



OPENING DOORS FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES. ENDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



COUNTRY FACT SHEET

Child protection system reform is complicated in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to the sheer number of authorities involved in the state. As such, child protection is a devolved responsibility to each of the cantons and federal states. Currently, there are about 1,200 children housed in 18 institutions for children, including 3 institutions for children and adults with disabilities, throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Worryingly, there is no moratorium on institutions for children under three years of age in contravention of best practice and international norms. Unemployment of parents, household poverty and the maladjusted behaviour of parents remain the principle reason for children to be placed into institutions for children across Bosnia and Herzegovina¹.

There is no clear aim of any state or entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina to deinstitutionalisation itself. The number of children in institutions remains stagnant with infants being placed alongside older children against international standards. Children with disabilities are often placed in the same institutions for person with disabilities as adults. Out of 15 institutions for children, six are run and financed by the state, five are church-run and four delivered by civil society organisations, with all institutions for people with disabilities being run by the state. The rulebook on standards for provision of services in social protection institutions in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina limits capacity of institutions to 40 children. Institutions were given a five-year period to align by 2018.

¹ Situation Analysis of Children without Parental Care in FBiH and implementation of the Policy for the Protection of Children without Parental Care and Families at Risk of Separation in FBiH 2006-2016: (HHC BiH and Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2016).

KEY DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS CHILD PROTECTION REFORM



AFTER ADOPTING
LAW ON FOSTER
CARE, BOSNIA
AND HERZEGOVINA
CONTINUED SETTING

LEGISLATIVE GROUNDS FOR DI BY
WORKING ON THE LAW ON SOCIAL
SERVICES, LAW ON PROTECTION OF
FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND LAW
ON SOCIAL WORK.

KEY RECOMMENDATION TO THE EU



IN 2014-2017, WITH SUPPORT OF THE INSTRUMENT OF PRE ACCESSION (IPA) II FUNDS, BOSNIA

AND HERZEGOVINA PROCEEDED TO DEINSTITUTIONALISATION REFORMS. IN 2018-2020, IPA II SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE USED TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF DI REFORMS IN BIH.

After adopting Law on Foster Care in February 2017, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued development of legislation by working on the Law on Social Services, Law on Protection of Families with Children and Law on Social Work. All these laws can be seen as a progression towards deinstitutionalisation for children. Furthermore, both Federation of BiH (FBiH) and Republic of Srpska (RS) are introducing mandatory training of foster families and child care professionals and are developing training programs. There is insufficient and outdated data on the actual numbers of children in foster care throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, to give a clear estimation of the throughout. However, there were 229 children in foster care in RS in 2016; 426 children were placed in foster care in FBiH in 2014.

In both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, child protection and care professionals at local centres are overburdened with administrative duties leaving little space for professional work; their budget is overall limited and it is of worry that their mentality tend to rely on institutionalisation. In both Federation of BiH and Republic of Srpska, there are no provisions explicitly mentioning prevention of institutionalisation, however, there are variety of benefits available to children and families with low income. Gatekeeping is conducted specifically by the local centres for social work, and their success is heavily dependent on several factors, such as budget, availability of alternatives and awareness of the professionals.

IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR and BiH immigration service are working on strengthening the capacities for providing care for vulnerable categories of migrants.

The EU has also played an important role in the process of deinstitutionalisation in Bosnia Herzegovina. In 2014, €1.5mln was granted under IPA 2014/ 037-662. 8/Bosnia and Herzegovina/ to support transformation of care institutions over the period 2014-2017. Two new services have been developed using IPA II: an emergency reception centre and a day centre for children at risk. With support of IPA II, four institutions are now getting closed, and 98 professionals increased their capacity during this transformation. Services developed through IPA II are now funded by the national budget and have contributed to the strengthening of country's child protection system. This commitment of the EU should be continued throughout 2018-2020 IPA II funding period with investments to be used towards transforming the rest of the institutions for children, strengthening capacity of centres for social work and developing alternative care services such as small family homes.

KEY RECOMMENDATION TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT



TAKE ACTION TO ENSURE THAT THE NEW LAW ON FOSTER CARE, ADOPTED IN FEBRUARY 2017, IS

FULLY IMPLEMENTED, ALLOWING MORE CHILDREN TO GROW UP IN FOSTER CARE FAMILIES RATHER THAN INSTITUTIONS.



hope and 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

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 16 European countries. For more information go to www.openingdoors.eu