

OPENING DOORS FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES. ENDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE.

POLAND



THE “ACT ON FAMILY SUPPORT AND THE SYSTEM OF FOSTER CARE”, APPROVED BY THE POLISH PARLIAMENT IN JUNE 2011, INTRODUCES DEINSTITUTIONALISATION (DI) REFORMS BY PREVENTING CHILDREN’S SEPARATION FROM THEIR FAMILIES AND INCREASING DAY CARE SERVICES. THE LAW ALSO FORBIDS INSTITUTIONALISATION OF CHILDREN UNDER 10. HOWEVER, DUE TO THE LACK OF FOSTER FAMILIES, INFANTS UNDER THREE YEARS ARE STILL PLACED IN INSTITUTIONS. LARGER INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SEVEN-YEAR TRANSITORY PERIOD.

Despite positive developments, the Polish Government still has no clear national strategy for DI. The old system of big institutions for 30 to 70 children still prevails. Moreover, the system is fragmented with 460 different counties responsible for institutional care and no effective monitoring procedure.

The main challenges to overcome include:

the lack of coordination between different services (e.g. family courts deciding about placements, system for social support and

institutional services);

a limited exchange of information between local-level services (support to families and day care services providers) and county services (foster families and institutional care providers);

a shortage of services to support vulnerable families – for one child in four, poverty is the main reason for institutionalisation.

Some municipalities do offer community-based services such as early intervention, family support and prevention programmes but only the most affluent communes can afford it.



Hope & Homes
for Children

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NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

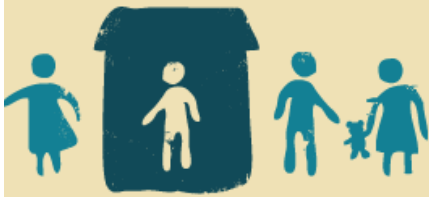


THE OUR HOME ASSOCIATION AIMS TO REFORM FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN POLAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE. SINCE 1991 IT HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN DEINSTITUTIONALISATION PROJECTS, INCLUDING TRANSFORMATION OF CHILD WELFARE INSTITUTIONS, INTRODUCING INDIVIDUAL CASE APPROACH IN SMALL GROUP HOMES AND FOSTER CARE, AS WELL AS MANAGING FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMMES.

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FACT FILE

FOR ONE CHILD IN FOUR, POVERTY IS THE MAIN REASON FOR INSTITUTIONALISATION.



THERE ARE 1,437 INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN IN POLAND.



67,356 CHILDREN ARE GROWING UP IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE IN POLAND.



The Opening Doors campaign operates at EU level and in 12 countries across Europe.

Working with a network of national partners in each participating country, we are building civil society capacity to advocate at national level.

We are calling on the EU and national governments to prioritise the transition from institutional to family-based care and deliver quality care for children across Member States, pre-accession countries and within the EU neighbourhood.

We believe that the end of institutional care for children in Europe is possible and within our reach – putting the best interests of children back at the heart of Europe's child protection systems.

