

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS 57

Resources: overview
Duration of support
Patterns of leaving care support

1. *Reforms, transition*
2. *Unequal access to support*
3. *Sensitivity or lack of it*
4. *Inadequate monitoring*
5. *Approaches and ideologies*

Keeping the door open: how?

APPENDIXES 63

1. Questionnaire
2. List of professionals, who contributed to the mapping

**Foreword by the Deputy Director Agneta Björklund,
Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs,
Chair of the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk**

Children in our societies are benefitting from the fact that the standard of living has risen, not only in the Baltic Sea Region but in most parts of the world. More and more children receive comprehensive education and more children spend a bigger part of their childhood with their families. Much of this is supported by a consolidation of child protection systems in our region and by the increase of knowledge that professionals assisting children demonstrate.

With this in mind, the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk continues its work to make the benefits of the progress in recent years available to all children, also those that fall into the category of being "at risk".

In many of the programmes implemented by the WGCC, children that have spent time in institutional care appear in the statistics as those that are more likely to also become victims of violence or exploitation. Research will tell us that this is true for all countries in the cooperation regardless of the specifics of the country. This failure on the side of societies that are there to assist children by placing them in care is one topic among the five priorities decided upon by the WGCC.

In May of 2005, at the meeting of ministers responsible for children's issues in the CBSS-region, the WGCC was tasked to urgently develop programmes to improve the protection of the rights of children in institutional care. This programme has seen a number of expert meetings and one major conference. All of these were organised to assist policy makers, public agencies and NGOs to better adapt their programmes and their policies to the reality facing children in care while they are in care as well as when they leave care. It is the support to young people leaving care that is the subject of this report, commissioned by the WGCC that we are now proud to present. The report includes examples of programmes and policies in place in the member countries to the CBSS when it comes to assisting young people as they enter into independent life.

The WGCC is certain that the report will challenge us all to consider what we can learn from the programmes presented and also what we can learn from that which is not there. The gaps in care and in services to children and to young people are important to identify and act on before they create more harm.

Stockholm in October 2008

The photographs are all taken by unknown photographers
in the borough of Sorunda, 60 kms south of Stockholm,
between the years of 1920 and 1940.

The children and young people in the pictures have no connection to the text.

Introduction

”Leaving care? Lost?” – would ask a typical brochure addressed to young people leaving institutional care. This address might sound like a friendly proposal of a helping hand for those children and young persons, who transition to independent lives after years in foster houses, residential institutions and treatment facilities. However, when a young person does feel lost, confused or unsafe leaving care institution, is there actually an adequate support to meet his or her needs? What particular assistance does the ”helping hand” offer for children and young people when it comes to after-institutional care?

Even though some European countries, including the Baltic Sea region, increasingly turn to the issue of aftercare, the support available for young care leavers is still far from sufficient. The direct evidence of this situation is present in numerous studies and reports, which document the complex life of children and young adults leaving care institutions. For example, Swedish Social Report of the year 2006 states, that children and young people who have been placed in out-of-home care run a great risk of unfavourable long-term development in many respects, for example of starting young adult life with nothing higher than compulsory school education, becoming a teenage parent, becoming mentally ill or of committing suicide in early adulthood¹. Other sources indicate that very often loneliness, isolation, unemployment and dependence on benefits is what young

people experience in aftercare situations; moreover, a disproportionate number of care leavers end up in homelessness, prostitution and crime².

Indeed, these tendencies show that the vulnerability of young people who spend a great part of their childhood in foster family homes or in institutional care facilities stays largely not responded. Nevertheless, accumulating amount of research indicate that situation can change significantly, when adequate support towards independent life is provided for young people in institutions. Basing on the empirical study in the UK foster care houses, researcher Clair Taylor points out: ”positive care experiences do exist, and it is important that poor outcomes after care are never accepted as inevitable³”. The report from the WGCC⁴ regional seminar on children in institutions also stresses that specific programmes, which ensure appropriate housing, enhance life skills, further educational achievements, strengthen positive self-image and social integration during post-placement, are most likely to produce positive results for children leaving care⁵.

Experience from similar studies and initiatives (e.g. Independent Living programmes⁶) lead to the acknowledgement, that institutional care is only part of the work, which governments have to accomplish to meet the needs of children and young people with inadequate parental care or serious adaptation and behaviour problems. The situation of children in institu-

¹ Bo Vinnerljung, et al., Children and young people at risk// International Journal of Social Welfare, special supplement ”The national report on social conditions in Sweden”, Vol.16, Suppl. 1, 2007.

² Claire Taylor, Young people in care and criminal behaviour. London Philadelphia (Pa.) : Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006. P. Mendes, B. Moslehuddin, Graduating from the child welfare system: a comparison of the UK and Australian leaving care debates// International Journal of Social Welfare. 2004, Vol. 13., p.332-339.

³ Taylor, 2006, p.30.

⁴ Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk within the Council of the Baltic Sea States

⁵ Conference Report ”The Rights of Children in Institutions in the Region of the Baltic Sea States”, Stockholm, Nov. 14-15, 2006. <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/institutions/dbaFile13603.html>

⁶ Annette Munch ”Leaving residential care in Denmark”. Conference Report ”The Rights of Children in Institutions in the Region of the Baltic Sea States”, Stockholm, Nov. 14-15, 2006. <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/institutions/dbaFile13603.html>



tions requires a holistic approach, which means continuity of support towards independence of young persons leaving institutional care. At the moment, however, existing data suggest that resources allocated to support children leaving residential care as a proportion of the cost of operating residential institutions are minimal in most countries. This shows that the focus is on care institutions, rather than on the outcomes of care for children themselves⁷.

With all the complex realities of care leavers in mind, this report looks at the situation of aftercare support in eleven countries around the Baltic Sea – a region with diverse legislation and social care systems related to child protection. The report aims at answering the following questions: What are the resources available for young people leaving institutional care in the Baltic Sea states? What is the system of aftercare in each of the countries? What special projects or programmes are currently addressing the needs of young care leavers in the region?

The need for such enquiry was stressed in 2005 at the meeting of ministers responsible for children's issues in the CBSS member states. The ministers decided to step up the cooperation on the rights of children in institutions.⁸ The Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (WGCC) was tasked, among other issues, to look at how the situation for

boys and girls leaving institutional care could be improved in the region. At the subsequent meeting in Yaroslavl on Support to Boys and Girls Leaving Residential Care the recommendations by the experts were to encourage the evaluation of programmes and the sharing of successful experiences from projects for children and young people leaving care. The present report is the first attempt to address this recommendation on the regional level.

It is important to note, that this report is largely of a descriptive nature and does not provide an in-depth analysis of existing practices or policy recommendations. Neither does it include a complete picture of the situation in all eleven countries around the Baltic Sea. Rather, it is the first step in reflecting the situation. It seeks to map the variety of systems (or absence of them) for children leaving care across the region and collect diverse examples of practices supporting children and young people leaving institutions in the Baltic Sea countries. Thus, the aim is to look at what is available rather than to evaluate the effectiveness of the projects and programmes. Hopefully, this effort will provide professionals in the region with a starting tool for reflecting on measures to protect and support children leaving institutional care in the region. The material will also be used to promote successful programmes and projects in the entire region and beyond.

⁷ Children in institutions: prevention and alternative care. Edited by Bragi Gudbrandsson. Council of Europe, 2005, p. 29.

⁸ For the conclusions from the meeting of ministers:
<http://www.childcentre.info/archive/background/dbaFile11866.html>

Methodology

This mapping was conducted through a desk study, which included analysis of information collected from professionals and child protection officials in each of the countries in the region. The analysis was complemented with an overview of relevant documentation and web-based information sources on the issue of after-institutional care. The duration of the project was from November 2007 – June 2008.

In the preparation phase relevant documents and other materials were collected and reviewed. In particular, the materials from the Stockholm Conference: "The Rights of Children in Institutions in the Region of the Baltic Sea States" held in November 2006⁹ were used to prepare for the study. The Council of Europe report "Children in institutions: prevention and alternative care"¹⁰, and the Recommendation nr. 5 (2005) on Children's Rights in Institutions approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and other relevant documents on child protection were reviewed.

A special template was designed for collecting information from organisations, institutions and professionals working in the field of child protection, primarily, institutional care (Appendix 1). The template included questions on state responsibilities, main actors involved in provision of aftercare, the existence of special projects and programmes for young care leavers and the system of evaluation of the efficiency of aftercare services. The template covered different layers of child protection, including the supporting measures run by the state, counties, municipalities and NGOs. The questions in the template covered support to children leaving institutions because they "age

out" of the residential care system, as well as these children for whom the reason for being in care no longer exists.

The mapping was carried out by getting in contact with the different organisations through the use of email. Additional clarifications were made by telephone interviews. Out of around 120 questionnaires distributed, 30 percent were filled in and returned. However, the number of returned questionnaires does not say much in itself, because the filled in questionnaires accounted for very diverse share of information, with some covering the wide range of activities by different actors on a national level, while others represented single projects run on a local level. The pattern of responses to the mapping might suggest though that the workload for child protection professionals is often very heavy and does not allow enough space for reflection on their work – some professionals admitted that they simply can not afford filling in the template due to a heavy workload. Another observation from the process of obtaining the answers was the high fragmentation of the knowledge on the issues relating to aftercare.

It is worth to mention that the template with questions was sent out just before the winter holiday season, which made it really difficult for the contacted professionals to provide their answers. Nevertheless, many of them did reply on time and provided their crucial input in this exercise. Sincere acknowledgements are due to all the experts, officials and professionals who contributed their expertise to the mapping. List of experts, institutions and organisations, who provided information for the mapping, is included in Appendix 2.

⁹ <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/institutions/dbaFile14074.html>

¹⁰ Children in institutions: prevention and alternative care. Edited by Bragi Gudbrandsson. Council of Europe, 2005.

Results by country

Before presenting the results obtained in each of the countries, it is necessary to note, that out-of-home placement in institutions in Europe and in the Baltic Sea region varies a lot. The complexity of the picture makes it difficult to compare the systems, because the legislation and criteria for placements are different, access to social rights and family support varies. Based on questionnaires among its member states and other sources, the Council of Europe identified three distinct categories: states with high rate of child residential care coupled with large institutions (Central and Eastern Europe); states with low rate of residential care and large institutions (South Eastern Europe); finally states where the process of de-institutionalisation, prevention and alternative care has already taken place, albeit in varying degree (more affluent European states, including Nordic countries)¹¹. The countries from the Baltic Sea region fall into the first and the last categories, however, as stated in the report, there are big variations inside these clusters. This tells us that there is an enormous variation and scope of the situation in relation to out-of-home placements inside the region, which makes it difficult to compare the countries with regard to the after-institutional care they provide.

Another complicating factor is the differences in types of out-of-home institutional care. Roughly they can be divided into two types: foster care and treatment, or compulsory care. The first type is institutions with the primary mission to provide foster care for those children who do not have at all or are deprived of

adequate parental care. These can be foster houses of different sizes and structures or foster families. The other type of institutional care is treatment facilities, which include both long-term residential care and short-term interventions. These treatment facilities often function as institutions for compulsory care in cases of criminal behaviour, delinquency, alcohol or substance abuse, etc. The second type of institutional care is thus not related to the absence of adequate parental care, but to the actual behaviour problems, which may or may not be related to inadequate parental care (even if in most cases they certainly are). This mapping covers both types of care as long as they are considered part of the child welfare (child protection) system, but it does not include these types of institutions, which operate under the justice system. The distinction between child welfare (child protection) and justice systems is an important and interesting one, however, as it differs considerably among the countries in the region. Even though for most countries the focus of this report is on foster arrangements rather than treatment institutions, Sweden, for example, would be an exception, as inside child welfare system it has a well developed institutional treatment care, which would most probably be placed under the justice system in some other countries. This difference points not only to distinct practical arrangements, but also to different approaches towards children and youth with behaviour or substance abuse problems.

¹¹ Children in institutions: prevention and alternative care. Edited by Bragi Gudbrandsson. Council of Europe, 2005, p.3.



Denmark

Denmark provides aftercare support for young people up to the age of 23. There are many possibilities for different arrangements of support, but it is the municipality's responsibility and authority to assess and decide what to offer the particular young person. The municipality also reviews the individual plan of action and involves the young person into decisions and monitors the situation.

Legal provisions

The Danish legislation provides different possibilities for support to young persons who are in residential care or who need support to manage life after the age of 18 and up till the age of 23. The conditions described below are common to all these possibilities.

First of all, the support has to be of important significance in relation to the young person's needs. The young person shall also consent to the arrangement and the arrangements can only be implemented if the young person was placed in residential care or had a personal adviser or contact person before s/he reached the age of 18.

According to the Danish legislation (Act of Social Service, in Danish: Serviceloven, abbreviated SEL), the municipality is obliged to offer support for young people between 18 and 22 years of age if needed. It is the municipality that carries out the needs assessment (SEL § 76). If a young person needs support, the municipality can offer a "personal adviser" to support the young person in clarifying issues like work, education and leisure time (SEL §76,2). If the young person needs support regarding his or her whole life situation the municipality can offer a "contact person", provided the contact person has been offered before the young person became 18 years of age, even if this offer has been cancelled earlier (SEL §76,2).

Young people who have been placed in residential care before 18 can stay in residential care after the age of 18 and up to the age of 23 (SEL § 76,3 nr.1) and the municipality can offer a personal adviser (SEL § 76,3 nr.2)

or a contact person (SEL § 76,3 nr.3) and/or establish a preparation arrangement which allows the young person to return to the former residential care for weekends or periods up to 2-3 weeks if the young person needs it (SEL § 76,3 nr.4). Even if no aftercare arrangements is established the municipality is obliged to give the young person opportunity to return for a shorter period to a former residential care if needed (SEL § 76,3 nr.5). The arrangements shall come to an end at the time when the young person does not need it any longer or when the person reaches the age of 23. The young person pays for board and lodging depending on his or hers financial situation - but not for treatment (SEL§160).

According to Danish legislation a plan of action is to be implemented if a child is placed outside his/her home or if a child is offered other kinds of support e.g. personal adviser or a contact person (SEL §140). The plan of action includes the purpose of the efforts and describes the objectives of personal development and behaviour, family relations, schooling, health conditions, leisure time and friendships and other things of relevance. The municipality is obliged to review this plan 3 months after an offer has been established and every year afterwards. At least 6 months before the young person reaches the age of 18 the municipality is mandated to assess the needs of the young person according to aftercare arrangements, education, training, employment, housing and different kinds of support. The young person can complain about the decisions of the municipality concerning the aftercare support and decisions concerning the end of support and decisions concerning payment (SEL § 167). Complaints have a delaying effect.

Institutions and organisations involved

Municipalities – they have the responsibility and the authority to assess and decide what to offer the particular young person. It is also the municipality's responsibility to review the individual plan of action and to involve the

young person. The young person shall consent to the arrangement in the written plan of action. If the municipality decides to provide aftercare – the municipality must monitor and follow up on the individual action plan concerning the single child/young person. If the municipality decides not to provide support and if the young person does not complain – there is no monitoring system for grown ups who has left care. In that case social service for adult persons is available.

The National Board of Social Services – is an independent subdivision of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Board aims to promote new development and initiatives in social services while also supporting and counselling local authorities in providing services to citizens, i.e. children, young people, socially marginalised groups, elderly and disabled. The Danish Parliament decides on the political social and welfare initiatives to be implemented in Denmark. The National Board of Social Services is charged with ensuring that such initiatives are put into practice in Denmark's local authorities as intended by the Parliament and to counsel and assist local authorities. In addition, the Board offers specialist consultancy and specialist assessments in complicated and specialised individual cases in the field. In such cases, the Board also offers specialist consultancy to citizens. All of these responsibilities of the Board apply to the field of child protection, including aftercare.

Care institutions.

According to aftercare arrangements between a young person and a municipality, care institutions provide direct services, like board and lodging, treatment and special care to those care leavers, who stay in residential placements after the age of 18 and up to the age of 23. Care institutions can also provide temporal housing or other services for care leavers.

Aftercare assistance available in Denmark

Municipalities and the state provide:

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Life-skills training
- Psychological counselling
- Health services
- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
- Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities: *state churches and private churches, municipality makes sports activities available but for a fee*
- Networks and empowerment/counselling groups for young persons formerly placed in residential care

As mentioned above, it is the municipality that provides most kinds of the assistance (except of the State Education Fund support and unemployment benefit). It is possible for the municipality to have private or non-governmental organisations provide services, but the municipality can also provide the different kinds of support by itself. The responsibility remains with the municipality regarding the aftercare for each single young person who needs support.

Thus, the assistance operates in the following way: The municipality carries out needs evaluation for each child or young person leaving an institution. Personal plan of action is made with the consent of the person. The municipality provides services either by itself, or by subcontracting private or public organisations. If the municipality decides not to provide support and if the young person does not complain – only the social service regarding adult persons is available.

Special projects and programmes

Projekt Efterværn (Project Aftercare)

The Project was initiated and run by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2002-2006 as a part of the ministerial initiative called KABU (Quality in institutional placements of children and youth). The Project provided a possibility for municipalities to develop their aftercare service plan and improve the situation locally. The financing of the Project was compound - the Ministry of Social Affairs financed the development of aftercare projects, while the local municipality where a young person was receiving help financed direct provision of aftercare services. Thus, the local municipality was the main implementing body and the partners in developing the aftercare project were Frederiksholm Akutinstitution (a Danish residential home for children and young persons), KABU and "De fire Årstider" (a networking project called "The four Seasons", which is a place for young people formerly placed in residential homes). Young people from the network project "De fire Årstider" were interviewed at the beginning of the Project. The young people's statements in this research have had a major influence on the design of the Project.

