



# FROM THE CONCEPTS TO PEOPLE CHANGING DESTINIES:

## BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AND WOMEN

Report on the achievements by the Better Opportunities for Youth  
and Women project during six years of implementation

This report was developed with the contribution of the entire team of the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Moldova, with the financial support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) at The Presidential Initiative for the Global Anti-traffic Program, Government of Romania, and The “Emergency Fund”, an international program created by George Soros in the summer of 2009 to mitigate the negative effects of economic crisis in Central, Eastern and South-East and Central Asia.

The publication contains pictures of the current activities and from the Project archives, as well as pictures taken by John McConnico and Julie Pudlowski.

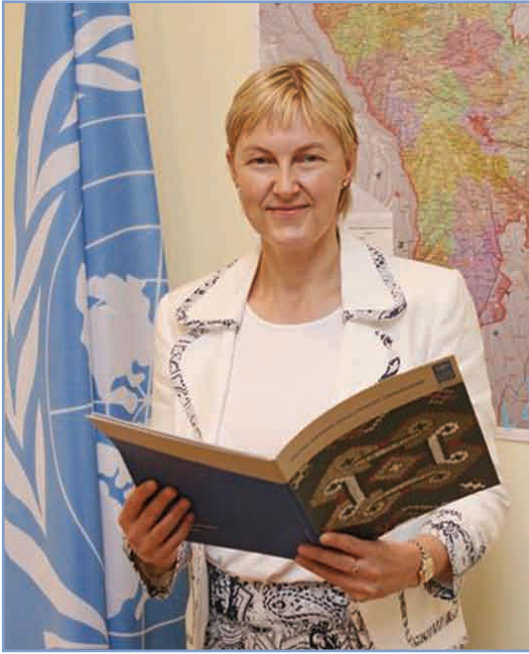
Copyright © UNDP Moldova, 2010

Chisinau, 2010

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and its wide range of partners. For more information please visit: [www.undp.md](http://www.undp.md) and [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org).

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>Better Opportunities for Youth and Women:</b> worthy life for those vulnerable .....	5
<b>Social Reintegration Centres for Youth:</b> once vulnerable, now independent .....	8
<b>Maternal Centers:</b> close to the family, close to the community .....	11
<b>Center for Assistance and Social Reintegration Human Trafficking Victims:</b> a new start .....	16
<b>Beneficiaries of Economic Integration</b>	
1. Mediation of employment .....	19
2. Creating new jobs .....	25
<b>Ensuring the sustainability of Social Reintegration Centres:</b> best practices shall be borrowed and continue.....	30
<b>Epilogue</b> .....	35



# Introduction

When I say this, I am referring to the new jobs created in partnership with the private sector and social enterprises.

When it is acknowledged that there is a diminished rate of child abandonment in those localities that have maternal centres, and a higher rate of youth employment in the communities that have services of professional training and integration, I think that we can talk about real success for the project. This success represents the proof of a good and sustainable collaboration among the Government, non-government, and private sectors, local public administration and donors, who together have united their efforts to develop some support services for the socio-economic and professional integration of boarding school graduates – orphans or children with no family care, as well as the mothers with children and pregnant women in risk or crisis situations.

Six years of activity is a long time, but not so much for the “Better Opportunities for Youth and Women” Project. It is not long, when taking into account that there are still thousands of people who are socially deprived and need our support. And it is a lot of time when considering the impact the project has had after half a decade of activity.

Talking about the impact, we must mention the thousands of socially-vulnerable people who have benefited from hosting, counseling, and life skills development within a network of social reintegration centres and maternal centres created within the framework of the project. We should also mention the thousands of people who benefited from professional training, mediation, and easier access to labour markets. The innovative aspect of the project is worth mentioning, as well as the capacity to replicate it.

The qualification of the “Better Opportunities for Youth and Women” Project among the best social initiatives at the international level by the end of 2008 represents an occasion of pride for the United Nations Development Programme, for the Government of the Republic of Moldova, and for the team working in this project. This award is the proof that joint efforts are needed to obtain the well-being of all citizens, and this fact can inspire us to invest in future achievements.

