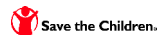
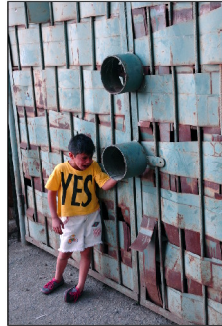


Georgia

Developing and Piloting a Child Protection Referral System

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Rebuilding Lives Project



What is a Child Protection Referral System?

- Functional network of governmental and non-governmental agencies working in cooperation and according to pre-established mechanisms in order to minimize threats to children's safety and security, to allow for easier and quicker identification of such threats and to maximize impact of interventions once such threats are revealed



Rationale and country context

- No specific, coordinated referral procedures for child protection exist
- Legislature fails to specify exact definitions of forms of violence against the child
- Not all cases of child abuse are reflected in the legislature
- The Law on Domestic Violence does not specify who exactly is obliged to report situations of child abuse
- Concrete reporting and intervention procedures do not exist
- Repercussions in cases when someone fails to report child abuse case are not specified



Coming up with an idea

- Street Children Working Group recommendations for secondary legislation related to child welfare (2006)
- Experience of cross-referral trials from two urban locations in Georgia (EveryChild)
- Assessment of Selected Residential Childcare Institutions in Tbilisi (Save the Children, 2007 for the MoES)
- The National Street Children Research in Georgia and its recommendations (Save the Children, 2008 for USAID and UNICEF)
- Various reports of unaddressed child abuse cases – practical experience
- Availability of local and international best practice models



The working group

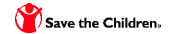
- Save the Children
- Patrol Police Department
- Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, Childcare Department
- Ombudsman Office, Child's Rights Protection Center
- Georgian Young Lawyers Association
- A local child protection NGO
- A local child protection center under the Ministry of Education and Science



Purpose of the procedures

To combine and enhance competencies of different professionals cooperating within local cross-referral systems, in order to:

- minimize threats to children's safety and security,
- allow for easier and quicker identification of such threats, and
- maximize impact of interventions once such threats are revealed



Assumptions

- Professionals within each individual institution have only partial information about a child/family
- Joint actions and combined competencies increase effectiveness of support
- The will, motivation and knowledge of individuals participating in the procedures is fundamental to their efficacy – the procedures are just tools intended to make their tasks easier



Target group

Professionals who, because of the nature of their work, most often are the first people noticing signs of an emergency situation in a child's life:

- School teachers
- Doctors and medical personnel
- Staff members of non-residential childcare service providers
- Statutory social workers
- The police



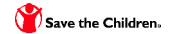
Process

- Creating a working group
- Developing Referral Procedures
- Piloting the procedures (6 months, 8 cities)
- Revising the Procedures document
- Presenting the documents and related policy and legal recommendation to the Government of Georgia for implementation and adoption



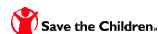
Partners

- UNICEF
- EU Support to the Child Welfare Reform in Georgia (EU SCWR) Project – EveryChild
- Public Health and Medicine Development Fund (PHMDF)
- Ministry of Education and Science (central and local levels)
- Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Interior, Police Department (central and local levels)
- Local Municipalities



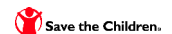
Success factors

- Inclusion of governmental stakeholders from the very beginning of the process
- Compatibility with the ongoing child welfare reform
- Willingness of the government to take over the process when the referral procedures are finalized
- Availability of separate components of the system in the country
- Partnership with other powerful non-governmental stakeholders >> more lobbying and advocacy resources



Obstacles

- The government is not yet able to cover costs >> the process is completely NGO/donor funded
- Due to recent developments in Georgia state budget allocation for the following years is uncertain





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