The Project focused on improving the quality of the placement by securing a good bridging between the different phases before placement and after residential care. The programme was available for all municipalities to implement in aftercare services. Every single municipality was allowed to decide what kind of programme/methods they wanted to use regarding aftercare services as long as they respected the law.

The Project was designed for children and young people aged 17-23, both boys and girls from all ethnic groups and included youth with physical or mental disability who had stayed in the care institution for more than 6 months. The reasons for leaving care could be ageing out, behaviour improvement or preparation for living in one's own home. Young people were referred to the Project through the municipality.

The aims of the Project were to reduce risk in the young person's life, support the

young person to manage by him or herself in an adult world and live a life full of meaning to him or her. Individually designed activities were available, including training and counselling regarding education, work, everyday life, housing, leisure time, health and nutrition, psychological well-being. The focus of the Project was on supporting education and training. Support with getting and maintaining a job and the counselling were of central importance in the activities. Life-skills training was also stressed and organized individually based on a specific assessment of the young person's competencies and need for development. The programme supported the young person's participation in cultural, religious and leisure activities through counselling, contact and monitoring. The needs assessment was always carried out, pathway plan designed, individual monitoring and other kinds of support could be initiated in the programme, but provided by the municipality. The issues of gender, ability, and ethnicity were approached as individual characteristics in the Project.

The Project was based on "*Activity Theory*" as developed by professor Pär Nygren and published in Norway under the title "Profesjonelt barnevern som barneomsorg" (in English – "Professional child protection as childcare – from theory to tools"). The approach is based on:

- Clear division of responsibility (between the young person and the different professionals);
- Planned meetings;
- Documentation of plans, efforts and results;
- Involvement of the young person, his or her parents and network;
- Pedagogical activities, counselling and support.

The method is implemented in practical tools such as assessment schedules, agendas for planned meetings, activity plans and training plans concerning the young person's daily life.

The Project was evaluated by a network of professionals but it was very difficult to test the programme in the limited time of duration.

The main innovation of the Project was approaching the aftercare as a professional, controlled, managed and methodical effort. The Project has finished, but it could be revived in the future.

Baglandet København (The Home Base, Copenhagen) - drop-in centre

The centre was established in 1998 by a group of people, who had been in care during their childhood. The initiative is financed by funds in the law of finance, managed by the Ministry of Welfare. The initiative consists of the ginger group, the board, the employees and the users. Two similar projects started later in Aarhus (2003) and Aalborg (2006).

The aim of the programme is creating an open network for people who have been in care, assisting in contacts with the social system, maintaining a job or finding out about the legal system. The main activities of the programme: drop-in centre, being together and leisure ac-

tivities. The target group is anyone who has been in care during their childhood. People aged 18 to 40 or even 60 come. The users are mostly Danish, both men and women. They may have stayed in care for different reasons, as well as left care under diverse circumstances. Among the participants there are people with psychological and social problems. Most of the users have a poor family connection. The participants of the programme find out about it in many ways, from other users, the media, the website and from local municipalities. The programme is based on the principle – you're welcome if you have been in care during childhood. No payment or registration is required.

The method of the programme can be called "individual talks". It functions largely through non-formalized communication between the staff, board and users of the programme. No formal evaluation is carried out for this programme.



ESTONIA

In Estonia the laws foresee after-institutional support for young care leavers through one-off grants or longer-term allowances and other support. Though there are many kinds of support covered by the state and the local municipalities, the gaps with quality and the access to the services are still big. Though the responsibility of aftercare and supportive services lie on the local municipalities, it is quite often that substitute homes and foster homes provide direct assistance to the young person, and in these cases it might last longer than foreseen by the state.

There are not many special programmes or projects for children leaving care and for aftercare. The system is mainly built on the support and services provided by the state and municipalities, also on the concept that the substitute homes and care in the family should prepare the young persons for independent life.

The professionals working in the field of child protection admit that there are gaps in the regulations and services in aftercare, which must be developed. For example, there is no special aftercare state monitoring system, but a general (statistical) monitoring by County Governor Offices and also monitoring on the municipal level.

Legal provisions

By the Social Welfare Act the substitute home is a family-type home, which should prepare a child for independency and provide him or her with necessary coping and life skills. According to the Social Welfare Act, before a child is going to care (guardianship, foster family or substitute home) the case plan shall be prepared by the local municipality together with the child. Case plan shall be reviewed once a year. Legislation that regulates the pathway plan has come into force just at the beginning of 2008, so the new system needs some time to start working effectively.

The municipality has a duty to provide a young person with help and assistance when leaving care and provide the housing as fore-

seen in the Social Welfare Act. There is an independent life grant (6000 EEK, approx. 380 EUR) for young persons leaving care. As regulated by the Family Benefits Act, the grant is allocated for children without parental care who have been living in a substitute home, foster family or have been under the guardianship or special schools for children with special needs. When a young person turns 18 and leaves care, the child allowance will be paid during the school year until he or she reaches 19, as specified in the Family Benefits Act.

Institutions and organisations involved

Ministry for Social Affairs – responsible for policy making, preparing necessary legal regulations, preparing and implementing social welfare programmes on the state level, setting standards for services, and benefits. Also for arranging the state-level services, like rehabilitation service, childcare service for disabled children.

Municipalities – provide the direct support and services to children in care and care leavers. Monitoring of children who have left care is the duty of municipal bodies.

County Governor Office – monitors the social welfare and social services in the county.

Care institutions – can prepare children for independent life by teaching certain skills at the institution, or follow up after young people leave the institution and provide direct material support for individual care leavers.

Non-governmental organisations – some of them have special programmes or projects for children leaving care, or for children at risk, where care leavers can be one of the target groups.

Assistance available

Municipalities and state provide:

- Needs assessment (*case management, rehabilitation, for disabled children -together with rehabilitation service*);
- Pathway plan (*case management, rehabilitation, alternative care*);
- Individual monitoring (case management);
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser (*MCP - main care person appointed for every child leaving the substitute home*);
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future;
- Housing;
- Financial allowances, benefits, in particular for coping in independent life;
- Life-skills training, in particular: youth home and family support services;
- Psychological counselling;
- Health services (*for people who do not have health insurance*);
- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare);
- Hobbies, sports activities;
- Other – different local social services.

Some of the services listed can be provided by non-governmental organisations working in child protection. Additionally, support with education and training, as well as getting and maintaining a job is provided through other social services.

Though the responsibility of aftercare and supportive services rests with the local municipalities, sometimes the substitute home or foster home will have the strongest bonds with the young person entering his/her adult life. So it is quite often that substitute homes and foster homes provide direct assistance to the young person. Substitute homes sometimes provide very direct support to young people leaving care. For instance, they provide young people who are starting their independent life with elementary things, like furniture, clothes, dishes, etc. Sometimes substitute homes also help with the transportation.

Care persons have seen it quite often that young people who have already left the institution come back for advice and help. Some of

the young people remain in contact with their mentor from the substitute home for a long time.

Tallinn municipality example

In Tallinn municipality there is an agreement that the child protection worker organizes aftercare at least half a year after the child's has left the institution. In addition, the child protection worker provides counselling and supervision or other family support services if there is a need for such. There is also a youth home for training and preparing young people for independent life.

Pregnant young girls and underage girls with children have a possibility to stay in the institution until they are prepared and independent enough to leave. There is also a joint project with NGO Caritas, which is called "Mother's class", aimed at supporting underage pregnant girls and girls with small children in continuing their education.

From the Tallinn municipality budget an independent life benefit (5000 EEK, approx. 320 EUR) is also paid, which complements the state grant and different social benefits. This benefit is for every young person leaving care in Tallinn (guardianship, foster family care, institutional care).

Special projects and programmes

Estonian SOS Villages (semi-independent phase)

<http://www.sos-lastekyla.ee>

Semi-independent phase is a continuous activity initiated inside Estonian SOS Villages and running since January 2002. The aim of the programme is to prepare children and young people living in SOS houses for independent life. The programme functions as part of the SOS care. It is based on SOS care concept and regulations coming from it. SOS National Association and SOS KDI are financing the activities, with contribution from the state if the young person is a student. In some cases municipality contributes to solving the issue of housing.

This programme is designed for a very small target group of persons. Those eligible

for participation are young people leaving SOS main care (Children's Village and/or Youth Facility) because of ageing out. They are former children of SOS Facilities. Generally, each child from SOS Village has a right to take part in the programme if s/he has passed at least one phase of SOS care. However, there are a few additional requirements: suitable age, education, job and emotional stability.

The aims for children under the programme are: to find a job and have regular income, to have permanent living premises according to the standards described in the "Housing" paper. The main activities to achieve these aims are pathway planning, personal advising, individual monitoring, guardian support/ personal adviser, housing, support with special needs. Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future is ensured, but psychological counselling is not available in this project.

There are some children who have light mental disability in the programme. They have the same rights like others to participate in the programme, but none of them have reached the suitable age yet.

The results of the programme are measured by the number of young persons who can manage to live independently. Based on information coming from MCPs (Main Care Persons) and from youth themselves, from 13 young persons who passed semi-independent living, 10 are already able to manage independently.

It is planned that the programme will continue as long as SOS Children's Village works in Estonia. The experience from SOS initiative could help to develop similar programmes on the governmental level. The most successful approaches in the project proved to be young people's participation in decisions for themselves and the possibility for them to always use a little way back to the Village.

Scholarship for children from children's homes and orphans for university studies
<http://www.elf.ee>

Since 1989 Estonian Children's Fund has given out scholarships for orphans and children from children's homes that continue

their education after grammar school. Estonian Children's Fund initiated this project in 1989 because of the lack of support for young people leaving care and continuing their studies at the university. There were 133 scholars in 2003 and they studied in 55 different schools all over Estonia. Now the scholarship is provided only for those who are going to universities. Estonian Gambling Tax Foundation funded the project until 2003; after that the funding is gathered from different sponsors and donations.

The aim of the project is to provide children living in care with equal opportunities as those who are living in biological families. It seeks to make it possible for children from children's homes to live in an economically safe environment during studies, including housing in the university-city, aids in learning and monthly managing support. Also, if necessary, the project tries to find resources for orphans' preparation costs in order to enter the university. All children who are living in care and are able to study at the university are eligible for the project, both boys and girls from all nations. Students' organisations are providing free additional training for the target group and involve those young people into the activities of the organisations.

The slogan of the project is: From children's home to university! Young people are organizing the scholarship ceremony.

Estonian Children's Fund has also carried out several other projects for children leaving care:

- 1997-1998 children aftercare in Narva (by the support of Phare).
- Mentor programme for children living in care (2002-2005). Since 2002, Estonian Children's Fund has been searching for benevolent people who could become mentors for children from Kopli orphanage. A mentor is a grown-up and good person who has time and is willing to introduce his/her way of life, interests and hobbies to the child from a different background. The aim of such activity is to enlarge child's small world and way of thinking.

Counselling service for abused children
<http://www.tugikeskus.org.ee>

The programme is implemented by NGO Tartu Child Support Center in collaboration with Tartu City Government. NGO Tartu Child Support Center has lobbied for years till they have reached the stage that city government is purchasing the counselling service for abused children from the centre. Currently, Tartu City Government finances 20% of the programme and the other finances are raised through different (mainly foreign) projects. State also purchases rehabilitation service for delinquent children from Southern Estonia. The programme is implemented in cooperation with institutions and organisations of Tartu that are involved in work with children: shelters, kindergartens, children's homes, schools.

The programme will continue during 2008-2010. Yet, this service is directed to all abused children of the region. Those who stay in residential institutional care are only one of the target groups – they form less than 20% of the assisted children under this programme. This group of children is referred to the programme by the staff of the residential care institutions. However, only children who are residents of Tartu can be consulted for free, otherwise residential care institutions have to raise funds to buy services for the children. Moreover, the programme is targeted to children who are still in residential care, not the young people who leave the residential care.

Johannes Esto Society
<http://www.johannes.ee>

The organisation provides "Mother and Child" shelter services. The services of the shelter are provided for young mothers with children aged up to three years, with a special focus on teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers. A number of clients at the shelter are former residents of school for girls with behavioural problems (Kaagvere School), who have become pregnant during their stay at this school. As a result the girls are referred to the mother and child shelter, where they receive social services, counselling and teaching how to cope independently.

The criteria for being admitted to the shelter are the following: if a young pregnant woman or a young mother has no place to stay; if a young woman faces unexpected family problems; if mental and physical health of mother and child are endangered; also in cases of domestic violence. There are four separate rooms in the shelter and a playing room for children. Each room has kitchen facilities and a bathroom/washroom. This shelter does not provide babysitting service.

The aim of the programme is to help young mothers and their babies to recover in a safe environment and to teach them to cope in the future. The first 24 hours are free of charge and in case of a longer stay the placement should be coordinated with the child protection services of the social department of Tartu City Government.

Finland

Aftercare process is one of the integral parts of institutional care in Finland. The newly adopted amendments in legislation on child protection, as well as previously applied law, include regulations on aftercare services for children and young people leaving institutions up to the age of 21. A wide range of services for care leavers is available according to the individual needs of the person. The support is provided through the municipal social services. Some support is delivered by subcontracting private or non-governmental organisations. There is supported housing available from a non-governmental organisation, through which young people until the age of 25 can learn to live independently step-by-step.

Legal provisions

Over recent years significant reforms took place in the Finnish social sector, including the National Development Project for Social Services (2003-2007) and the National Development Programme for Child Welfare¹². In connection to these reforms Finland has also amended its legislation for child protection - Child Welfare Act (417/2007). The amendments have come into force at the beginning of 2008. The new law includes improvements in a range of areas of child protection and family support, including identifying problems in the whole system, reviewing the process of taking a child into care, foster care, decision-making on child welfare and follow-up care.

The amended Child Welfare Act, as well as the previous document, includes articles on after-institutional care. The Child Welfare Act foresees that the municipal social welfare board must support the child or young person after the end of foster care. According to the child welfare law, municipalities are responsible to

organize aftercare as well as all other social services:

- aftercare has to be organised always after the substitute care (residential care and foster care),
- it lasts five years or up to the age of 21,
- municipalities are responsible to make an aftercare plan,
- once the aftercare period is over the social worker has to make a plan what are further services and support needed by a young person,
- a young person is entitled to financial support in the period when s/he starts independent life.

Childcare legislation is also applied to ethnic minorities, who have been within the child welfare system in Finland. However, it does not apply to children who received asylum as unaccompanied minors. At the age of 18 unaccompanied minors shall move out of family group homes and group homes¹³. Many of them do not have a long experience of living in the Finnish society. When outside of the residence institution, they may risk problems with school, little social support around them, feeling lonely, dropping out of school, and getting marginalized if living without any support from adults.

In the second report on the project "Minor Mig Unaccompanied Minors as Vulnerable Groups" in 2000 it was stated that municipalities do not have resources to provide any special after-institutional care for unaccompanied minors, although there is a great need for that. Though the proposal has been submitted to the government for providing financial support to municipalities until unaccompanied migrants turn 21, the situation remains largely unchanged today – the age limit has remained

¹² Ms Kristiina Laiho "Child participation and the Finnish bill of welfare act".

Conference Report "The Rights of Children in Institutions in the Region of the Baltic Sea States", Stockholm, Nov. 14-15, 2006.

<http://www.childcentre.info/projects/institutions/dbaFile13603.html>

¹³ Anna Mikkonen, Anne Alitolppa-Niitamo Second Report on Minor Mig Unaccompanied Minors as Vulnerable Groups. The Family Federation of Finland, The Population Research Institute. September 2000.

18. There is a strong need for the municipalities or the Ministry of Labour to invest money in the aftercare of migrant youth.

Institutions and organisations involved

Ministry of Social Affairs – issues legislation, implements reforms and development projects, including the new Child Welfare Act.

Municipalities – roughly 450 municipalities in Finland are responsible for the provision of all social services, including child protection. These local authorities finance 70 percent of the expenditures on the provision of social welfare and health care services. Municipalities are responsible for organizing services for young care leavers. Municipality social services are the coordinating body for aftercare of an individual child. There are many different possibilities for the municipalities to arrange the aftercare services. The municipalities may provide the services themselves, in cooperation with other municipalities or by purchasing them from private service providers.

County Councils – monitor the work of municipalities, including provision of aftercare. Private services are also monitored by county councils.

Childcare institutions – the residential care units and foster parents are involved in the planning of aftercare and sometimes it is possible to organise aftercare in foster home or in residential settings. Some institutions have some kind of independent living units and support is organised by the institution.

Private institutions, non-governmental organisations – can be subcontracted for partial provision of services for care leavers. There are also comprehensive aftercare projects running, like the ones from *Ehjä ry* (www.ehja.fi) .

Aftercare assistance available in Finland

All listed actions are available for care leavers:

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Life-skills training
- Psychological counselling
- Health services
- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
- Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities
- Support for child or a young person to keep in touch with significant persons (parents, former foster parents etc.).

Everything starts with the needs assessment, which is the responsibility of municipal social services. Further the actual arrangements and assistance provided during aftercare depends on the needs of a child or a young person. As mentioned, the municipalities may provide the services themselves, in cooperation with other municipalities or by purchasing them from private service providers.

