

OPENING DOORS FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES. ENDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE.

ROMANIA

ROMANIA HAS GONE THROUGH A SIGNIFICANT TRANSFORMATION OF ITS CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS. IN 2000 THERE WERE 100,000 CHILDREN IN CARE, PREDOMINANTLY IN LARGE-SCALE INSTITUTIONS. AT THE END OF 2012, THERE WERE 63,447 CHILDREN OFFICIALLY IN STATE CARE, OF WHICH APPROXIMATELY 9,000 ARE IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE. THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM IS NOW MORE DIVERSIFIED, OFFERING A RANGE OF FAMILY-BASED SERVICES TO CHILDREN UNABLE TO LIVE WITH THEIR PARENTS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES.

Despite these efforts, the Romanian child protection system still relies heavily on institutional care. In 2011, the Government initiated – with the collaboration of NGOs – a “DI and Prevention Working Group” with the main objective of developing public policy on prevention of family breakdown.

In Romania, poverty and family breakdown are among the main drivers for separation of children from their families. Children with unemployed parents, single parents and those exposed to domestic violence are particularly vulnerable to separation from their families.

Children with disabilities, irrespective of their age, are also more likely to be placed in institutions and have limited access to family-based care: only 20% of children in foster care have disabilities. More than 60% of the children in the remaining 184 institutions have disabilities.

Besides investment in prevention services, continued reform of the Romanian childcare system must tackle a series of important issues:

1. Overall number of children in public care: there are currently 65,000 children in public care, which is a very high number but has decreased from 72,000 over the last seven years ago. Of these 65,000, 9,000 are still placed in old style institutions.
2. The completion of the deinstitutionalisation process: There is a stringent need to dismantle the existing old state institutions for children, and to replace them with an infrastructure of family-based residential alternatives for children.
3. Gaps in services: There is a lack of services for children and families. Once a child is taken into state care, they do not benefit from customised interventions. In this respect, the situation for children with disabilities is even more problematic. Support for care leavers is ad-hoc, mostly provided by NGOs.
4. Lack of monitoring: The outcomes for children in the care system and the quality of services provided are not monitored objectively and impartially. These areas are still covered by the same state authorities providing the services. There is also a need to invest in hiring and training childcare workers and professionals as well as a critical need to carrying out follow up



Hope & Homes
for Children

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NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

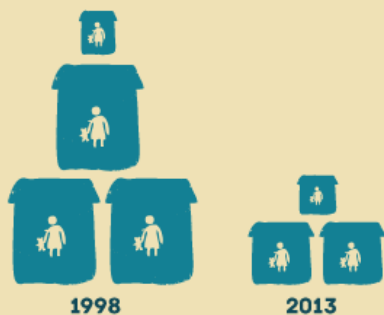


HOPE AND HOMES FOR CHILDREN ROMANIA FOCUSES ON TRANSFORMING A CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM BASED ON INSTITUTIONAL CARE, BY PREVENTING CHILD SEPARATION FROM FAMILIES, AND DEVELOPING FAMILY-BASED ALTERNATIVES. THEY BELIEVE THAT ATTACHMENT, LOVE, INDIVIDUAL CARE AND STIMULATION ARE ESSENTIAL FOR EVERY CHILD.

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FACT FILE

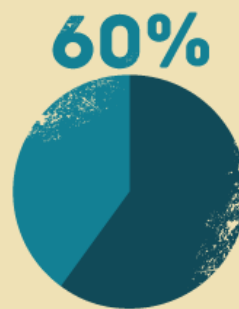
RELIANCE ON INSTITUTIONAL CARE HAS DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS.



THERE ARE NOW SOME 60,000 CHILDREN IN STATE CARE, OF WHICH 9,000 ARE IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE.



MORE THAN 60% OF CHILDREN REMAINING IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE HAVE DISABILITIES.



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.