**Kaarina IMMONEN,**  
**Resident Coordinator of the United Nations**  
**Organization in the Republic of Moldova**

# Better Opportunities for Youth and Women: a worthwhile life for the vulnerable

Combating social marginalization and exclusion - one of the basic objectives for the Government of the Republic of Moldova - is a commitment to change, which envisages the social policies, with very clear objectives, which UNDP Moldova adhered to as a strategic partner.

For the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project, implemented by the UNDP Moldova, fighting the social marginalization and exclusion of some categories of population is the main objective and means concrete actions in several directions. Thus, the project has the following activity areas: creation of the social infrastructure, access to social services, stimulation of the participation in the economic activity, and job creation.

The project's target group covers the vulnerable youth, particularly graduates from boarding or vocational schools - orphans or children deprived of parental care, single mothers and pregnant women in difficulty, victims of domestic violence or victims of human trafficking. The educational flaws of the residential system and the respective consequences, youth unemployment, human trafficking, poverty altogether and domestic violence in particular generated the idea of creating services that would help the social-



economic and professional integration for these disadvantaged people.

By its actions, the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project contributes directly to the social-economic and professional integration of the aforementioned vulnerable categories.

The created network of centres and services ensures, on the one hand, housing in family-like conditions, psycho-social counseling and development of life skills and, on the other hand, mediates and facilitates the access of beneficiaries to the labour market, provides financial and material support.

The project creates new places of work for the target group by means of social enterprises, as well as financial support of the economic units interested in developing their own business.

The project is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme with the



financial support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) at The Initiative of the President Bush for the Anti-traffic Program, Government of Romania, and SOROS Foundation - Moldova.

Implementation Period:  
October 2004 - December 2011.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Create and develop a network of ten Social Reintegration Centres in settlements outside the capital, managed by local non-governmental organisations.
- Develop support services and programmes in these centres, which would favour the social-professional integration of the project beneficiaries.
- Increase the quantity and improve the quality of social assistance services within these communities.
- Enhance the workers' capacity and "competitiveness" by means of professional formation.
- Create workplaces by setting up social enterprises.

### **OUTPUTS:**

- **10** Social Reintegration Centres were created and are operating.
- **9** operating Vocational Training and Integration Services.
- **7,231** beneficiaries, including graduates from boarding and vocational schools, women from socially vulnerable groups and their children, will benefit of various services.
- **2,034** beneficiaries will get vocational training.
- **1,711** persons will be employed
- **704** new workplaces will be created
- **9** social enterprises will be established and 18 business-plans will be financially supported.
- Over **100** partnerships with the private sector.
- **65** specialists in the social and child protection areas will be trained to act for the sake of the beneficiaries.



### **BUDGET:**

The total budget of the project is USD **5.2 million**.

### **PARTNERS:**

The Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family; Local Public Authorities; The Ministry of Education; The Ministry of Youth and Sports; The Ministry of Finance; IOM Moldova; Every Child; Global Compact; OSCE; UNICEF; UNFPA; UNCHR; La Strada - Moldova; Winrock International; Caritas Moldova; local NGOs.