Special projects and programmes

Aftercare - a project by Ehjä ry
<http://www.ehja.fi>

Ehjä ry is an NGO that offers supported accommodation and other services in communes and in apartments for youth on a continuous basis. Supported living is a form of aftercare for young care leavers, who come from foster care or who move away from home and need some support. The project is carried out in close co-

operation with municipalities and is financed by the Finnish Slot Machine Association (RAY). The programme originated in a project related to aftercare, which was implemented in cooperation with one municipality. After the project was finished in 2004, the organisation started to provide support services to young care leavers on a continuous basis.

The idea of supported accommodation is to support independent coping mechanisms in youth. Adolescents living in a supported accommodation do not have to start living on their own right away, but they learn it step-by-step. Initially a personal plan is made for each individual. The young person then moves to an apartment that is owned by the municipality. Ehjä supervisors go to his/ her home and go through the rules on how the support works. The supervisor visits the person three times a week in the beginning and after some months, if things are going well the supervisor visits the young person twice a week. Later the meetings are reduced to once a week. During the meetings the supervisor discusses with the young person the school, economic matters, etc. Sometimes the supervisor and the young person go to offices or certain institutions together to take care of the daily matters. The young person can call his/her personal supervisor anytime during the week and on working hours. The supervisors work flexible hours, approximately from 10 am to 10 pm. The service finishes when the supervisor and the social worker and the young person jointly assess that it is no longer needed. The support is also finished, if the young person is not motivated or committed to receiving support.

Young care leavers referred by the social service units of the participating municipalities is the target group of these services. The age varies between 17 and 25 years of age. Youth of both sexes participate in the project. Most of them are Finnish and some are Somali but there are also young people of other nationalities. Some of the clients have mental health problems. The youth of the target group have

been in institutions for very diverse periods of time ranging from ½ a year up to 15 years but the reason for leaving institutional care is most commonly ageing out. To participate in the programme the person has to have enough motivation not too heavy substance abuse problems and there has to be an assessment made by a social worker and Ehjä supervisor that this kind of support is sufficient.

The aims of the project are the following: to empower the young person, to guide the young person to take care of her/his home, to guide her/him on economical issues and to advise her/him on how to apply to an education and how to take care of daily matters. The methods applied by Ehjä are based on a social pedagogical approach: empowering the individual to take care of him/herself, guiding him/her to utilise public services and to assist the young person in the realisation that they can influence their own life. The project is evaluated by self-assessment, feedback from the social workers and the young person her/himself, the organisation's supervisors (who all have degrees in social services), the social workers and the board of the organisation. The main achievement, as seen by the organisation, is that young people that have benefited from the programme can manage their own lives. The project has worked out well and it is clear that the need for supported living is much bigger than the supply.

The main innovations of the project are the following: 1) seeing the person as an individual and tailoring the support services to each young person; 2) supported housing. The services provided range from pathway plan, individual monitoring, personal adviser to child involvement in the decisions about his/her future, housing, support with education, training, getting and maintaining a job, life-skills training, assistance if special needs arise (disability, pregnancy, childcare), supporting in cultural and religious needs, hobbies, sports activities, referral to public services (health, psychological counselling, etc.).



Germany

The question about projects and facilities, which provide assistance for children and youth leaving care in Germany, is not an easy one. This can be explained by the specific situation in the country, discussed below. In general, the law recognises socio-educational provisions for a young adult in need of assistance until the age of 21, but only in especially motivated individual cases will the provision be continued for a defined period. This provision is valid in all of Germany; however, it depends on the local service structures, as well as on the actual assistance entities available, and varies according to the regional circumstances. Even though the overall responsibility lies on the governmental youth offices, a large proportion of assistance is provided by non-governmental organisations.

Legal provisions

The German child and youth service, the sector responsible for institutional care mandated by the German Social Code VIII (*Sozialgesetzbuch – SGB*), is organized as an ensemble of governmental and non-governmental bodies (§ 3 and 4 SGB VIII). This means that although the overall legal responsibility according to the German Social Code VIII lies with the youth offices, a large proportion of the assistance is provided by non-governmental bodies. Non-governmental bodies are non-profit organisations that enter into contracts with public bodies and that are funded by the youth offices for the purpose of placing children or for providing non-institutional support services, such as Family Assistance Case Work (*Sozialpädagogische Familienhilfe*). Youth offices, which are governmental bodies, can be found in every German county and municipality. They are financed by the counties or municipalities.

There is a legal entitlement to socio-educational provisions for children with problems. The legal regulations for this provision are defined in § 27-41 SGB VIII and include non-residential socio-educational provision, foster

family and residential care. The addressees of the provisions are the parents. § 41 SGB VIII describes the legal entitlement to provision for young adults and aftercare operations. This article determines that socio-educational provisions for a young adult, if he/she needs it for his/her individual situation, is guaranteed until the age of 21. The provision will be continued for a defined period only in especially motivated individual cases. The young adult should obtain necessary advice and support after the end of the provision.

However, the specifics of the local service structures, as well as the actual assistance entities available, vary and have developed differently according to the regional circumstances. This is actually in line with the legislators' intention, since similar services are to be provided for children and youth throughout Germany, while at the same time regional conditions are to be taken into consideration. Therefore, the implementation of federal law applicable throughout the country will vary at the municipal level. Thus, the youth offices at the municipal level have an independent status in that they are not subordinate bodies of the federal government.

As empirical studies have shown, nearly all of the 600 German youth office districts responsible for providing and implementing these tasks are able to provide the full spectrum of services foreseen by the law either directly within their region or in another in close proximity.

Institutional care is part of a broader spectrum of assistance. This spectrum of assistance is available to the trained professionals of the youth offices, who can apply these different options in their effort to find adequate support for families in problem situations. Youth offices are support agencies, which arrange assistance and stand by families during the time they receive it. For this purpose they draw up an assistance plan in cooperation with those involved. This plan is reviewed at regular intervals. The

broad spectrum of assistance, however, does not factor in any specific aftercare services for children and young people leaving institutional care. Service providers specializing in this field in Germany are difficult to identify. The following assistance scenarios are "typical" for Germany.

Those young people, who according to their assistance plan should not be returned to their families, will remain institutionalized until they can be transferred to a less care-intensive service. Many residential care homes have established their own assisted living communities into which young people transfer after leaving institutions. These provide a setting in which young people can prepare for an independent life. Assistance is given by professionals employed by the responsible body or by people with whom the children have been familiar for a long time. Often, this assistance continues until the completion of vocational training. For example, the youth may be assisted in finding housing and employment or in filing for financial aid.

If a child or young person returns to his or her original family, this process is, as a rule, also assisted by non-institutional support. For instance, families in these cases are helped to adjust their everyday lives to the "new" family member by means of Family Assistance Case Work. In other cases the child or young person is assigned a supervision order by the youth office for the purpose of helping and advising the parents. Other supportive measures include the integration into youth organisations and further therapeutic assistance, for example. There is considerable variation from case to case and region to region.

The problem of the transition from institutional care is currently discussed with a focus on cooperation with the parents. Consideration focuses especially on how the contact with the parents can be established and intensified in order to facilitate the return of children and young people into their families. Another line of discussion associated with this relates to networking. The desired effect of this effort is the establishment of contacts and communica-

tion for the children and young people outside the institution.

Institutions and organisations involved

Youth offices (governmental bodies) – there are around 600 such offices throughout Germany. They are responsible for procurement of assistance and monitoring/ follow-up on the case as long as assistance is provided.

Non-profit charity organisations (non-governmental bodies) – they provide a wide and diverse spectrum of services for children in residential care, including aftercare.

Care institutions – can be run by charity organisations or local/ municipal bodies. Most of them as part of their services have transition support for children leaving care. The work of these institutions includes help with transition to independence in most cases.

Aftercare assistance available in Germany

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Life-skills training
- Psychological-pedagogical assistance
- Health services
- Youth work
- Other – maintaining the relationship with the family

In most cases the services are provided by non-profit charities, which are subcontracted by local youth welfare offices.

Special projects and programmes

Due to the diversity of practices, at this point there is no possibility to single out particular projects or programmes for care leavers in Germany. A national mapping looking at these diverse practices in different federal states and municipalities is needed.

Iceland

In Iceland comprehensive services for children and young people leaving institutional care are ensured on the state level up to the age of 20. There is an institutional cooperation, which ensures provision of aftercare support, mainly coordinated through municipal Child Protection Committees, with the overall supervision by the Government Agency for Child Protection. In addition to the state and municipal support, private and public organisations provide separate services for care leavers. There are two NGOs providing after care services for youth after institutional treatment for alcohol and drug abuse. There is no comprehensive state monitoring system to follow up aftercare, except for the duty of the Government Agency for Child Protection to carry out researches on children after care.

Legal provisions

The out-of-home care for children, including aftercare, is regulated in Iceland under the Child Protection Act, No. 80/2002. When a child is leaving care either from residential institution or from foster home, the municipal Child Protection Committee shall in collaboration with the parents and, if applicable, the child, if aged 15 or over, make a written schedule for further handling of the case. Before making the schedule the Child Protection Committee must evaluate if the child still needs support and what kind of support.

The social workers in child protection and the staff of the institutions shall follow the guidelines that the Government Agency for Child Protection has set about collaboration between institutions and Child Protection Committees. The guidelines say that two months before the child is supposed to leave, the staff of the institution shall write a short report and put forward a recommended plan about the child's nearest future concerning what kind of support the child will need after care (state responsibility). A month before the child leaves, the social worker of the Child

Protection Committee shall make a written plan for further handling of the case with the parents, the staff of the institution and the child. The schedule is then crosschecked at the last meeting where everyone mentioned above is present. When the child has left, the staff of the institution (most often the psychologist) writes the final report about the child's treatment in the institution. The Child Protection Committee is then responsible for implementing the plan (municipal responsibility).

Similar actions are taken when a child leaves a foster home. Then the social worker of the Child Protection Committee shall make a written plan for further handling of the case one month before the child leaves. This shall be done with the parents and foster parents considering each case. When the child is leaving the Child Protection Committee shall prepare the child's separation with the foster parents and arrange that the future plan will be put into praxis (by the regulations for foster care, Sept. 2004) (municipal responsibility).

According to the Article 3 of the Child Protection Act, the regulations apply for children under 18, but they may be extended to 20 years of age, if decided so by the child protection authorities and with the consent of the young person. The Act foresees a direct involvement of the child in the preparation of the plan, if the child is aged 15 and older. Younger children have to be consulted in accordance with their age and maturity. The plans have to be made for a specified period, and revised as necessary. The Act ensures a contact person, personal counsellor or support family for every care-leaver.

The Act foresees special measures for parents or pregnant girls. Besides all other assistance, parents and expectant care leavers are entitled to the necessary support and treatment in cases of illness, alcohol or substance abuse, or other personal problems.

Institutions and organisations involved Government Agency for Child Protection

under the Ministry of Social Affairs –works closely with and oversees municipal child protection, including aftercare. Law requires the Government Agency for Child Protection to:

- offer instruction and consultation to municipal Child Protection Committees at the local level with regard to family welfare and the management of child protection cases,
- monitor the work of Child Protection Committees, through the review of annual reports and other means,
- supervise and monitor institutions and homes operated or supported by the government for children and youth, which consist of two categories: care institutions for abused and neglected children or children without parental care, and facilities for children with destructive behaviour (delinquent or criminal behaviour, drug abuse, etc.),
- assist Child Protection Committees in finding suitable foster parents,
- support research and development work in the area of child protection,
- provide education and instruction concerning child protection

The Government Agency for Child Protection is also responsible for the operation of specialized services in child protection. There are two principal services in operation: a centre for investigation of child sexual abuse cases and treatment facilities for children and youth.

Municipal Child Protection Committees – responsible for management of child protection cases, including institutional care placements and aftercare. This involves local coordination and management of all aftercare cases, including both – children leaving residential institutions as well as foster homes. Work directly with municipal Departments of Social Services, thus, can provide and coordinate all general social services. Cooperate on a local level with schools, health care authorities, police and other relevant institutions.

Childcare institutions – when a child leaves institutional care, the institution from which the child is leaving, together with local Child Protection Committee, is responsible for writing reports and drafting recommended plans (schedules) for the child’s nearest future.

Private institutions, non-governmental organisations – provide separate services for care leavers. There are two NGOs providing after care services for youth after institutional treatment for alcohol and drug abuse. These are SAA – National Center for Addiction Medicine (<http://www.saa.is>) and Sober Youth/ Parent’s House (<http://www.vimulausaeska.is>).

Their services consist of self-help groups, counselling and leisure activities for care leavers. These NGOs receive substantial financial support in the form of grants from the state.

Aftercare assistance available in Iceland

The state ensures for care leavers:

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Life-skills training
- Health services
- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)

Municipalities ensure for care leavers:

- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Psychological counselling

NGOs provide additionally:

- Self-help groups
- Counselling
- Leisure activities for care leavers, like hobbies and sports

All available assistance is delivered according to the individual plan for each care leaver. Support is channelled either through care institutions or municipal Child Protection Committees, with involvement of other relevant institutions/ organisations, like health authorities, schools or NGOs. Private institutions or NGOs can also be involved in provision of the assistance, except for housing, financial support, health services and assistance with special needs.

Special projects and programmes

Sober Youth/ Parents' House <http://www.vimulausaeska.is>

The organisation called Sober Youth/ Parents' House is a private enterprise, established by parents who aim at strengthening the resistance against drug abuse among young people, especially those, who have undergone special residential treatment. The programme was put in practice because of an urgent need to build a bridge between the treatment institution and real life. Those who started it felt the need because they were parents of children who were drug abusers and had been placed in institutions. The parents have managed to finance the programme and hire specialists to execute the therapy. The programme has evolved since then, and today provides a number of services, which complement state and municipal support for treatment leavers.

The aim of the programme is to help young care leavers to stay sober, find ways to connect to pro-social groups and activities, stay at school, find and keep work and have a good relationship with their family. The main innovation of the programme in Iceland is that before there has not been any comprehensive programme under one roof, which would specialize in children who have finished treatment in different institutions.

The programme is continuous and has been running for the last 3 years. Municipality of Reykjavik, Ministry of Social affairs and private donors finance it. The Government Agency for Child Protection is cooperates, supervises and monitors the programme. The

plan is to stabilize the programme by signing a contract with the Government Agency for Child Protection who would also continue to monitor it.

Services of Sober Youth/ Parent's House are available in Reykjavik and in the communities around Reykjavik. The programme travels to some of the largest communities in Iceland to deliver counselling services. Services are available for teenagers after having been placed in residential care (treatment homes). Young persons are referred to the programme by the child protection services, even though sometimes therapists from the institutions contact the programme directly. The requirements to participate in the activities are the following: the young person must have finished the programme at the institution (treatment home), s/he must have the consent of her/his parents, the Child Protection Committee workers and the therapist at the institution.

The target group of the programme are children and young people between 15 and 21. It applies to both boys and girls. The clients of the programme are almost entirely Icelanders. Most of them do not have serious mental or physical disability and have been placed at the institution for at least 3 months, most often 1 year. The reasons for leaving care institution vary. It can be ageing out, returning to the family of origin, ceased care or improvement in the young person's behaviour.

The young persons come together twice every week – once in the middle of the week and once in the weekend. Weekend activities are very important to them – it is necessary to have some positive tasks to participate in. They eat together and then they do all kinds of leisure activities, for example, going to the theatre, enjoy a good hiking trip, both shorter and long trips. Other methods applied in working with these children and young people are the following:

- **Group therapy** is a very important and effective way to help the young persons to help themselves and others in the group. They have two group sessions twice every week.
- Parents also participate in group sessions (**family therapy**).

- It is very important for those who have drug problems that they attend AA meetings on a regular basis (**12 step approach**). They are taught and trained to stay sober and to stay away from illegal acts.
- Every child gets a private interview with the programme leader or a psychologist. The group leader is educated and trained as an alcoholic and drug counsellor (**ICADC**).
- At last there is one important aspect of the programme – the young persons can call one of the therapists whenever they feel the need and get direct counselling in any complicated situation they find themselves in. (**direct training to stay out of trouble**).

Case from Sober Youth/ Parent's House: A girl, 17 years old, began in the programme after she had been placed in a treatment home for three months. Before the placement she had been

a heavy drug abuser; had been kicked out of home, had no friends beside those who were in a similar situation and had no hobbies. She was suffering from anxiety and depression and had dropped out of school. After 15 months in the programme things were going much better. She was using for her own good, everything the programme was offering. Her relationship with the therapists and the group was both fruitful and rewarding. She managed to work with her feelings, traumatic episodes and grief. She started to attend 12 step AA – meetings – feelings of guilt lessened and her self-esteem grew. She got to know pro social friends and felt that she belonged to a group of people that cared for her. Her parents also took an active part in the treatment and the relationship with the family grew better and better. She started to work and eventually her self-confidence was strong enough for her to start school again.

Latvia

In Latvia aftercare assistance is provided for foster care leavers until the age of 24. However, many kinds of support are not yet available for young people leaving care, for example, needs assessment, pathway plan, individual monitoring or guardian support. Assistance is provided directly by the state and the municipalities. Some missing kinds of support are available from certain municipalities under special projects, initiated recently under the new government programmes on child protection. With these programmes steps are taken on a national level to transform institutional childcare to more family-oriented forms of care (e.g. group houses).

Successful and motivated care leavers are supported through allowances and benefits, which in reality make up a small part of the actual cost of living. Motivated care leavers have access to special family-like projects if their municipality is involved in them.

