



**OPENING DOORS  
FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN**

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**STRENGTHENING FAMILIES. ENDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE.**

## **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**



### **COUNTRY FACT SHEET**

Over the past few years both the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Republic of Srpska (RS) have developed DI strategies and action plans<sup>1</sup>. These are the key policies that support prevention of child abandonment, developing alternatives to institutional care and providing guidelines to the overall reform of the institutional care system. Importantly, both entities have recognised the need for separate legislation regarding foster care. RS has developed and adopted a Rulebook on Foster Care, while FBiH developed a law on Foster Care which is currently in process of accession.

However, there are still many challenges ahead. In 2014 there were 1,302 children without parental care living in institutional care. Sadly, many children with disabilities live in the same institutional care settings as adults.

The three main stumbling blocks to deinstitutionalisation reform in BiH are: the lack of funds and an economic recession; a lack of official pressure and financial support from the European Commission as part of BiH's pre-accession process, and the lack of capacity to change the long-standing entrenched ways in child protection.

Institutional care is deeply rooted in the minds of Bosnians Herzegovinians. The general public accepts institutional care as a traditional form of care, and rarely challenges it. In 2014, there were 1,302 children deprived of parental care in 16 institutions for children in BiH. Children with disabilities grow up separately from the rest of the children in 13 institutional care settings. Some of these institutions are specifically for children and youth, some others are for adults but host children as well, and some of them are seen as boarding schools for children with hearing or vision impairment, learning disabilities and more. The number of children with disabilities growing up in these institutions is unknown.



**MANY CHILDREN WITH  
DISABILITIES ARE LIVING IN  
SPECIALISED INSTITUTIONS  
FOR ADULTS WITH  
DISABILITIES IN BOSNIA AND  
HERZEGOVINA**

<sup>1</sup> Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) adopted in 2008 the Policy for the Protection of Children Deprived of Parental Care and Families at Risk of Separation in FBiH 2006-2016 setting DI as a goal in child protection. In July 2014, the Federal Government also adopted the Strategy of Deinstitutionalisation aiming at the development of alternative care in social protection. In the Republic of Srpska (RS) the Strategy for Enhancement of Social Welfare of Children Without Parental Care was adopted in 2015 and DI is seen as the way forward.

## IPA II - 2015



**IN 2015, BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA RECEIVED EU FUNDS FOR DI REFORMS**

The recent Rulebook on Standards for Provision of Services in Social Protection of Institutions in FBiH limited the capacity of institutions to 40 children, and institutions were given 5 years to align by 2018. The same Rulebook limited the capacity of Small Group Homes (SGHs) to 8 children. However, in BiH there are only 2 SGHs operating at the moment, one of which was established by Campaign's National Coordinator, Hope and Homes for Children BiH, providing high quality community-based care.

Lack of funding is one of the key challenges for deinstitutionalisation reforms in BiH. Even though Ministries of both entities have budgeted activities for deinstitutionalisation reforms, the amount was not nearly enough to achieve a substantial change. This lack of funding has led civil society organisations to often undertake the State's role by developing and implementing DI activities in the community (e.g. foster care training for both parents and professionals, family support and strengthening).

In 2015, as a direct result of the Opening Doors Campaign, BiH received for the first time EU funds specifically for deinstitutionalisation under the EU's IPA II programme. Among the foreseen activities is a comprehensive situational analysis on the protection of children in the care system, improvement of the existing services to prevent child abandonment, especially for children with disabilities,

strengthening of existing models and capacities of alternative care and the support to transformation of selected institutions into centres providing services for children and families at risk of separation. However, the continuation of these funds is not secured beyond 2017, which may put at risk the sustainability of the implemented projects. Hope and Homes for Children BiH is advocating with its partners for the extension of the IPA II funds.

## FAST FACTS & LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- **THERE WERE 1302 CHILDREN IN 16 INSTITUTIONS AND 831 CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE IN 2014**
- **THERE ARE 13 INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THESE SETTINGS IS UNKNOWN**
- **THERE ARE NO SPECIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 3 WHO ARE BEING PLACED IN THE EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS**
- **IN 2015 FOR THE FIRST TIME BIH RECEIVED IPA II FUNDS FOR DI REFORMS**
- **FEDERAL MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY HAVE DEVELOPED A PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN LEAVING CARE THAT NEEDS TO BE ADOPTED**
- **THE BIH MINISTRY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEES ADOPTED THE ACTION PLAN FOR CHILDREN 2015-2018 URGING AUTHORITIES FOR MORE INVESTMENTS IN DEINSTITUTIONALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE CARE SOLUTIONS**



**Bosnia & Herzegovina**  
**Hope & Homes for Children**

### OPENING DOORS NATIONAL COORDINATOR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) has been active in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) since 1994. All HHC BiH programmes are focused on replacing institutional care with family based solutions for children without parental care, such as reintegration of children with their biological families, local adoption, fostering, supporting young adults leaving the care system and the development of high quality residential care in Small Family Homes of capacity up to 12 children. To find out more visit [www.hhc.ba](http://www.hhc.ba)

### NATIONAL PARTNERS

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the campaign is supported by: Save the Children BiH, SOS Children's Villages BiH, SUMERO Alliance, UNICEF BiH, World Vision.

The Opening Doors for Europe's Children campaign supports national efforts to develop child protection systems that strengthen families and ensure high-quality family and community-based alternative care for children, by leveraging EU funding and policy and building capacity in civil society.

It is a partnership between 5 international organisations and civil society across 15 European countries. For more information go to [www.openingdoors.eu](http://www.openingdoors.eu)