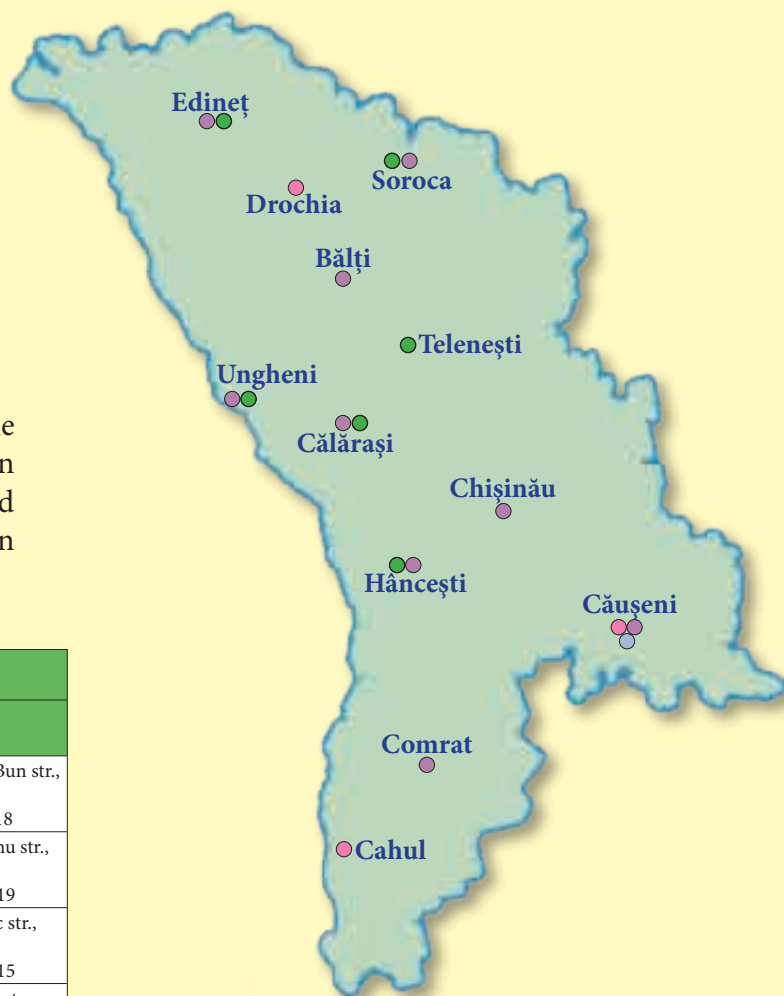
### **CONTACTS:**

**Viorel Albu,**  
Project Manager

**Address:**  
**office 810,**  
**180 Stefan cel Mare si Sfint bd.,**  
**Chisinau**  
**Republic of Moldova**  
**Tel.: (373 22) 29.47.71,**  
**e-mail: [viorel.albu@undp.org](mailto:viorel.albu@undp.org)**

# Better Opportunities for Youth and Women

During six years of implementing the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project, 10 Social Reintegration Centres and 9 Vocational Formation and Integration Services were established.



Social Reintegration Centres for Youth		
Name of the Centre	Organization	Contacts
SRCY "ALTERNATIVA" from Edinet	Public Association "Demos"	18B, Alexandru cel Bun str., Edinet, tel (246) 2.40.18
SRCY "DACIA" from Soroca	Youth Resource Centre "Dacia"	21, Mihai Sadoveanu str., Soroca, tel. (230) 2.36.19
SRCY "CREDO" from Ungheni	Association of Civil Education "Viitorul incepe azi"	8, George Meniuc str., Ungheni, tel. (236) 2.31.15
SRCY AMIGO from Carpineni village, Hancesti rayon	Public Association "Asociația pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane din Moldova"	9, Independentei str., Carpineni village, Hancesti rayon tel. (269) 2.75.85
SRCY from Calarasi	Public Association "Epitrop"	11, Makarenko street, Calarasi, tel. (244) 2.31.20
SRCY from Telenesti	Public Association "Centrul de Justitie Comunitară Telenesti"	16/2, Ion Voda str., Telenesti, tel (258) 2.10.73, 2.10.74

Maternal Centres		
Name of the Centre	Organization	Contacts
MC "PRO-FAMILIA" from Causeni	Public Association "Asociația Psihologilor Tighina"	18A, Ana si Alexandru str., Causeni, tel. (243) 2.68.35
MC "ARIADNA" from Drochia	Public Association "Artemida"	21, Alexandru cel Bun str., Drochia, tel. (252) 2.03.08
MC "INCREDERE" from Cahul	Public Association "Incredere"	133, Negruzzi str., Cahul tel. (299) 4.40.80

Assistance and Social Reintegration Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings	
Place	Contacts
Causeni	tel. (243) 2.69.75