All special support for care leavers applies to children and youth in foster care situations, but not to those leaving special treatment or correctional facilities. No individual monitoring is available, except for general statistical data on the number of care leavers and reasons for leaving the institution.

Legal provisions

Section 43 of the *Protection of the Rights of the Child Law* states that upon the termination of foster care the local government, according to the permanent place of residence of the child, shall, in conformity with the *Law On Assistance In Solving Housing Issues*, provide the orphan or the child, who has been left without parental care, with residential premises (if the child cannot return to the previously occupied residential premises) and, in accordance with the social guarantees, specified by the *Cabinet of Ministers Regulations Regarding Social Guarantees for an Orphan and a Child Left without Parental Care as well as after the Termination of Out-of-Family Care* (issued

on 15.11.2005.) shall provide other assistance, including support after 18 years of age.

Monetary resources in the form of allowances and benefits are ensured by the law during independent life until the child reaches the age of 24, but there is a condition that the child continues without interruption with his or her studies at a general secondary or vocational education institution and is a successful student thereof. After the young person reaches the age, where no support can be provided for him or her as a care leaver, he or she has the right to turn to the municipality Social Service Office and to receive the necessary social services and social assistance.

Currently there are additional measures taken on the national level according to the *Action plan for the promotion of family-like care for orphans and children left without parental care and for the improvement of the situation in child care institutions* (adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 11 November, 2003) and the *State Program on the Improvement of the Situation of Children and Families* for 2006-2008.

Institutions and organisations involved

Ministry for Children and Family Affairs

– responsible for the policy, legislation and regulations on institutional care, including aftercare. Currently implements long-term national programmes for structurally reforming the institutional care in Latvia. Also responsible for collecting annual statistical data on the number of children who have left the care and the reasons for the termination of care.

Municipal government and its Social Services Office

– after the termination of out-of-family care municipality shall provide a child who has reached the legal age with psychosocial assistance, support to receive an education and financial benefits.

Assistance available

- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future;
- Housing: *until permanent living place is allocated to a child, the local government shall cover the monthly expenses of the child related to the rental of residential space;*
- Financial allowances, benefits: *municipality provides monetary resources for the commencement of independent life (amount not less than 90 LVL, approx. 130 EUR), pays an extraordinary allowance to obtain household objects and soft furnishing for the commencement of independent life (not less than 175 LVL, approx. 250 EUR); provides fare concessions on public transport; pays the benefit for monthly expenses (not less than 45 LVL, approx. 60 EUR) until the child reaches the age of 24, if the child continues without interruption his or her studies at a general secondary or vocational education institution and is a successful student thereof;*
- Support with education and training;
- Psychological counselling;
- Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities.

All kinds of support listed here are provided directly by state/municipal institutions. The assistance, which is not provided by state or municipalities under general regulations, can be available in some municipalities, which participate in special projects run by the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs. Health services are based on social insurance and labour exchange services are accessible for all unemployed people.

Assistance not available:

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ personal adviser
- Support with maintaining job
- Life-skills training
- Support with special needs

Special projects and programmes

Promotion of a family-like environment in the out-of-family care institutions

Initiated by the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs the project has been running since 2006. Every year a number of group homes – a new form of aftercare – are established in foster care institutions. One of the long-term aims of this project is to transform institutional childcare to the family-oriented forms of care. Group homes are one of the options on how to transform childcare institutions. This is the first project of this kind in Latvia, which is supported by the state. The project was initiated to fulfil the *Action plan for the promotion of family-like care for orphans and children left without parental care and for the improvement of the situation in child care institutions* (adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 11 November, 2003). The project is included in the *State Programmes on the Improvement of the Situation of Children and Families* for 2006-2008.

The aim of the project is to open group homes in the out-of-family care institutions for the young people aged 16-18; to train the staff on the methods of how to create family-like environment in caring and upbringing the children; to provide possibility for the young people to acquire the necessary life-skills, preparing them in advance to live in group homes at the training seminar „What does it mean to live an independent life?”. The project focuses on the development and improvement of infrastructure in out-of-family care institutions, but also training activities for staff and youth are included.

The municipality is chosen in the result of a tender procedure to implement the project in its territory. Ministry for Children and Family Affairs finances the project and follows its implementation for the next 5 years. The municipality, chosen in the tender, co-finances the project and implements it.

Group homes have already been opened in two municipalities. The premises have been repaired, trainings for the staff and youth have

been organized, 21 young persons have started to live in group homes. The aim is to continue the operation of group homes for at least five years and during this period supervise their functioning through the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs. In 2008 Ministry for Children and Family Affairs plans to finance creation of group homes in another municipality.

The target group of the project is young people aged 16-18 living in childcare institutions. They should be successful students in secondary school, technical school, vocational school or high school and should be willing to continue their studies or to acquire a profession. The young people are active in developing the internal rules of the group homes, as well as in sharing their ideas on the content of the preparatory training. The main condition to receive the service is participation of a municipality in the project tender and the motivation of young people who stay in an institution to live in a group home.

The support available under this project is individual monitoring, guardian support/personal adviser, child involvement in the decisions about his/her future, housing, psychological counselling. No individual needs assessment is carried out nor is a pathway plan designed. Considering that this kind of project is the first in Latvia and it has been realized for comparatively short time, it cannot include all kinds of assistance. In the following years it may be considered to broaden the project or to realize other projects aimed at this group.

Youth and staff of both genders and different ethnicities are involved in the project. The following methods are used in trainings of the staff and youth: preparatory training for the staff and youth, individual work with the youth, team building and promotion of communication for the staff, the youth and for both groups together, and polling of the young people (to find out motivation for participation in the Project, or to find out what they have learned during training).

Considering that this project has only been running for a short time yet, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of it. Nevertheless, the feedback is gathered through assessment questionnaires, where the young

people have evaluated changes of their situation, publications and reviews in mass media, and changes in statistical results by continuing to further implement reorganization of all out-of-family care institutions and aiming at their full transition into group homes.

Other international projects aimed at supporting children after termination of out-of-family care:

1. Within the project on bilateral cooperation between Latvia and the Netherlands *Matraflex*, in 2007 Ministry for Children and Family Affairs has realized a project „***Implementation of New strategies of Working and Raising Professional Capacity in Children’s Public Care Institutions in Latvia***”. The aim of the project was to prevent the social exclusion of youth and children in Latvian childcare institutions by sharing knowledge and experience about establishment of group homes, both on policy level and on a more practical level (practical recommendations and possible scenarios for the preparation of the relevant policy planning documents on the establishment of youth group homes in Latvia were given). The project was also aimed at strengthening the professional abilities of the specialists by providing them with the specific knowledge on youth development, as well as new methods of work. Within the project 22 specialists have been educated, who will be further providing free consultations to the staff of institutions on teaching life-skills for adolescents and on establishing specialized youth group homes.

2. Since 2007, Ministry for Children and Family Affairs has been involved in the project co-financed by the European Commission „***Life after institutional care. Equal opportunities and social inclusion for young people: identification and promotion of best practices***”. The project will continue until 2010. The overall objective of the project is to promote the development of European social policies aimed at social inclusion and equal opportunities for young care leavers or young people who are leaving institutions after a long time spent in residential care. The project’s specific purposes

are: identification and promotion of effective practices, such as programmes, services and pilot projects, aimed to prevent conditions of marginalization, and the participation of the stakeholders through coordination mechanisms; creation of a set of social, psychological and economic indicators that allow policy makers, stakeholders and public opinion to recognize the potential effectiveness of services

and social programmes aimed to favour social inclusion of young people in vulnerable conditions. The project should support the adaptability of the good practices from one European context to another; promotion of innovative service planning aimed at the reduction of the negative impact of those risk factors that affect care leavers, as well as to the prevention of inappropriate leaving conditions.



Lithuania

Lithuania is currently undergoing transition from big childcare institutions to family-type foster care arrangements. There is a governmental strategy how the system should look and what steps need to be taken in the following years. However, big investments and changes are still needed to implement the strategy. There are already foster care arrangements functioning fully according to the new approaches to care and aftercare, usually non-governmental houses but the majority of children still live in big foster care institutions, where possibilities to respond to every child's needs are very limited. Thus, for most of the system huge changes are still necessary to turn the strategy into reality.

The current legislation ensures support for children leaving care until the age of 24. Assistance is available in the form of special financial allowances, housing and scholarships for studies. The care leavers' access to different forms of support however, is limited by a number of factors, including, the type and size of the institution, initiative of the staff, uneven regional development, reason for institutionalisation, etc.

Legal provisions

The regulations on aftercare are covered by different social protection laws in the Lithuanian social support system. The financial support for care leavers is regulated by the Law on Child Benefits, adopted in 1994. According to this law, children leaving care are entitled to two kinds of benefits: the first is one-off allowance of around EUR 1884 to be used by the young person for primarily housing purposes (acquiring their own living space, rent, reconstruction, house equipment or personal computer). The second allowance is a monthly scholarship of around EUR 150 for those care leavers, who continue their full-time education upon leaving the institution. This allowance can be paid to young people not older than 24.

Another type of support for children leaving care relates to their housing needs. Upon

coming of age the young people are supposed to leave the care institutions. According to the Law on Support in Acquiring or Renting Housing and Renovation of Houses (last amendments in 2005), care leavers are entitled to social housing, which municipalities together with the Ministry of Environment Protection are obliged to provide. The access to social housing facilities, however, varies greatly from municipality to municipality, and it is the biggest problem in the capital and other larger cities. Usually, care leavers are obliged to apply for studies at schools which have their own housing facilities – care leavers then have a priority for housing, but their monthly allowance is reduced to less than EUR 80. If care leavers do not have a place to stay and are involved in full-time studies the possibility to prolong their stay at the institution can be sought. The regulations on credits for housing needs to take into account that care leavers are entitled to a 20 % subsidy on the housing credit they receive from banks.

Additional forms of support for children leaving care are included in the 2007 Directive of the Minister for Social Support and Labour on the Norms for Provision of Social Care, which will be applied and monitored from 2010. The Directive includes many non-financial forms of support for care leavers, like individual plans, monitoring, guardian and other. The Directive was prepared by a Swedish expert under the project of the World Bank. From 2010 the violation of the norms of care in the Directive may lead to withdrawal of the licence to provide childcare.

Many changes and additional regulations on aftercare come together with the changes in the general child protection and foster care system in Lithuania. Therefore, it is important to refer to the Directive of the Minister of Social Support and Labour on the Plan for Reorganization and Optimization of the Childcare Institutions in Lithuania (signed in 2007). The plan anticipates that by the year 2010 all the management functions for care institutions will be transferred to municipalities, and by the year

2015 each childcare institution will provide housing and support for not more than 8 children without parental care. Aftercare should then become an integral part of the foster care system, with one contact person (guardian) continuously providing the child with necessary care and support.

It is important to note, that the provision of aftercare in the system of child protection in Lithuania refers to children without parental care or inadequate care, but not delinquency or substance abuse as reasons for institutionalisation. Teenagers and young people institutionalised due to delinquency problems fall under the responsibility of justice system, and substance abuse is usually under health care jurisdiction and responsibility.

Institutions and organisations involved

Ministry of Social Support and Labour – legislation, reforms, childcare norms. Monitoring – through the Department of Social Services’ Supervision.

Municipalities – implement legal provisions on aftercare based on their resources and possibilities. Responsible for social housing of care leavers together with the Ministry for Environment Protection. Gradually, by 2010 municipalities will become the main coordinating bodies for provision of foster and aftercare for children.

Care institutions – play crucial role in preparing young people for leaving care through skills training, information on aftercare support and personal contacts with the care leavers. Most institutions are run either by the state, government regional offices or municipalities. There are some non-governmental foster care arrangements, but they make up a small part of all care institutions.

Aftercare assistance available in Lithuania

Available currently on a comprehensive level

- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Life-skills training
- Psychological counselling
- Health services
- Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities
- Other – keeping the connection with parent’s family

Additional forms of support, available from 2010 comprehensively, currently – on project basis

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Life-skills training (advanced)
- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)

Special projects and programmes

Government programme for support and social integration of orphans and children without parental care 2005-2008

This national programme is initiated and coordinated by the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Support and Labour, funded by the Lithuanian Government. The aim of the programme is to support the integration of care leavers into the larger society, reduce their vulnerability and social exclusion. At the beginning of the programme, an evaluation study on the quality of life and preparedness of care leavers to integrate into the larger society was carried out¹⁴.

¹⁴ Tėvų globos netekusių asmenų gyvenimo kokybės ir pasirengimo savarankiškam gyvenimui įvertinimas (Evaluation study on quality of life and preparedness for independency among persons without parental care). Ministry of Social Security and Labour, “Factus Dominus”. Kaunas, 2005.

According to the regulations of this programme, special yearly tenders are announced, where relevant interested organisations and institutions can apply with their proposal on aftercare. This way in 2006 there were 6 and in 2007 there were 7 projects for care leavers supported through the programme. Overall, around EUR 32000 were spent in the supported projects during 2007. The average funding for one project was around EUR 4600.

During 2007 there were 257 children involved in the activities of supported projects. Out of these 17 had already left care while the rest were still in care institutions. The majority of activities during 2007 focused on professional orientation and social, psychological-pedagogical, and legal services. Individual consultations made up over one third of all the activities during 2007 while another third were training activities, seminars and courses. A special guide for care leavers on practical aspects of leaving care was prepared and published under this programme.

The organisations, supported through this programme, report to the Ministry at the end of the year. According to their reports, children who took part in the projects had possibilities to acquire working skills, participate in work and leisure camps, find out about legal aspects of employment, experience relationship between the employer and employee and earn their own money. Some children had a chance to participate in the seminar on financial thinking and develop their own projects that can be implemented in their own environment. The organisations which implemented activities under the programme in 2007 recommend to put more focus on the practical training of children on social and communication skills by creating an environment for developing social ties and enriching the social environment of children in foster institutions.

The Ministry will continue the programme in the year 2008. A special study will be carried out on the quality of life of the care leavers and comparisons will be made with the study of 2005.

Work skills training programme of children, living in the child care institution “Atsigrėžk į vaikus”

<http://atsigrezk.org>

Since the beginning of 2006 the NGO “Atsigrėžk į vaikus” has run a project on work skills training for children, living at their institution. “Atsigrėžk į vaikus” is a non-governmental children’s home functioning since 1995 where around 60 children without parental care aged 4 to 18 years are cared for.

The aim of the work skills project is to develop working skills of the children, living in the children’s home, and to prepare them for independent life. The project involves a complex of activities that should improve motivation of young people to study and to work. There are two main supporters of the project - World Childhood Foundation (Sweden) and Lithuanian Ministry of Social Support and Labour.

The idea of the project came from the children themselves, because they have always asked the staff of the organisation about the possibility to earn money. Thus, the project was initiated to combine training of work skills with providing children with a possibility to earn their own money. The programme started in the beginning of 2006. At first a meeting of all adolescents between 16 and 18 that wanted to work was organized. During this meeting children’s questions on work issues were answered and questionnaires distributed. Children’s answers helped in choosing appropriate work for the participants of the programme. The institution has made agreements with Lithuanian organisations that agreed to take some children, living in care institution, as students. The partners, helping with children’s employment, are Vilnius Labour Market Training and Consultation Service, the trade school “Sodžiaus Meistrai”, organisation “Locus Standi”.

Later on the programme was broadened with professional orientation consultations for adolescents. These services helped them to evaluate their strong and weak points, to choose an appropriate profession and school for their

studies. In addition, teenagers were provided with knowledge about job search, preparation of CV, work interview and work possibilities in Lithuania and abroad. Advanced children had computer literacy training. Younger children had possibilities to participate in weekend work trips to Lithuanian farmsteads. A number of psychological characteristics necessary for successful functioning in the labour market were supported through the activities. Due to insufficient funding Pathway plan and Individual monitoring as well as Psychological counselling was not available in this project but it was possible to provide the latter from other projects.

In this programme the activities are not gender-specific. However, "Atsigręžk į vaikus" are also implementing the project for girls "Laumė", the aim of which is to psychologically strengthen girls in care and prepare them for independent life.

Regular evaluations are carried out in the project by children who have participated in the programme and still live in the children's home, by children who participated in the programme and live independently already, by project coordinator and executors, by the staff of the children's home (pedagogues, social workers, special pedagogues, psychologist, etc.) and by employers. Based on the results of the evaluations the services of the project are improved and broadened, thus developing the work skills training programme of children in care into a continuous complex programme.

During the evaluation of the programme activities in 2007 the feedback was collected from employers and children, who participated in work skills training. The data from the employers' interviews showed that they subjectively experienced the programme as useful and valuable. The employers believed that the programme would have an impact on children's choice of profession, better self-recognition, training of different capacities and budgeting. Many respondents mentioned that the children from the children's homes worked as well as other employees. They were industrious, responsible, unspoiled. However, the employers perceived that not everybody participating in

the programme was able to do well in every job. This depended on the character, temperament, health, physical development and education of the young person.

The survey of the children participating in the programme showed that the programme was subjectively experienced as useful, necessary and important in their lives. The majority of working children were satisfied with their jobs. The majority of the children were thinking to further seek a professional education. Children did not want or did not believe they could go for the university education.

Vilnius SOS Children's Village – Youth Home

www.sos-kaimas.lt

Non-governmental children's home Vilnius SOS Children's Village are running Youth Home – a project of the international organisation SOS Kinderdorf for children, who grew up in the SOS Children's Villages. The project was initiated and funded by SOS Kinderdorf, but some related activities are also funded through applications to Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Vilnius municipality and Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science.

The aim of the project is to prepare young people coming of age for independent life by gradually developing their independence and social skills. The programme consists of three stages: living at the Youth Home, half-dependent life programme and housing programme. Young people can stay at the programme until they turn 24-26 at the most.

The participants, eligible for the project, are young people who grew up in SOS Children's Villages. Currently the target group is young people of both genders, around 20 years old, who have been in care 4 to 8 years, and the reason for leaving is ageing out, while the reason for entering care was orphan status or lack of parental care in the family. Some people in the project have special needs – slight mental disability, thus, they are additionally supported through a special support programme.

The main directions of the Youth House project are the development of independence,

of emotional stability, social skills and integration into society. Young people in the project receive many kinds of support and services that are planned in the pathway plan according to the individual needs assessment in cooperation with the child and his/her guardian: Housing, pedagogical-psychological assistance, health care services, support with education and employment and professional orientation. Life and communication skills are developed through many different activities including international peer exchanges, team building camps and skills training seminars. Cultural and religious needs are cared for and hobbies and sports activities are also covered by the project. Financial assistance for acquiring housing is provided to young people moving to live on their own. For children with special needs psychological or psychiatric assistance is available as is assistance by speech therapist. No support for physical disability is possible currently. Individual monitoring is also not included into the project. The activities of the project are not gender specific.

The approach applied in the project is to allow the young person to learn by him/herself. The pedagogues at the Youth House are advisers, helping youth discover independent life in a less stressful and less painful way. The aim is to teach young people to take the main respon-

sibility for their lives and to live in the society with respect for themselves and others.

The main limitation of the project is the narrow group of children eligible to use the support of Youth House. It is necessary to attract additional resources and make the project available for children leaving other foster care facilities. The strongest part of the project is its practical activities – non-formal education, planning, integration into certain activities and peer groups from other backgrounds. The most complicated part of the project is direct financial support.

Case example: *Young person has been living at the Youth House for 4 years. During that time he has finished professional school, acquired a profession. Now he lives half-independently, with support for housing and pedagogical assistance. Last year he started university studies in the field of informatics-mathematics, he is successfully combining work with his studies. Currently he has joined a housing programme, which will help him finally to acquire his own place for living. The young person has good social skills, which is proved by the big number of friends and the warm relationship he has with his foster mother. He will graduate from the university in 2011 and will receive assistance with acquiring his own living place in 2012.*

Norway

Throughout Norway support for children leaving care is available on a municipal basis. Law ensures that necessary care is provided to every care leaver in need until the age of 23, but the routines and practices of care provision vary to some extent according to the municipality. Due to differences in size of population no universal regulations are applicable in all municipal divisions. Currently Norway focuses on gathering research-based knowledge on aftercare – big efforts are under way to map and evaluate the different practices of aftercare provision on a national level, promote "best practices", as well as strengthening of the system for follow-up of children and their families in situations of receiving help and support or in leaving care.

Legal provisions

Since 1998 the Norwegian Child Welfare Act states that measures implemented before the child has reached the age of 18 may continue or be replaced by other measures mentioned in the Act after the person turns 18. Such measures can last until the young person has reached the age of 23.

These regulations include after-institutional care. Young people leaving care could specifically be allowed to stay in a foster home or institution, they can have a personal adviser appointed, be offered measures encouraging them to take part in leisure activities or support to acquire adequate training and employment and they can receive direct financial support. The municipal child welfare service shall in reasonable time before the child reaches the age of 18, in cooperation with the child, consider whether the placement shall be maintained or whether the child shall receive other assistance measures after reaching the age of 18.

The child has to give consent to these measures. If the child consents thereto, the child welfare service shall draw up a plan for future activities and measures. This plan may be amended. The plan may in addition to child welfare measures involve other state or municipal bodies that have responsibilities for all inhabitants concerning their need for employ-

ment, housing, social insurance and financial support or allowances – as stated in the Social Welfare Act. After the age of 18 any person in need of social support has the possibility to ask for assistance from the social services. This applies also to those who have been in institutional care. If the child does not consent to receiving assistance before the age of 18, the young person has a possibility later on to reconsider - „regret” not giving the consent, and return to the child welfare service after some time to ask for measures and support.

The monitoring responsibility is also regulated in the Child Welfare Act. The after-care activities both from the state and from the municipalities are covered by the County Governors monitoring responsibility. This does not replace the municipalities and institutions own responsibility to follow up and support every child and young person in accordance with the regulations in the Child Welfare Act. Every family and child in the welfare system can appeal and complain to the County Governor's office if they believe their rights according to the Child Welfare Act are not seen to. The County Governor can, for example, decide to close an institution if the institution is not operating in accordance with the regulations in the Child Welfare Act.

Historically, the child welfare legislation in Norway has undergone certain changes with regard to aftercare. From 1953 the Act had specific regulations for services after care until the age of 21. In 1993 the age was reduced to 20 and a precondition for aftercare was that the measure should have started before the age of 18. The precondition was removed and the applicable age was raised to 23 only five years later.

Institutions and organisations involved

Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs – the Directorate, associated with the Ministry of Children and Equality, has 5 regional bodies, *Regional Offices for Children, Youth and Family Affairs*, which

cover a number of municipalities. They are responsible for the management and development of childcare institutions and, in cooperation with the municipalities, foster home services. In the situation of leaving care, cooperation between the care institution or the foster home and the regional office of the Directorate, is required.

Municipalities – the municipal child welfare services are responsible for following up all child protection measures including the child welfare measures in the situation of leaving care. There are as many as 434 municipalities, which vary in size and social service arrangements considerably. Some municipal child welfare agencies have specialized personnel, who work with, for example, children and youth in care or aftercare, while other municipalities have integrated child welfare and social services.

County Governor offices – the County Governor offices have a comprehensive, overall and specific responsibility to monitor and audit all the activities of the municipalities' child welfare services, including aftercare measures, in accordance with the regulations in the Child Welfare Act. They have also the responsibility to monitor, audit and inspect all child welfare institutions.

Aftercare assistance available in Norway

Municipalities and the state provide:

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits: *social benefits for daily living, financial benefits to study (as loan or stipend), child welfare benefits, for instance, to participate in leisure activities*
- Support with education and training

- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Life-skills training
- Psychological counselling
- Health services
- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
- Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities

All the listed support may in general be provided directly by the child welfare services, health services and other services in the municipalities and/or state institutions/services. In some cases sub-contracting private organisations in cooperation with or on behalf of the state/municipality is practiced. There may be in some cases a lack of co-operation among the different state or municipal institutions, lack of competence and other temporary reasons, which put limits to the level and quality of support the child is actually offered.

Special projects and programmes

NOVA (Norwegian Social Research) project
"Research-Based Knowledge in Aftercare"

www.nova.no

The NOVA study, named "Research-based knowledge in aftercare", is commissioned by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs. The main aim of the study is to help the Directorate develop better practices for aftercare, to be implemented locally throughout Norway. The work raises the following questions: "What is necessary in order to improve Norwegian work on aftercare? What are the critical – and success factors in order to achieve better system for care leavers?" This research is currently the biggest project on aftercare on a national level in Norway.

The study will address these issues from the point of view of young people who have received assistance from child protection services, the foster parents' and the residential care units' point of view, and also from the perspective of the child protection agencies. The main focus is on the teenagers and young adults. The research focuses on young people aged 16-23,

who received child welfare services not only in out-of-home short or long-time placements, but also at home.

One part of the study concerns making a literature review, in order to highlight past, present and future research issues within the field. In order to single out questions, topics and issues that are important to focus on, focus group interviews will be arranged with young people who have been in public care, interviews with foster parents and interviews with directors from both public and private residential units will be held. The data from an ongoing follow-up study of children in care (both foster care and residential care) will also be analyzed. This part of the study has a multi-informant design and includes interviews with child protection workers, foster parents, employees in residential units and some of the parents. In addition, data from Statistics Norway about child welfare interventions from 1990 to 2005 will be analyzed. A survey will be conducted in order to collect information on routines and practices on aftercare in residential institutions.

The first findings have already been collected through the postal survey of child protection agencies in different municipalities. According to the majority of agencies that responded, the main reason why children do not receive assistance in the process of leaving care is that they say no to continued measures. Some municipalities followed-up the care leavers after some time.

The results of this project will be presented in a final report and is to be finalized by the end of 2008. Examples of good practices in Norwegian aftercare work and will be collected and plans are in place to publish a collection of such examples.

Umbrella research project on marginalized youth in the NORDLAND county

In one of the Norwegian regions a so called umbrella research project is implemented during the years 2007 to 2010. The project is a co-operation between the County Governor's Office, a regional social work college – **BODØ University College** and several municipalities. The aim of this project is to investigate, initiate and describe different approaches as well as interdisciplinary cooperation related to marginalized youth aged 15 to 25. Among these young persons children in contact with the child welfare services will be included and it is likely that this also will include some children leaving care. The project is financed through different funds at the state level. Some of the municipalities participating in this project are also participating in some of the state level projects addressing poverty of families and children.

There is currently more research underway in Norway in the field of child welfare, aftercare and transition to independence:



Poland

In Poland the needs of children leaving institutional care are first of all targeted through support to either "biological" or foster family, where the majority of children and young persons return or transfer after leaving the institutions (e.g. in 2006 more than half of all care leavers under 18 years (59%) left to live with families). Such policy aims at ensuring the right of the child to live in a family and reducing the time children spend at care institutions. Care leavers' individual transition to independence is also currently under development. Young persons leaving institutions can be supported by the state up to the age of 25 if they continue their education, mainly through financial allowances and supported housing. Consistent monitoring of services for care leavers and individual cases is not carried out.

Legal provisions

The system of foster care and aftercare in Poland has to be seen in the context of a major reform, implemented since the year 2000. In the field of institutional care the aims have been reformulated in order to change the system based on big care institutions into the family-type foster care arrangements, and to return the child to the "biological" family. The financial and operational responsibility for foster care has been assigned to the municipal authorities. In relation to these changes the municipal social services, in particular, Family Support Centres are now responsible for children with inadequate parental care.

Support for families with multiple problems and foster care for children is regulated in the chapter "Support for family and child" by the Polish Law on Social Support, adopted on March 12th 2004. The legislation defines help for the family as a priority and aims to strengthen the family to reduce the number of children with inadequate parental care.

Even though many children under 18 go to either "biological" or foster family upon leaving institutional care in Poland, the majority still stay at the institutions till the age of 18

– every fourth care leaver is 18 or older. A special Regulation by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy was issued, which complements the Law on Social Support and describes in detail the process of care leaver's transition to independence. This regulation states that each care leaver is entitled to a personal programme of transition to independence, which is developed by the care leaver her/himself together with an educator, guardian or social worker. Based on this individual programme other support is provided. Care leavers who wish to pursue education in secondary, professional or higher school, are entitled to a monthly scholarship, which is around EUR 120 per month, until they turn 25. Care leavers are also entitled to receive a one-off allowance upon graduating from educational institution – the amount varies from EUR 410 to EUR 1650 depending on the time spent in foster care. A one-off allowance should be paid to each care leaver for acquiring house ware, educational materials, computer or other necessary equipment. Housing is also included in the Regulation and thus municipalities have to take care of the place to live for young people who leave care. One of such possibilities is temporary housing in "guarded" apartments, where several care leavers could stay for approximately 2 years, living independently with the help of responsible social worker, who comes 2-3 times a week.

With regard to the obligation to observe the right of a child to be brought up in the family, care institutions in Poland have to take certain measures, which can also be considered aftercare-related support: help in keeping emotional contact of the child with the family, seeking to reunify the family, cooperation with the family of the child, cooperation with family environment with an aim for reunification, coordination of solutions regarding the child and his or her parents. Having in mind the goals of the childcare policies in Poland, this can be considered support related to aftercare, especially, when many of the children who leave institutions move to live with families. In

addition, life-skills education is also included into the activities of care institutions – children have to be involved in house maintenance, cooking, shopping, finance management, celebration of yearly holidays and leisure planning activities.

Institutions and organisations involved

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – responsible for legislation and statistical monitoring on services for children leaving care. Carries out in-depth research projects on the situation of care leavers in Poland.

Municipal social services – in particular, municipal Family Support Centres. They are the main bodies responsible for care provision in each individual case.

Care institutions – responsible for preparing care leavers for independent life. There are four different types of foster arrangements in Poland: child houses (long-term, not more than 30 children), multifunctional institutions (short-term and long-term placements, support in the family), interventional institutions (short-term placements) and family-type arrangements (long-term, not more than 8 children).

Aftercare assistance available in Poland

Municipalities and the state provide:

- Pathway plan
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser – *children can choose one, but it does not always work, because it is an additional duty for the guardian, not paid work*
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Life-skills training
- Psychological counselling
- Health services

Additionally, support with special needs (pregnancy, disability) and cultural, religious needs, hobbies is provided by non-governmental sector (see the project described below).

Special projects and programmes

Activities of Robinson Crusoe Foundation **www.fundacjarobinson.org.pl**

The Robinson Crusoe Foundation is an independent charity organisation, which focuses on and has a number of projects in the field of aftercare and wider work with children in institutions. Their motto is that just like Robinson Crusoe, every person has the ability to take care of themselves even in adverse conditions. The Foundation aims to teach children leaving institutional or foster care to adapt to the difficult realities they might face outside.

The biggest project of the Foundation is the establishment of 9 centres for training of independence for teenagers from different institutions and foster families. Training centres are established in different cities of Poland in cooperation with different institutions locally – municipal authorities, businesses, civil society. The project is initiated by the Foundation and has run for two years now. The idea of the centres is for the Foundation to support the setting up and the first year of the centre and later for local communities themselves to run the centres. The activities of setting up of the centres are funded by different donors – companies and EU funds.

The target group of these training centres are, first of all, teenagers and young people aged 16-25 from different kind of foster families and orphanages. They are mostly Polish, of both genders, sometimes with a physical disability. Some of them are still under foster care, and some have left care due to ageing out or return to the family of origin. The main criteria for participating in the activities of the centres is motivation. Each child receives a needs assessment, support from specially trained pedagogues, from psychologists, social workers and from volunteers.

At the centres there are different activities in which children can be involved. There is practical training arranged for children growing up in orphanages by teaching them a trade specific to certain regions of the country. There are computer skills training (internet, various software), small business management training, responsibility training, networking assistance and training in many other skills. There is also a special programme called Robinson's Club, where teenagers set up a club of their own and then participate in different projects offered by the Foundation. For example, in cooperation with a consultant and volunteers the club sets goals for which they want to obtain funds, write applications and realize their own projects. The club must collect 40% of the required sum, and the rest is supplied by the Foundation. The club then accounts for the donation by documenting their investment and organizing a meeting that closes the project. The members of the club can also search for training courses they want to attend in order to develop certain skills, they might also look for a person or place of employment where they can sign up for an apprenticeship – the Foundation agrees to credit the course provided that the participant agrees to take part in it regularly and undertakes to help one elderly person in his/her community (cleaning, shopping, etc). The members of the club can also set up a mini-firm for services or production. The firm may produce greeting cards, souvenirs, gadgets, milk delivery, etc. The capital needed is borrowed from the Foundation and the club accounts for the loan by keeping simplified accounting (record of taxes, salaries etc.).

The Foundation runs some gender-specific projects. Currently, a new support for young mothers is starting – teenage care leavers who have children will be able to receive help with childcare and other specific needs. Another gender-related project was the evaluation of NGOs working with children through the gender perspective – gender analysis was carried out at the Foundation and other NGOs, and recommendations have been prepared. Subsequently, the Foundation will carry out gender training for all staff and will apply the recommendation in their programming.

The Foundation applies "Five Suitcases" approach in their activities – first, education, second, economy (clever safe job for money), third, individual targets (children's own projects), fourth, collective targets (Robinson clubs, implementing joint projects), fifth, being in the group process. For working with local communities they have also developed attractive simulation/ strategy games, which help to involve different actors into the game and the process of establishing and developing local centres for children at the same time.

The main results of the recent activities of the Foundation:

- Overall, around 100 children are involved in the activities of the local centres yearly,
- Innovative methods developed for working with local communities (2 strategic games),
- Bigger presence of care-leavers on the Internet,
- Special book for teenagers – guide for care leavers on self-dependence, i.e., how to find help, what is in the law, etc.
- Special book on gender in NGOs working with children.

The main impact of their activities, as seen by the Foundation, is: 1) new model of shared economic and social responsibility with local community introduced; 2) establishment of social enterprise as the principle of the work of the Foundation. Evaluation of the activities is carried out at the end of each school year – every teenager gets a paper to describe his work at the Foundation. In addition, special research about the needs of teenagers in the situations of leaving care is carried out.

Institute of Public Affairs research project on aftercare

www.isns.uw.edu.pl

In 2005 the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy initiated a research project in order to study the processes of care leavers' transition to independence. The Ministry subcontracted the non-governmental Institute of Public Affairs to carry out the research. The

results of the study were published in the book edited by Professor Anna Kwak "From foster care to independent life" in 2006 (in Polish).

The aim of the project was to evaluate the functioning of support to care leavers in Poland after 5 years since the start of the reform. The main questions of the study were related to effectiveness of the transition to independence process and the perceptions of those receiving support and those delivering it. The research also aimed to evaluate the extent of care leavers' conscious involvement in the process of transition to independence.