Vocational and Integration Services		
Place	Organization	Contacts
Edinet	Public Association "Demos"	s18B, Alexandru cel Bun str., Edinet tel. (246) 2.40.18
Soroca	Youth Resource Centre "Dacia"	21, Mihai Sadoveanu str., Soroca, tel. (230) 2.36.19
Balti	Public Association "Onoarea si Dreptul Femeii Contemporane"	144 Decebal str., Bălți tel. (231) 7.07.78
Ungheni	Association of Civil Education "Viitorul incepe azi"	8, George Meniuc str., Ungheni, tel. (236) 2.31.15
Calarasi	Public Association "Epitrop"	11, Makarenko street, Calarasi, tel. (244) 2.31.20
Chisinau	Public Association "Centrul de Consultanță în Afaceri"	98, 31 August 1989 str., off. 308-308A, Chisinau tel. 21.00.89, 21.00.94
Hancesti	Public Association "Asociația pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane din Moldova"	128, Mihalcea Hancu str., Hancesti tel. (269) 2.02.40
Causeni	Public Association "Asociația Psihologilor Tighina"	1, Mateevici str., Causeni tel. (243) 2.16.80
Comrat	Public Association "Asociația Femeilor din Gagauzia"	160, Lenin str., Comrat tel. (298) 2.10.51, 2.88.99

# Social Reintegration Centres for Youth:

once  
vulnerable,  
now  
independent



## WHAT IS A SOCIAL REINTEGRATION CENTRES FOR YOUTH?

The Social Reintegration Centres for youth are units that provide social assistance at a community level, with a mixed activity regime - both residential and daytime.

The aim of centres is to provide and ensure the access of youth in difficult situations to quality services for a determined period of time. They aim at combating the marginalization and exclusion of young people and their subsequent social-professional integration by means of these centres.



From 2005-2009, 6 units of this kind were created in Moldova. The geographical coverage of a Social Reintegration Centre for Youth is the administrative-territorial area of a rayon or district.

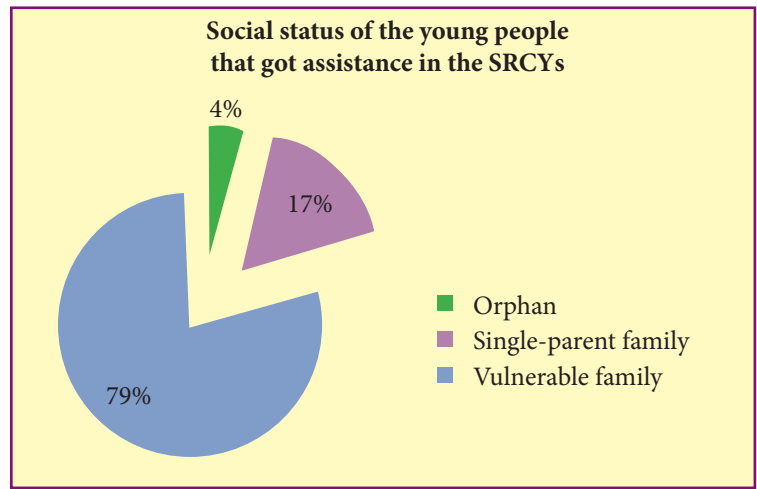
The activity of Centres providing social reintegration services to young people is conducted in line with current legislation, as well as with the provisions of the local agreements concluded between the LPA and the service providers.

The Social Reintegration Centres for Youth fill in the shortage of specialized social services, targeted at the youth that grew up and was educated in the residential care system, as well as for youth from disadvantaged families.

The idea to create the services was based on the reports and surveys on the educational deficiencies of the residential care system and their consequences (the specific behaviour of the youth coming from the residential environment), youth unemployment, poverty as a whole and domestic violence in particular.



In the centres, the basic need of young people are satisfied (accommodation, hygiene, nutrition), as well as training, if needed, and access to information are ensured. The beneficiaries of the centre are involved in activities aimed at obtaining Life Skills (LS) and social skills.



**BENEFICIARIES**

- ◆ graduates from the boarding schools
- ◆ graduates of vocational schools
- ◆ orphans or young people from vulnerable families

**STAFF**

- ◆ Centre Manager: 1
- ◆ Service Coordinator: 1
- ◆ Social Assistant: 2
- ◆ Psychologist: 1
- ◆ Support Staff: 3

**CAPACITY**

Every Centre has on average 12 accommodation places.

Annually, each SRCY may assist about 120 beneficiaries, both in residential and day regime.

**SERVICES PROVIDED BY A SOCIAL REINTEGRATION CENTRE FOR YOUTH**

**SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

- intervention of the social worker, case assessment, determining the social diagnosis and development of the individual intervention plan.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL ASSISTANCE**

- initial and periodical psychological assessment, development of an individual plan of services depending on the identified psychological problems, learning strategies to settle the problems.

**PEDAGOGICAL ASSISTANCE**

- particularly for the beneficiaries that did not graduate from the 9th form, as well as for children that were not involved in the educational process at that moment.

**SUPPORT FOR RECEIVING LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

- in order to clarify the identity of the beneficiary, settle the litigations related to the private property or custody over the child.

**LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

- activities that promote and plan the preparation of beneficiaries for the independent life.

**SUPPORT FOR THE SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL REINTEGRATION**

- education, counselling, and orienting activities that favour the young people’s autonomy and prepare them for the integration in the community.

# The Reintegration Centre – and not luck alone – helped Nicolae become one of the best carpenters in town

When Nicolae was just two years old he had to face the first complication in his life – his parents’ divorce, after which his mother left. His grandmother, or as Nicolae calls her “the gentle angel of my childhood,” was the one to take the mother’s place in the child’s life. In a short time, the boy had to face the second great challenge of his life. His dear angel left him. His grandmother died three years later, and the boy had to take care of himself, begging or working as a day labourer in his native village.

Nicolae went to school later than his peers, but not even then he had the chance to study. He was forced to frequently miss school because he had to join his father at work, at a chemical waste-storage in the village. When asked by teachers to let the child attend the school, his father had the same answer: „He isn’t going to become a minister anyway!”. After the third grade, the boy gave up on school for good. Instead, he went to day-paid jobs, such as field work or construction works. He spent his free time with so-called “friends” that at the beginning got him involved in small “troubles,” but later with more serious offences. First, they stole a TV set, then an audio system... The punishment was not late in arriving. A criminal case was filed against Nicolae and the boy was sentenced to four years imprisonment.

There, deprived of his freedom, Nicolae understood that he had gone down the wrong path, as he confesses. He tried his best to improve himself and was released after two years of custody. He returned to his village, to his parents’ home, and decided to start his life all over again. His joy came to an

end when in place of the native home he found a flooded ruin instead of a house. Villagers housed him for a period of time, but the boy, aware that he needed to survive, went to Calarasi to look for a job. Here, the social workers referred him to the Social Reintegration Centre for Youth from Calarasi.

„I felt like in heaven, Nicolae recalls. My life changed drastically. I found here the house I was looking for my entire life – tidy, comfortable, and friendly where I learned how to eat properly, how to take care of myself, how to communicate with people, how to earn my money and how to find an aim for my life. With the help of people from the Centre, I managed to apply for an identity card to be able to find a job”, says Nicolae.

At the Reintegration Centre for Youth from Calarasi, Nicolae had the chance to receive vocational orientation and training. Thus, after the graduation of the Civil Engineering College, Nicolae became a carpenter and was employed at a company in the town. From his salary, he saved money to fulfil a childhood dream – to obtain a driver’s licence. Today, Nicolae is one of the best carpenters in the town, but also a person who is appreciated by all Centres’ employees and everyone who knows him.



## ADDRESSES OF THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION CENTRES FOR YOUTH

Social Reintegration Centres for Youth		
Name of the Centre	Organization	Contacts
SRCY "ALTERNATIVA" from Edinet	Public Association "Demos"	18B, Alexandru cel Bun str., Edinet, tel. (246) 2.40.18
SRCY "DACIA" from Soroca	Youth Resource Centre "Dacia"	21, Mihai Sadoveanu str., Soroca, tel. (230) 2.36.19
SRCY "CREDO" from Ungheni	Association of Civil Education "Viitorul incepe azi"	8, George Meniuc str., Ungheni, tel. (236) 2.31.15
SRCY "AMIGO" from Carpineni village, Hancesti rayon	Public Association "Asociația pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane din Moldova"	9, Independenței str., Carpineni village, Hancesti rayon tel. (269) 2.75.85
SRCY from Calarasi	Public Association "Epitrop"	11, Makarenko street, Calarasi, tel. (244) 2.31.20
SRCY from Telenesti	Public Association "Centrul de Justitie Comunitara Telenesti"	16/2 Ion Voda str., Telenesti, tel. (258) 2.10.73, 2.10.74

From 2005-2010, by means of the 6 Social Reintegration Centres for Youth, **3,168** young people got assistance, both graduates from boarding schools (42%) and young people from disadvantaged families (58%), mainly from rural areas. On average, every assisted young people benefited from financial support of about MDL **610** per month during 6 months. At the same time, every young person participated in **12** Life Skills activities on the average, thus increasing their chances of a harmonious integration in the society.