The study showed that the material support provided to care leavers according to the new legislation of 2000 was functioning well.

A positive effect of monthly scholarship was documented on care leaver's involvement in education and continuity of the educational process. Increasing use of "guarded" apartments was also noticed in many municipalities.

However, the study showed that non-material side of aftercare support was facing more problems. In particular, the work with family of children in institutions was not satisfactory as confirmed by the problems children and young people face when returning to their "natural" families. Lack of capacity among staff of institutions and municipal social workers was also emphasized, as well as lack of conscious involvement on behalf of care leavers themselves.

Russia

Due to the size and diversity of situations in different regions of the Russian Federation (83 federal subjects) this mapping focused on a limited number of locations. First of all, the two federal cities – Moscow and St. Petersburg are included. The latter, together with other north-western lands of the Russian Federation (RF) – the Republic of Karelia and the westernmost federal subject of Russia the Kaliningrad Oblast – represent in the report the region of North-West Russia, which is the closest part of the RF to the Baltic Sea. For comparison, the data on Ekaterinburg, a major city in the central part of the RF, the Ural mountain area, eastwards from Moscow, is also described.

In general, Russia's current policy and reforms on protection of children without parental care is directed towards de-institutionalisation and promotion of fostering among families. In 2008 new federal standards of complex care will be developed and typical models of different forms of fostering will be described. Even though not directly, this should lead to changes in aftercare, as more responsibilities and support for children who leave care could move from the state to foster families.

Care leavers are supported in Russia until the age of 23. There is a common legal basis (federal law) regulating foster and aftercare in Russia, however, the regions can also issue their own regulations, which should be consistent with the federal legislation. Due to the differences in local situation and conditions, the actual routines and practices may differ considerably among the regions. Thus, the regions are described separately in terms of what support is provided in that particular area of Russia.

Legal provisions

The basic principles of foster care in Russia are defined by the Civil Code – it regulates, who and in what situations can a guardian of a child be appointed and what are the main responsibilities of a guardian. The issue of aftercare is not in the focus of this code, however. The

main regulations on aftercare are formulated in three legal sources: the Family Code of RF, the Federal Law Nr.159 "On additional benefits for orphans and children without parental care", adopted on 21.12.1996, and in the new Federal Law Nr. 48 on adoption and foster care, signed on 24.08.2008 and coming into force from September 2008.

According to this legislation, upon leaving care institutions children and young people with a status of an orphan are provided with a housing option, which the state has to secure for them. The law defines different provisions for two groups of care leavers. The first group is children, who officially have housing, for example, their parents' place. In this case young people are supposed to return to this housing upon leaving care. However, there are many problems related with the return, in particular, when young person has to share the place with abusive parents or parents with addiction problems, when the place is abandoned or destroyed, or when living conditions are very different from the ones during foster care (e.g. care leaver has to move to live in a village after spending many years in the city).

The second group is care leavers, who had no housing prior to foster care. The municipalities are mandated to provide housing for them on a priority basis. Though there is a general lack of available housing places, many regions have started building or buying apartments for care leavers, sometimes subsidized on the federal level. Also, social hostels are available in many regions for temporary housing of care leavers.

Care leavers have also special advantages in the educational system. Until the age of 23 they can acquire two levels of education for free, moreover, they can apply to higher educational institutions and be admitted without competition with other applicants. If a care leaver continues education, the school provides him or her with the dormitory, when the educational institution has one. The scholarship of care leavers who are studying is 50 % higher

than that of other students. Upon completion of education care leavers receive a one-off allowance for purchase of furniture or technical equipment, they are provided with clothing and shoes. Free healthcare is also ensured by the law.

Care leavers are guaranteed support with employment. Jobless care leavers are provided with necessary training, help in finding a job and unemployment allowance, available for six months. The amount of the allowance differs significantly between the regions.

Foster institutions themselves can contribute to the preparation of children for independent lives. It depends however, on the dedication of the institution and the position of its authorities. The majority of foster care institutions fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science in Russia.

Thorough monitoring of children without parental care, including care leavers, is compulsory in RF and regulated by the special Federal Decision Nr. 217 adopted on 04.04.2002 "On the state database on children without parental care and control of forming and using such database". At the beginning of 2008 there were around 170 000 children listed in the database. The database has regional operators, who are responsible for collection and usage of local data on children without parental care. The data on care leavers in the region is gathered by several institutions: state foster care bodies, agencies of interior affairs and social support bodies. The main responsibility for monitoring aftercare rests with the foster care bodies, who receive information about the cases of leaving care directly from care institutions according to the place of residence. It is important to note that this monitoring concerns children themselves rather than institutions involved in provision of services.

Institutions and organisations involved

Foster care bodies – they are a part of the regional executive powers and operate in each administrative region and sub-region of RF. Foster care bodies are widely spread throughout the country – one institution covers 4000 children. At the beginning of 2008 there were

2927 such institutions across Russia. They function under local representations of federal institutions or under local bodies, responsible for education, childcare and child protection. Usually foster care bodies would function under local ministries of education or educational departments of municipalities. Foster care bodies are directly responsible for children without parental care and can act as their guardians.

Ministry of Education and Science of RF

– responsible for procedures and institutions providing care for children without parental care. The Department of Upbringing, Complementary Education and Social Protection of Children develops drafts of regulatory legal acts that establish a procedure for the fostering of children left without parental care.

Care institutions – depending on the institution, preparation for independent life can start well before the child leaves care in the form of special training, involvement of the child into everyday activities and decisions, through publication of special guidelines and handouts for care leavers and other activities. Care institutions are also responsible for follow-up on housing, education, legal papers and registration of care leavers.

Foster care bodies, relevant agencies of interior affairs and social support institutions are involved in compulsory registration of data on care leavers.

Aftercare assistance, special projects, programmes and institutions in five Russian regions

Moscow

Aftercare assistance available in Moscow

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits

- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job – *training, visits, case assistance, mentoring*
- Life-skills training, in particular, mentoring and training
- Psychological counselling – *individual and group therapy*
- Health services
- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
- Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports and tourism activities

Moscow is the only region in Russia, which provides all care leavers with housing. However, sometimes care leavers are moved to live in one multi-flat house or district, which prevents their wider socialization.

Special projects and institutions

Fund "Nadezhda"

The fund operates several projects for care leavers in Moscow and other regions of Russia. The organisation has 12 years of experience in providing services and support for children in foster care, including care leavers. Activities of the fund are supported through grants and individual donations. The fund works in partnership with governmental and municipal care institutions.

The aim of the activities of the fund is social adaptation of care leavers. Each client can participate in one or more of the six projects run by the fund: support club for care leavers, young family and single mothers' support, social adaptation of care leavers in professional schools and colleges, family centres (patronage), individual supported housing and preparation for employment and support in keeping the job.

The organisation works by signing contracts with institutionalized children and young people, who want to participate in the activities and receive services from "Nadezhda" upon leaving care. The activities target youth from 14 to 23 years of age who have been in care for different periods (from 1 to 16 years). Most of them are orphans due to parents' death or loss of parental rights. Boys and girls of different

ethnicities are eligible, as well as children with disabilities. Care leavers participating in the projects of the fund are usually either students, temporarily unemployed, or have created a family and find themselves in a difficult situation.

In cooperation with every client a comprehensive individual plan is designed which consists of a master plan, a yearly plan and working plans for 3-6 months each. Young persons are provided guardianship by a foster family and a psychologist. The aims of the individual plans are achieved through comprehensive guardianship, psychological consultation, life-skills training, rehabilitation allowances and patronage. The criteria, used for evaluating the individual progress, are the following: educational achievements of the young person, social and career development, overcoming complicate/ crisis situations of life, reduction of law violations, healthy style of life and development of social connections. The evaluation of progress is carried out by programme managers and psychologists.

The programmes of the fund are long-term and available on a permanent basis.

St. Petersburg

Aftercare assistance available in St. Petersburg

- Needs assessment
- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits, in-kind support
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Psychological counselling
- Health services
- Support with special needs (*pregnancy*)

All assistance is provided by state and municipal institutions. Not every child receives all kinds of assistance, it depends on his/ her needs, type of institution,

Special projects and institutions

Centre of assistance for children without parental care "Prometheus"

The state institution provides complex support to teenagers from 15 to 23, who have lost parental care or are care leavers from another childcare institution on a waiting list for state housing. The centre has 52 places for those teenagers who are staying full-time. In addition, the institution functions as a day-care centre and provides social patronage. The following types of activities are carried out:

- Identification and analysis of the reasons for lack of social adaptation
- Provision of temporary housing
- Assistance in finding employment, education and housing according to the legal regulations
- Social patronage of care leavers, who already received housing – social workers follow up on each case for one year
- Development and implementation of special programmes to facilitate social adaptation of the children at the institution.

Social Hostel

Social Hostel functions as a branch of a state child house for children with limited abilities. Young people can stay at the Hostel until the age of 23. All persons at the institution are working and studying. Development of everyday life skills is facilitated at the institution by teaching the young people to plan their budget and to cook food. Upon leaving the Hostel every young person receives the service of social patronage for a year. During this time the care leaver is provided consultations and other necessary assistance.

Shelter for young women "Little Mamma"

A pregnant young woman between 18 and 23 without parental care or has been at another care institution, can be placed at the state shelter "Little Mamma" and stay there up to a year after delivery. At the shelter young women are trained in how to treat and look after a child, they can also get legal consultation, assistance in finding employment or professional training.

NGO Stellit activities (www.ngostellit.ru)

There are also projects, which do not directly target the issues of aftercare, but include children and youth without parental care or with institutionalisation experiences. These are the projects of NGO Stellit, developed after initial work with neglected children, children on the street and children at the special care institution "Shelter-Transit". This is a state-run shelter for children with delinquent behaviour and experiences of neglect and commercial sexual exploitation.

One of the Stellit projects started in December 2007 and is called "Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Protection of Child Victims in Russia". The main aim of the project – to strengthen the continuity of support for children victims of commercial sexual exploitation, among whom there are many neglected children without adequate care. The main method of work is prolonged care for the child. It consists of a temporal placement in a specialized shelter and long-term after-placement support. The project also includes establishment of a specialized centre for rehabilitation of child victims and training of relevant professionals on commercial sexual exploitation of children. The project is sponsored by OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and will last for two years with a possibility of continuation.

Another activity of NGO Stellit is a completed project "Our response to violence". A three-month project targeted children with experiences of violence in the family. Children hospitalized at the narcological department after family violence participated in a series of art-therapy sessions, where they could speak in a non-direct way about their family violence experiences, express their feelings and find out about non-violent ways of communication in the family. Among the participants there were children who have families and those who are left without parental care.

Kaliningrad Oblast

Aftercare assistance available in Kaliningrad Oblast

- Pathway plan
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job
- Life-skills training
- Psychological counselling
- Health services

All the services are provided by state institutions. No needs assessment and individual monitoring is ensured. Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future is not practiced. Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare) and cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities is inadequate for care leavers.

Special projects and institutions

Regional programme "Children-Orphans"

The Kaliningrad Ministry of Education has started the programme in 2007 with financial support from the regional budget. The programme is linked to the federal programme "Children of Russia" and its sub-programme "Children-Orphans". The target group of the programme is children in care up till the age of 18, who leave institutions due to ageing out. Also staff of the child care system is targeted.

The aims of the programme are to develop family forms of foster care, reduce the number of children without parental care and to create a system for aftercare adaptation of young care leavers. The aims are achieved through diverse directions of activities, from development of legal instruments, to education of both children and relevant staff. Multiple services for young people are provided under this programme, which complements the usual scope of assistance provided. In addition to the support, ensured by the existing legal basis, needs assessment and individual monitoring is provided by the programme. Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future is

ensured. Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare) and cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities is developed. The programme will last for five years and will end in 2011.

Development of the educational system of Kaliningrad

Another closely related programme is functioning only in the city of Kaliningrad. The timing and duration of the programme corresponds to that of "Children-Orphans" and the aims of the two programmes are similar. The programme is financed by the budget of the city of Kaliningrad and coordinated by the committee on social issues at the administration of Kaliningrad city.

Children, who leave care due to ageing out, return to the family or foster family or due to entering professional or higher education is the target group of the project. Children under patronage by foster families are given the biggest attention. Multiple services for young people are provided under this programme, which complements the usual scope of assistance provided. The main achievement of the project is promotion of the system of patronage among the foster families in the city of Kaliningrad.

Republic of Karelia

Aftercare assistance available in Karelia

- Needs assessment
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Life-skills training
- Psychological counselling
- Health services
- Cultural needs
- Other – legal representation (*in courts, regarding housing issues, etc.*)

In Karelia, pathway plan, individual monitoring, guardian support is not practiced for care leavers, even though the authorities of care institutions have been trained in the systematic organisation of these kinds of support

under the project "Children's Bridge". Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare) and religious needs, hobbies, sports activities for care leavers should still be developed.

Special projects and institutions

Regional NGO Karelian Union for Child Protection project "Child Houses of Karelia"

This extensive project has several aims, but the most important is to strengthen children's preparation for independent life outside the walls of the institutions. Different activities are used to achieve the aim of the project. Children in institutions are provided with opportunities to participate in extra-curricular education – sports, tourism, technical and artistic activities. This is one way for children to integrate into the larger society, extend their social space and participate in joint activities with children who have different experiences. Also children in institutions receive professional orientation, through which they learn about new professions, conditions of work, etc.

As a consequence of continuous implementation of the project in Karelia local system of child houses became more open and easier to control. Though there are some problems in communication with local authorities, the project has developed quite stable cooperation with state institutions. The project has already been running for three years. It has been initiated and financed by the Finnish NGO Save the Children.

Regional NGO Karelian Union for Child Protection project "Protection of the rights of convicted children in correctional institutions"

Since January 2008 a new project was initiated based on experiences of work with children, who finish serving their sentences in correctional facilities and return to the care institutions. The main target group of the project is youth from 14 to 21 who are convicted and serve their sentence. These are mostly young men with experiences of institutionalisation and without parental care. Those, who have finished serving their sentence, can be involved

in the project. The aim is to provide legal, psychological and professional orientation as well as educational support for these teenagers and young people. The aim is also to provide housing and employment assistance.

The activities will target the staff of professional schools, where the main target group of the project will receive their education. The innovation of individual monitoring will be introduced into these schools for working with the target group of the project.

The project activities should be continuous, but the funding is only available for the 10 first months. The project is supported by the Presidential Fund of RF through independent organisation "For Support of Civil Society" established by the Ministry of Education of Republic of Karelia.

Ekaterinburg

Aftercare assistance available in Ekaterinburg

- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Life-skills training (*depending on the institution*)
- Psychological counselling
- Support for young mothers

A large scale of support, in particular, needs assessment, pathway plan, individual monitoring, guardian support, child involvement in the decisions about his/her future, support with getting and maintaining a job, healthcare, support with special needs and leisure activities are not available for care leavers in Ekaterinburg, the capital of Sverdlovsk Oblast.

A project on deinstitutionalization, started in the autumn of 2007 and can be considered an indirect effort to target inadequate aftercare for institutional care leavers by directing as many of them as possible to foster families. One of the four initiating partners of the project is non-profit organisation Everychild in Ekaterinburg, which covers the Sverdlovsk Oblast.

There is a school in Ekaterinburg, which provides education and housing for young mothers, who left childcare institutions. How-

ever, this project is considered only an exception among the general lack of response to care leavers' basic and special needs.



Sweden

Services, adjusted to the individual needs of a child or young person are available when leaving out-of-home care in Sweden, with the upper age limit not defined for many types of support. Out-of-home care for children and young people, as well as the whole system of social services, is the responsibility of municipalities. All decisions regarding provision of out-of-home care for a child and accordingly aftercare are made by municipal social services. Most out-of-home care is provided on a voluntary basis according to the Social Services Act. Compulsory care can be decided by the county administrative court on certain conditions stated in the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act. Most children and young persons are placed in family homes (foster homes) or in small homelike institutions. For those young persons, who need close surveillance, there are specially approved homes for which a government agency, the National Board of Institutional Care (NBIC) is responsible. The municipality is responsible for following up out-of-home care on a regular basis.

Municipal social services do not always provide the services themselves. They often subcontract either public or private institutions and organizations to deliver the services directly to the client, in this case the care leaver. For those over 18 - 20 years of age the services would typically be provided by other parts of the municipal social services than the child welfare and protection services.

Legal provisions

Aftercare is part of the social services in Sweden, and is regulated by the Social Services Act. As of April 1, 2008, a new regulation is in place concerning the responsibility of the municipal social services to meet the needs care leavers may have when they leave out-of-home care placements. This is a specification of a general responsibility already included in the act. The regulation applies to all children and young persons leaving out-of-home care, regardless of whether it has been a family home or an

institution – home for care and residence – and applies to all situations of leaving care – short term as well as long term.

According to the Social Services Act the municipalities are responsible to provide social services to all persons in the municipality. The legislation does not specify what kind of support a child or young person leaving out-of-home care can get. It depends on the needs of the person, and the responsibility for assessment of needs also lies on the municipal social services. The child also has a right to be heard, listened to and to be documented. Care plans must be established when children and young persons are being cared for outside of their own homes. The National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) has been commissioned to provide support to the municipal social services in their post placement work with children and young persons. A report from the NBHW will be delivered on June 30, 2009.

With regard to supervision of social services, a government inquiry handed over its report to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs at the end of 2007. It aims at a system that is strong, explicit, less vulnerable and better coordinated, more structured and more efficient. The following suggestions have been made:

- a coordinated supervisory/monitoring system for the health and social services is suggested,
- a definition of supervision/monitoring is suggested in the relevant legislations and supervision/monitoring is to be carried out according to the suggested definition,
- a child perspective is to be integrated into supervision/monitoring,
- the supervision authority is to produce relevant information on the rights of the child/young person and on the duties of the authority including information on who to contact,
- when an institution for children/young persons is being supervised/monitored children/young persons are to be included

in the process and they shall have the right to be heard,

- inspections of institutions for children/young persons shall take place at least twice a year, at least one of them unannounced.

After circulating the report among relevant parties – municipalities, national authorities, organizations, etc. – the Ministry will prepare a bill on the reform to be taken to the Parliament. If approved, this reform will also affect supervision/monitoring of services for children and young persons leaving out-of-home care.

Institutions and organizations involved

Municipal social services are responsible for aftercare of children and youth, as well as all other kinds of social support. They coordinate, make decisions, manage cases, provide support and commission services. The social services are required to follow up each client in their system. The regular supervising system is applicable also on the follow-up of children and young persons who leave care.

NBHW - The National Board of Health and Welfare is a government agency under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, with a wide range of duties within several areas including social services for children, young persons and their families. The NBHW and the county administrative boards have a joint responsibility for supervision of social services in the municipalities. The *county administrative boards* are responsible for operational supervision at a regional level, while the NBHW has an overall national responsibility. The Government determines the policy guidelines for NBHW work. The board shall observe and develop the social services. The board also issues handbooks and other information to the social services.

NBIC – The National Board for Institutional Care is a government agency responsible for compulsory care of young people and adults in special institutions. The NBIC runs 33 residential homes designated for male and female youths (13-21 years of age) with severe antisocial behaviour problems, for example,

criminality, substance abuse, violence, etc.

The NBIC regulating document requires its institutions to prepare the client/youth for leaving the institution in collaboration with the municipal body and to offer aftercare to the municipal body. The municipal body commissions all aftercare in collaboration with the NBIC institution. The NBIC requires that institutions follow-up all youths that leave commissioned treatment; however, there is no requirement to follow-up youths receiving emergency care and assessment. The NBIC strongly encourages a follow-up of these cases also.

Each institution implements follow-ups according to NBIC guidelines. The NBIC institution is responsible for making sure that the commissioning municipal body's social services worker fills in the Social Services Questionnaire when the youth leaves the institution. Each institution is responsible for collecting the individual case data and sends it to the NBIC Research and Development Office, which compiles and analyzes the data (publication series are available on the NBIC web site www.stat-inst.se).

Care and treatment institutions – there is a range of institutions where the municipalities can look for suitable placements for children and young persons. The majority of the institutions are privately run by individuals, organizations or foundations, but there are also institutions run by the municipalities or the state. All private institutions must have a permit from the county administrative board. Institutions can be specialized on provision of care for children, but they can also be institutions providing a wide range of social services to diverse groups of clients. An example of how such institutions function can be **Gryning Vård** (www.gryning.se), which is a big organization providing different care services for big numbers of clients with various needs and in various situations. In most cases of social care, institutions do deliver aftercare when the client leaves provided there is a decision from the municipality. Some institutions have their own follow-up system in cases of provided support.

Aftercare assistance available in Sweden

The following types of assistance are provided:

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Individual monitoring
- Guardian support/ Personal adviser
- Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Support with getting and maintaining a job – *indirectly by coaching or in collaboration with other agencies*
- Life-skills training, in particular, practical training at the institution or in collaboration with a school
- Psychological counselling
- Health services - *both medical and psychiatric consultation are generally offered*
- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare) – *support can be offered to young persons with disabilities according to their individual needs*
- Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities
- Other – interpreter service, family therapy

All support is provided after assessment and decision by the municipal authorities, who either provide the services themselves or buy them from private or public entrepreneurs or from the institution that has provided care. The municipality is always responsible for follow-up. Health services are provided by the counties independent of any authorities' decision.

Special projects, programmes and institutions

MVG – Motverka Våld och Gäng (Prevent Violence and Gangs)

The project was initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and financed by the government with SEK 230 million during 2,5 years (approx. EUR 24 million). The government

commissioned the NBIC to organize and carry out the MVG project from 2006-07-01 to 2008-12-31. The municipal social services in 15 municipalities (including Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö) were selected to partake in the project.

The project focuses on enhancing collaboration between NBIC institutions and the municipal bodies with the aim of ultimately reducing violence and gangs. Special focus is on the process when young people are leaving NBIC institutions and the aim is to develop aftercare interventions in the respective municipalities. The cost paid by the municipality for NBIC institutional care of each referred youth from these municipalities is subsidized with 40%. The idea of the MVG project is to introduce special coordinators to ensure the „care-chain” between NBIC institution and the continuing care run by the municipal social service. The special coordinators are employed by the government, but work in the municipalities. The coordinators make sure that the care institution and the municipal social service support the child with all she or he needs. The main activity of the project is coordinating the interventions made by institutions and social services – the coordinators themselves carry out no treatment or social assistance. The coordinators have also to ensure that all those related participate in the planning. The coordinators follow each case for 6 months.

The introduction of special coordinators is the most significant innovation of the MVG project. The focus is on the continuation of care, including aftercare – the project targets to improve the continuation by strengthening coordination of different institutions and municipalities in that process. Notably, the project does not change the division of responsibility between the institution and the municipality.

Young persons with different needs are eligible in this project, the main criteria being that those involved in this project have serious problems in their social situation. The objective of the project is to reduce relapse in institutional care, to strengthen the family and to create an alternative to criminal life.

The main criterion for monitoring of the project is relapse in criminality. Two universi-

ties are monitoring the project. The University of Lund follows and studies the process of cooperation between all involved parties. The University of Stockholm compares 200 cases in the project with 200 old cases. In doing this they can access the social registers in the municipalities and the police registers on criminality.

Treatment facility for children with criminal behaviour (NBIC network institution)

The treatment facility has been in operation since 1991. The institution has 18 beds divided into two residential homes, one in Hässleholm – for boys and girls (12-17 years of age) for emergency care (1 to 60 days) or assessment (8 weeks), the another in Perstorp – for boys (12-17 years of age) for treatment, which usually varies from 6 months to two years. During the course of a year approximately 50 to 55 youths with severe antisocial behavioural problems are placed at the facilities. Both facilities offer aftercare to the commissioning municipal body.

The state finances approximately 35% of the institution's budget, while the remainder is financed through fees paid by municipal bodies that have placements at the institution. Aftercare, however, is entirely financed by the commissioning municipal body. All treatment programmes implemented by the institution are carried out in close cooperation with the commissioning social services case manager.

The children at the institution are both Swedish and immigrants (approximately 40 nationalities and ethnic groups). 85% of the young people come from broken homes and about 65% of the youth have previously stayed in one or more foster homes or institutions. About 50% of them have received psychiatric care prior to placement.

Boys and girls have separate rooms and toilettes. There are regular group meetings where the young persons are given the opportunity to express their views and individual needs. Special attention by the staff is given to the protection of individuals from unhealthy group pressure or negative biases about gender or ethnicity. Girls and boys are also encouraged to try activities generally attributed to the opposite sex. Sex education is taught from a gender specific perspective. Physical examination of boys also relate to gender specific concerns.

Four main services are provided by the institution: emergency care, assessment, treatment, and aftercare. The main goal of commissioned emergency care is to put an end to the crisis, and motivate children to proper care. The main goal of commissioned assessment is to provide recommendations for social services continued care of the child, and to motivate them to adequate care. The main activities aim to prepare the child and its guardians for the time after the placement, and to provide information and advice to the commissioning social services worker and the new care providers (if they do not go home). Furthermore, social services can commission the institution to provide aftercare for the young person.

The institution uses the following methods in their work with children: ***Structure assessment model***, ***Token economy***, ***ART*** (Aggression Replacement Training), ***MI*** (Motivational Interviewing), ***FFT*** (Functional Family Therapy) and ***MTFC*** (Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care). The last one is specially applied in aftercare, together with FFT.

Concluding observations

This mapping looked at the situation on aftercare support in eleven countries around the Baltic Sea with an aim to answer the following questions:

- What are the resources available for young people leaving institutional care?
- What is the system of aftercare in each country?
- What special projects and programmes are currently addressing the needs of care leavers in the region?
- With the help of a specially designed extensive questionnaire for professionals and officials in the field, complemented by phone interviews and desk research, the mapping focused on a variety of systems (or absence of them) addressing the needs of children and young persons leaving institutional care and collected diverse examples of practices supporting care leavers around the Baltic Sea.

The findings of the mapping do not present a complete picture of the situation in all eleven countries nor do they provide an in-depth analysis of existing practices and policies (such a report would require a research larger in scope and richer in details). Even so, there are several observations and conclusions to be made, based on the information received and on the process of collecting the information, contacting professionals and discussing the issues around support for children leaving care in the Baltic Sea region.

Before going directly to the results, it should be noted, that the pattern of responses to the mapping might be suggesting heavy workloads for child protection professionals, which do not allow enough space for reflection on their work. In the course of collecting information some professionals admitted that they simply could not find the time to fill in the template due to a heavy workload. Another observation from the process of obtaining the answers was the high fragmentation of the knowledge on the issues relating to aftercare. In most countries professionals and officials from

different institutions could each very well cover their part of the chain, but there seemed to be a lack of a unified view. Bodies responsible for collection and monitoring of the general situation on a national level are often not in place. Such situation presents even a bigger challenge for a regional view on aftercare support.

Resources: overview

Looking at the resources available for care leavers in the countries of the region it might be concluded that for the most part the **basic (survival) needs** of children and youth leaving institutional care are addressed in all of the countries. In most cases, legislation on social protection and services includes provisions, which address the basic needs of care leavers:

- Housing
- Financial allowances, benefits
- Support with education and training
- Life-skills training
- Health services
- Psychological counselling
- Support with getting and maintaining a job

There are cases, however, when even these basic kinds of support are hardly accessible for care leavers due to a lack of governmental or municipal resources. For example, provision of housing is a big challenge for some countries in the region, especially in cases when care leavers do not continue their education. In general, there are certain differences among the countries in terms of the actual support provided, e.g., size of allowances, range of life-skills training or employment support provided, but such comparison needs a separate closer look.

The second group of services concerns individual **case management**. These services are even formally available for care leavers only in some countries of the region:

- Needs assessment
- Pathway plan
- Individual monitoring

- Guardian support/ Personal adviser

These types of social services are very clearly divided geographically and are related to the child protection system practiced in the country. We can refer to the types of care systems identified by the Council of Europe: states with high rate of child residential care coupled with large institutions, in which the above listed case management services are hardly available, and states where the process of de-institutionalization, prevention and alternative care has already taken place, and where case management does include all the components listed above. It has to be noted, that there is a shift towards adoption of the latter model even in the countries, which do not yet provide all the case management services.

Along with the case management approaches the issue of the child's involvement in the decisions about his/her future should be mentioned. Although this principle is formally applied for care leavers in all of the countries, child involvement might be much more complex in reality and needs a closer look, because the understanding, the concept of child participation might differ significantly, as observed in joint regional meetings on the issue (e.g. CBSS seminar "Children's participation in shaping their own healing process", St. Petersburg, 15-16 Feb. 2007).¹⁵

The third group of services for care leavers, which is provided rather on exceptional basis than as a rule, concerns care leavers' **special and other needs**:

- Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
- Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities
- Other:
 - o Networks and empowerment/ counselling groups for young persons, formerly placed in residential care
 - o Legal consultations and legal representation

These kinds of services are often provided only by NGOs on a project basis.

Duration of support

The official upper age limit for provision of aftercare support range from 20 (Iceland) to 25 years (Poland) in the region. In some cases it means that all types of support are available up to this age, in other cases only certain kinds of assistance can continue until the upper age limit, for example, only allowance is paid. Moreover, there are certain conditions or requirements, based on which the support can be provided to a care leaver (e.g. continuing education, certain level of achievements). Usually the assistance continues until completion of vocational or professional training. On the other hand, in the Swedish case there is no upper limit for most types of support for care leavers, they do, however, depend on individual needs and are not always provided within the child welfare and protection system.

It can be observed, that NGO projects on aftercare often apply a higher upper age limit for the services to care leavers. However, most countries set the limit at 23-25 years. There is only one initiative covered in this mapping, which target all care leavers regardless of their age (Home Base Copenhagen).

Patterns of leaving care support

It is clear from the mapping that any comparison on support to care leavers in different countries has to be highly contextualized, as the systems and histories of child protection and welfare vary considerably from country to country. Nevertheless, based on the results of the mapping, some common patterns can be distinguished in the provision of support to children leaving care institutions in the Baltic Sea region. These are

1. Reforms and transition of care/ aftercare systems,
2. Unequal availability of support,
3. Lack of sensitivity towards important social markers like gender, ability and ethnicity,
4. Inadequate monitoring,
5. Susceptibility to ideologies in child protection.

¹⁵ <http://www.childcentre.info/projects/traffickin/bsrcacvt/stpete/>

1. Reforms, transition

It is difficult to capture the aftercare systems around the Baltic Sea because of reforms and transition, which is characteristic to the bigger part of the region. First of all, there are fundamental changes taking place in those countries which have not undergone full de-institutionalization of care systems yet. Countries like Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are currently implementing transformation projects from highly institutionalized care to family-type arrangements for out-of-home care. This process of transition and its expected results will have a decisive influence not only on out-of-home care, but also on children and youth transitioning from care to independent life. The first care projects with additional aftercare components, e.g. supported housing, are being implemented in these countries.

However, these are not the only significant reform patterns. Even the second type of countries with predominantly family-type out-of-home care systems are also undergoing certain changes, their legislation is being amended and reviewed. Certain specifications on aftercare are introduced in the legal systems and new proposals are underway. It can be noted, that practically all of the countries in the region are experiencing transition and changes related to aftercare support.

2. Unequal access to support

One thing which can be observed for all the described countries to a larger or smaller extent, is the lack of equal access to the existing aftercare support. Obviously, some of the care leavers receive all the assistance and services they are entitled to, while others receive just parts or none of it. To a large extent this depends on different needs of care leavers and their ability to communicate their needs, and on their willingness to receive support. If these reasons can at least formally be attributed to the care leaver him/herself, then other reasons for not receiving relevant support do lie in the aftercare and foster care systems themselves. For example, very often access to support depends on the region where the child lives (centre or province, city or village), on the particular care institution s/he resides in (e.g., type of institu-

tion, the extent the institution is involved in projects of aftercare), the contact between the child and the responsible social worker and other reasons that the child or young person is not in control of. Thus, we can identify a situation where most of the countries do provide most types of necessary assistance for children leaving care, but where most of the care leavers do not receive it simply because the access to different types of support is so unequal.

If we look closer at the care leavers that have the most limited access to the aftercare support, we note that these are the most vulnerable. Those that most often do not get the support they need are those with the greatest need for the assistance. Quite often assistance is conditioned and this filters away a big group of young care leavers from the possibility of receiving the necessary support. For example, if we take the frequent condition of enrolment in educational institution as a requirement for receiving aftercare support, then those most vulnerable youths who do not have adequate skills and motivation for continuing education do not have access to necessary support. This problem is however seemingly solved at a later stage, when the care leavers whose needs are not responded to fall out of the child care system. They do so either by graduating from it, or, worse, by transitioning to the justice or health care systems, where already different policies apply and other institutions and bodies are assigned the responsibility.

3. Sensitivity or lack of it?

Some issues, touched upon in this mapping, certainly need more in-depth attention, for example, gender, ability, ethnicity aspects of support to care leavers. The questions about gender sensitive projects, as well as other special aspects of support for care leavers, e.g. ethnicity or ability, were in most cases answered with a statement that "the services of the project are tailored to individual needs". This, of course, may mean sensitivity to any individual characteristic and situational aspects of the child or young person leaving care. On the other hand, this may also indicate a lack of sensitivity for such powerful markers of our lives as gender, ethnicity or ability. Thus, more

in-depth inquiry is needed on these particular issues, including more detailed analysis of the activities of the projects, as well as feedback from staff and children in these projects, to be able to answer the question, to which extent gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, etc. are addressed by the projects and programmes for care leavers.

Even if very few, there still were certain gender sensitive projects mentioned in some countries. Mostly they related to girls and young women, who were either referred to as young mothers or as potential victims of trafficking in these activities (which definitely does not exhaust the possible ways of addressing gender issues among young care leavers). Only Swedish respondents mentioned special efforts to protect individuals from unhealthy group pressure or negative biases about gender or ethnicity, also encouraging girls and boys to try activities generally considered non-traditional for their sex. They also mentioned that sex education was taught from the gender sensitive perspective. Very few programmes or activities addressing sexuality and sexual health for care leavers were identified in the region.

4. Inadequate monitoring

Monitoring the support for young people transitioning from care to independence was considered by professionals in the field as insufficient both on an individual level and on the general level, looking at the situation for care leavers. This is related to the fragmentation of knowledge on aftercare, mentioned above. Only Sweden and Norway are listed to have large data sets on child welfare, which are also used for analysis of aftercare services. Russia also collects a compulsory data on care leavers but it is not clear how this data is used for monitoring, evaluating and improving aftercare support.

On an individual level, the lack of monitoring of cases is partly related to the structural

conditions of the care systems, and is especially complicated to implement in the countries with large institutions.