With the support of Social Workers from the Centres, **912** young people were integrated in the family or society and **535** young people got identity documents.

Since the social reintegration of post-institutionalized youth is a commitment assumed in the national social assistance policies of the Republic of Moldova and the services existing at the country level do not cover the needed amount of assistance programmes, the Social Reintegration Centres for Youth are remain topical, being a qualitative alternative for the potential marginalization of youth and an important tool for the local public authorities.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SRCY

- ◆ Protect the rights and dignity
- ◆ Ensure the self-management and intimacy of the beneficiaries
- ◆ Individual approach and focus on people
- ◆ Protect the right to choose
- ◆ Participation of beneficiaries
- ◆ Result-oriented
- ◆ Ongoing improvement of the service quality

### SRCY ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

- ◆ The Centre operates on the basis of the Regulations on Organization and Operation, developed in line with its mission, taking into account the legal provisions in force on the social assistance services.
- ◆ The procedures used by the Centre during the service provision are developed on the basis of the Operational Manual.
- ◆ The management of the Centre uses an evaluation and monitoring system, aimed at improving the quality of the provided services.
- ◆ The quality of provided services is assessed in line with the Minimum Quality Standards.

# Maternal Centres: close to the family, close to the community



## WHAT IS A MATERNAL CENTRE?

The Maternal Centre - organised according to family-type models - provides a set of social services both to women with children and to pregnant women in difficulty, as well as to women that are victims of domestic violence or human trafficking.



The Maternal Centre supports the local community, providing public social assistance services to a certain group of beneficiaries at risks or in crisis.

The mission of the centre is to allow establishment, maintenance and strengthening of family and social links of the beneficiaries, the final result of the actions being their reintegration with their own families and/or with the community.

The Maternal Centre aims at meeting the material, financial, and relationship needs of the mothers at the risk of separating the children from the family, so that they are successful at overcoming the given situation. Single mothers and pregnant women benefit from assistance with hosting at the centre (or at home if it is possible and the mother's or child's life is not endangered), psycho-social assistance, counselling, mediation of employment, and establishment of the relationship with the community. The services for trafficked people or victims of domestic violence also include psycho-social assistance, vocational training or retraining.

From 2006-2008, three centres of this kind were created in Drochia, Cahul, and Causeni. The placement of the centres allows the beneficiaries access to the community services: school, cultural, and healthcare facilities. The geographical coverage of a Maternal Centre is the administrative-territorial area of a rayon, or district.



The indirect beneficiaries of services provided by the Maternal Centre are the child's father, extended family members, and the community as a whole.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE MATERNAL CENTRE

### PROTECTION AND CARE

- guard and security, accommodation and nutrition are ensured.

### EDUCATION - COUNSELLING - ORIENTATION

- the mother is taught and counselled to provide proper care to her child. The individual intervention plan stipulates the activities that envisage the improvement or settlement of the difficulties encountered by the mother (visits at the father's or extended family's home, meetings at the Centre headquarters, etc.); psycho-therapy sessions are arranged; they appeal to a legal counsellor so that the mother gets aware of her rights/duties and receives specialized guidance; group activities on educational topics are organized.

### MONITORING-ASSESSMENT

- the initial assessment of the case is carried out, which underlies the development of the individual intervention plan; every case is assessed on a periodical basis;

### BENEFICIARIES

- ◆ Young mothers at risk or in crisis
- ◆ Mothers and children that are victims of domestic violence
- ◆ The pregnant women in the last quarter of pregnancy, inclined to abandon their children
- ◆ Teenage mothers that want to continue their education
- ◆ Victims of trafficking in human beings
- ◆ Victims of domestic violence

### STAFF

- ◆ Centre Manager: 1
- ◆ Service Coordinator: 1
- ◆ Social Worker: 2
- ◆ Psychologist: 1
- ◆ Support Staff: 3

### CAPACITY

Every Centre has an average of 10 accommodation places. Annually, each Maternal Centre may assist about 80 beneficiaries, both in residential and day regime.