5. Approaches and ideologies

When speaking about approaches to support of children and young persons leaving care the concepts and terms used are important. There are differences in the terminology used to describe the situation of leaving care and in describing the support provided. In particular, the most common term "aftercare" is criticized by some professionals in the region as too narrow and that there is a need to use a more sensitive concept of "transition from care to independence" or "leaving care".¹⁶ It is argued that the latter terms refers to leaving care as a process, rather than as an event in the life of a child.

Depending on the child welfare system, the terms "institutional care", "residential care" or "out-of-home" care are used sometimes synonymously to refer to the children living outside of their own/biological families. These terms however actually refer to slightly or even significantly different situations of care.

The increased use of the perspective of young care leavers themselves could be seen as a criticism of the dominant approaches on aftercare in the region. This perspective has been utilised already where some studies in the field document that young people's views differ considerably from those of care providers and other actors. Multi-informant approach to monitoring and research on aftercare is considered more fruitful than professional and expert centred, and the most recent research underway in the field adopts a multi-informant perspective (e.g. NOVA study on aftercare in Norway).

Another important criticism of dominant approaches in aftercare in the region is related to simplified view on the process of leaving care. As experiences from some of the projects in the region show, and as is also documented

¹⁶ Jan Storø Reflections on aftercare in Norwegian context. Presentation at the expert seminar "Research-Based Knowledge about Aftercare", February 28-29, 2008, NOVA, Oslo.

by the existing research¹⁷, the life of children in institutions is certainly more complex than only care and aftercare. Very often children move between care institutions, correctional institutions, returning to the family and back to the child welfare system. Therefore, continuous support projects and longitudinal research is needed in this field. Moreover, the need for disaggregated analysis and case studies of care leavers' experiences are necessary, as research indicates that there are at least three groups of care leavers whose situation, needs, life histories and achievements differ greatly after leaving institutions¹⁸. This aspect is essential when planning support and intervention projects.

Finally, it is important to also when discussion after care support to reflect the ideologies and discourses shaping foster care policies in different countries of the region. Undoubtedly, prevailing wider ideologies do influence and form the kinds of support provided to children leaving care. It can be identified from this mapping, for example, that the terminology used and the aims of the policies as formulated by respective representatives of the authorities and organizations differ. For example, some countries stress the reunification with "biological family" as the main aim of foster care and aftercare system, while others focus on responding to the needs of individual child. Some states claim to build their support for care leavers on research-based knowledge while others stress the value-based background for policies and projects. Some countries lack any general or individual monitoring system on aftercare while others follow strict registration and compulsory collection of data on care leavers. Without understanding how ideologies influence child welfare systems, it is difficult to understand the existing practices of aftercare and evaluate their impact.

Keeping the door open: How?

Based on the approach that leaving care is not a one-off event in the life of a young person, but rather a continuous transition to independence, I would like to refer to the thought suggested by one of the professionals who answered the questionnaire about the programme for care leavers run by her organization. The question concerned the most effective and successful approaches in working with young people leaving care. The answer was very short: it works best when you "let the young people make decisions themselves and always keep a little way back for them".

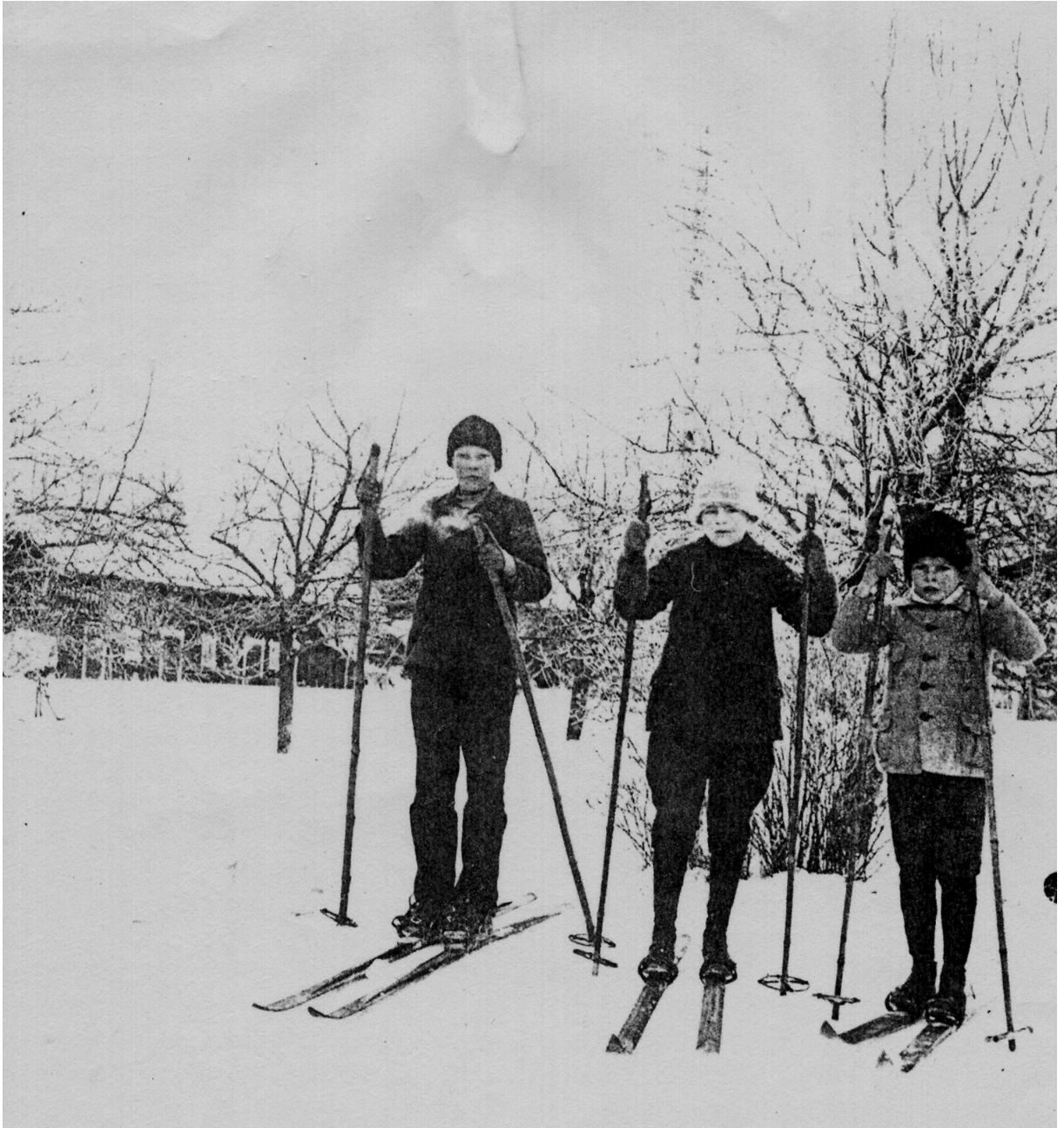
The metaphor of "keeping the door open", thus, seems to reflect very well the whole idea of leaving care support. Some of the projects in the mapping report already follow this approach in their services for care leavers, for example, a semi-dependent phase is included before transitioning to fully independent life, and even in the latter phase the contact is maintained so that young people can learn to live independently step-by-step. However, it seems that we are talking about very small numbers of care leavers, who are lucky enough to be included in this kind of programmes.

On the other hand, if we do realize the need to "keep to door open" for all care leavers, how do we implement it in practical terms, how do we "keep the door open"? It is not a secret, that very often the most vulnerable group of young care leavers will not have adequate skills and motivation to accept the conditions of receiving aftercare support, and would only accept it on their own terms, which might be destructive in their own situation or hostile towards the community. Can support for this group of care leavers then be the same as for the rest of those transitioning from care to independence? Should there be some specialized types

¹⁷ Mark Courtney The significance of aftercare in an American context. Presentation at the expert seminar "Research-Based Knowledge about Aftercare", February 28-29, 2008, NOVA, Oslo.

¹⁸ Mike Stein Leaving care research: Looking back, looking forwards. Presentation at the expert seminar "Research-Based Knowledge about Aftercare", February 28-29, 2008, NOVA, Oslo.

of support available for different groups of care leavers? These and related questions on possible ways to improve support for children and youth leaving care need a thorough reflection on a national as well as on a regional level.



APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire:

MAPPING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN LEAVING CARE IN THE CBSS REGION

Please, answer section A if you are familiar/ work with state or municipal bodies responsible for institutional care.

Please, answer section B if you are running project or program, which includes services for children leaving care.

STATE/ MUNICIPAL SERVICES

1. Is leaving and after-care specifically included in the state regulations or regulations for relevant state or municipal bodies? If yes, what regulations do exist and what aspects of leaving and after-care are covered?
2. What are the main state and municipal bodies involved in the situation of leaving care and after-care period? What specific responsibilities and functions are foreseen for them in the care-leaving situations and after-care?
3. What kinds of state support are available for children leaving care in your country?
Please, underline those, which are available.
 - a. Needs assessment
 - b. Pathway plan
 - c. Individual monitoring
 - d. Guardian support/ Personal adviser
 - e. Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
 - f. Housing
 - g. Financial allowances, benefits, in particular

 - h. Support with education and training
 - i. Support with getting and maintaining a job
 - j. Life-skills training, in particular:

 - k. Psychological counselling
 - l. Health services
 - m. Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
 - n. Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities
 - o. Other – please, specify

-
4. Which kinds of listed support are provided directly by state/municipal institutions?
 5. Which kinds of listed support are provided by sub-contracting private or non-governmental organizations?
 6. What are particular needs that are not met by state and municipal bodies in care-leaving situations and after-care? *Please, underline those, which are NOT available.*
 - a. Needs assessment
 - b. Pathway plan
 - c. Individual monitoring
 - d. Guardian support/ Personal adviser
 - e. Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
 - f. Housing
 - g. Financial allowances, benefits, in particular
 - h. Support with education and training
 - i. Support with getting and maintaining a job
 - j. Life-skills training, in particular:
 - k. Psychological counselling
 - l. Health services
 - m. Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
 - n. Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities
 - o. Other – please, specify
 7. Is a comprehensive after-care state monitoring system in place for following-up children and young people who left care? If not, are there any fragments of such system?

PROJECTS/ PROGRAMS

Title of the Project:

Duration:

I. Coordination and resources

1. What institution(s) or organization(s) have initiated the Project/ Program? *Please, underline those, which have initiated.*
 - a. Your organisation
 - b. Ministry, governmental agency
 - c. Municipal authority
 - d. Other authority responsible for care institutions, specifically,
2. How was the Project/ Program initiated?
3. Is there specific legislation related to initiation and/ or implementation of this Project? If yes, please, specify.

4. Who is financing Project/ Program, how are the activities supported?
5. Who are the main implementing bodies of the Project/ Program?
6. Which are the main partners of the Project/ Program?
7. What is the role of governmental, municipal and other public bodies in the implementation of the Project/ Program?
8. Describe, if other projects are related to the implementation of this Project/ Program.
9. Have young people themselves been consulted in any way in the design of the Project/ Programme? In which way?

II. Target groups

10. What are the main target groups of the Project/ Program?
11. What are the main profiles of children leaving care targeted/ involved/ assisted by the Project/ Program? Please, describe the main profiles using the following criteria:
 - a. Age
 - b. Gender
 - c. Ethnicity
 - d. Physical or mental disability
 - e. Duration of institutionalization
 - f. Reason for leaving institutional care
 - Aging out
 - Returning to family of origin
 - Other
 - g. Family/ foster family situation
 - h. Education and training acquired
 - i. Other important information
12. How are the target groups contacted by or referred to the Project/ Program?
13. What are the conditions or criteria to receive services under this Project/ Program?

III. Objectives and activities

14. What are the aims and objectives of the Project/ Program with regard to children leaving care?
15. Are the aims and objectives of the programme tailored for one specific group of children leaving care or common for all children no matter what the reason is for them to leave care?

-
16. What are the main activities of the Project/ Program, related to the children leaving institutional care?
17. What kinds of assistance for children leaving care are available in the Project/ Program? *Please, underline those, which are available and describe shortly, how each of them is organized in practical terms.*
- a. Needs assessment
 - b. Pathway plan
 - c. Individual monitoring
 - d. Guardian support/ Personal adviser –
 - e. Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
 - f. Housing
 - g. Financial allowances, benefits, in particular
 - h. Support with education and training
 - i. Support with getting and maintaining a job
 - j. Life-skills training, in particular
 - k. Psychological counselling
 - l. Health services
 - m. Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
 - n. Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities
 - o. Other – please, specify
18. What kinds of assistance for children leaving care are, in your opinion, missing in the Project/ Program? *Please, underline those, which are available.*
- a. Needs assessment
 - b. Pathway plan
 - c. Individual monitoring
 - d. Guardian support/ Personal adviser
 - e. Child involvement in the decisions about his/her future
 - f. Housing
 - g. Financial allowances, benefits, in particular
 - h. Support with education and training
 - i. Support with getting and maintaining a job
 - j. Life-skills training, in particular:
 - k. Psychological counselling
 - l. Health services
 - m. Support with special needs (disability, pregnancy, childcare)
 - n. Cultural/ religious needs, hobbies, sports activities
 - o. Other – please, specify
19. What, in your opinion, are the main obstacles to provide the missing assistance in this Project/ Program?
20. Is the missing assistance available from other programs, projects or institutions for the target groups of your project?

21. Are any of the activities in the Project/ Program designed specifically for boys and for girls? If yes, what are the gender-specific activities?
22. Which activities in the Project/ Program, if any, address children with special needs or children with physical or mental disability/ies?

IV. Approaches and methods

23. What approaches is the Project/ Program based on?
24. How are the issues of gender, ability, ethnicity approached in this Project/ Program?
25. What specific methods are used in the activities of the Project/ Program?
Please, make a short description of methods used.
26. How are the described methods applied practically in the activities of the Project/ /Program?

V. Results achieved

27. What are the criteria/indicators used to measure the results of the Project/ Program?
28. How are the results monitored and by whom?
29. What main results are already achieved by the Project/ Program?

VI. Sustainability and follow-up

30. Is the Project/ Program continuous or is it a one-off project?
31. What continuation or follow-up is planned for the Project/ Program?
32. What previous efforts, initiatives, projects is this Project/ Program based on?
33. What do you see as the main impact of the Project/ Program?

VII. Exchange of good practice/ innovation

34. What activities, methods and/or practices do you consider the most successful and effective in the Project/ Programme?
35. What were the activities and methods that did not meet the initial expectations?
36. What are the innovative aspects of the Project/ Program?

37. What makes you draw these conclusions?

VIII. Case examples

38. If possible, please give brief case examples how the assistance was provided in this Project/Program.

APPENDIX 2

List of professionals, officials and institutions, who contributed to the mapping

Denmark

Geert Jørgensen

NGO Baglandet, København

Anne Melchior Hansen

Team leader, National Board of Social Services

Estonia

Lemme Haldre

Head of Tartu Child Support Center

Ragne Kepler

Crisis councillor, Tartu Child Support Center

Elmet Puhm

Estonian SOS Village

Anniki Tikerpuu

Head of Children's Rights and Services, Ministry of Social Affairs

Estonian Children's Fund

Union of the Directors of the Social Welfare Institutions

Finland

Anne Hujala

Advisor, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Katriina Munukka

NGO Ehjä ry

Germany

Sabine Herzig,

Researcher, German Youth Institute

Liane Pluto

Researcher, German Youth Institute

Iceland

Bragi Gudbrandsson

General Director, Government Agency for Child Protection

Bryndís S. Guðmundsdóttir

Government Agency for Child Protection

Latvia**Viktorija Bolsakova**

Ministry for Children and Family Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

Lithuania**Violeta Bareikienė**

Director, I SOS Youth House

Rima Breidokienė

Psychologist, Non-governmental child house "Atsigrėžk į vaikus"

Evaldas Karmaza

Head, NGO Vaiko Namas (Child House)

Rūta Pabedinskienė

Senior specialist, Children and Youth Unit, Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Norway**Elisiv Bakketeig**

Senior researcher, NOVA – Norwegian Social Research

Bjørn Bredeesen

Deputy director general, Ministry of Children and Equality

Inger Oterholm

Lecturer, Diakonhjemmet University College

Poland**Aureliusz Lezenski**

President of the board, The Robinson Crusoe Foundation

Tamara Uliasz

Chief expert, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Russia**Galina Semya**

Researcher, University of Moscow, member of the Ministry of Science and Education coordinating council

Maria Bogacheva

Head of the Department of Social Service and Assistance for Children, St.Petersburg

Arne Grove

Head of Nordic Council of Ministers Information Office in Kaliningrad

Yulia Kandalova

Project coordinator, Nordic Council of Ministers Information Office in Kaliningrad

Olga Mironova

Head of PR and Fundraising, EveryChild Russia

Natalia Pavlova

NGO Karelian Union for Child Protection

Elena Zabadykina

NGO "Stellit", St. Petersburg

Ministry of Education of Kaliningrad Oblast

City Hall of Kaliningrad

Sweden

Ingrid Åkerman

National coordinator, The National Board of Health and Welfare

Agneta Björklund

Deputy director, Social Services Division, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Nick Dovik

Institution director (one of NBIC institutions)

Carina Fransson

Gryning Vård

Ola Panzar Karlsson

The National Board of Institutional Care (NBIC)



Layout, original
4xZ-gruppen
Sorunda
Sweden
October-November 2008