### SUPPORT FOR THE SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL REINTEGRATION

- education, counselling, and orienting activities that favour the mother's autonomy and prepare her for the return to the family or community. Steps are taken to find a workplace; social surveys are carried out and visits are paid to mother's family or relatives, if any. The field activities prepare the change of community mindset with respect to these categories of people.

# At the Maternal Centre, Lilia learned how to be a mother

Lilia got pregnant when she was only 15, and was still studying at a boarding school. Her fear and shame made her hide her pregnancy for a long time. Lilia's father had died several years earlier, and her alcoholic mother would go missing from home for days. Being the oldest child in the family, Lilia took care of her three younger sisters when she came home on holidays. The harassment started when her pregnancy couldn't be hidden any more. Afraid of responsibilities, the child's father abandoned her, advising her to get rid of the child as soon as possible. Her mother continually insulted her. The relatives and family acquaintances mocked her whenever possible. When the child came into the world, Lilia, was desperate and decided to abandon her child at the maternity ward. This was because she had neither means of subsistence, nor the skills necessary to take care of a child.

In the maternity hospital, Lilia was visited by a social worker from the Causeni Maternal Centre, which gave her all the support she needed during that period of time. The social worker also told her about the possibility to be temporarily housed at the Maternal Centre together with her child.

At the Centre in Causeni Lilia became very attached to her child, learning how to take care of her, how to use reasonably the monthly allowance given by the Centre and she even managed to buy some things for herself and the child. The most important thing is that she gained a psychological balance and understood how important the child was for her. At the Centre, she met a seamstress from the locality, who taught her how to tailor and sew and who in the end gave her a sewing machine.



Eventually, the social workers from the Centre helped Lilia to be reintegrated in her biological family. With the Centre's help, the child's father was found and he accepted to meet his daughter, having been convinced by social workers. Two months have passed since their first meeting, when, one fine day, the man returned to the Centre again. It has been well said of this kind of days as being "fine", because that day was really good. He then accepted to start a family. Currently, the three of them live in a friend's house, who is working abroad, in Lilia's native village. Being supported by social workers, the parents try to cope with their new position – of being a newly married couple, and young parents. "The Maternal Centre helped me to take the right decision and to change my life for the better, so that my child has a mother and a father and will be happier than me", says Lilia.

## MC SERVICES

### **SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

- intervention of the social worker, case assessment, determining the social diagnosis and development of the individual intervention plan.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL ASSISTANCE**

- initial and periodical psychological assessment, development of an intervention plan depending on the identified psychological problems.

### **PEDAGOGICAL ASSISTANCE**

- particularly for the beneficiaries that did not graduate from the mainstream school.

### **PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE**

- both vocational training, as well as vocational retraining if needed.

### **SUPPORT FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

- clarify the identity of the beneficiary; settle the litigations related to the private property or custody over the child, etc.

## MC ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

- ◆ The Centre operates on the basis of the Regulations on Organization and Operation, developed in line with its mission, taking into account the legal provisions in force on the social assistance services.
- ◆ The procedures used by the Centre during the service provision are developed on the basis of the Operational Manual.
- ◆ The management of the Centre uses an evaluation and monitoring system, aimed at improving the quality of the provided services.
- ◆ The quality of the provided services is assessed in line with the Minimum Quality Standards.



## ADDRESSES OF THE MATERNAL CENTRES



Maternal Centres		
Name of the Centre	Organization	Contacts
MC "PRO-FAMILIA" from Causeni	Public Association "Asociatia Psihologilor Tighina"	18A, Ana si Alexandru str., Causeni, tel. (243) 2.68.35
MC "ARIADNA" from Drochia	Public Association "Artemida"	21, Alexandru cel Bun str., or. Drochia, tel. (252) 2.03.08
MC "INCREDERE" from Cahul	Public Association "Incredere"	133, Negruzzi str., Cahul, tel. (299) 4.40.80

## RESULTS

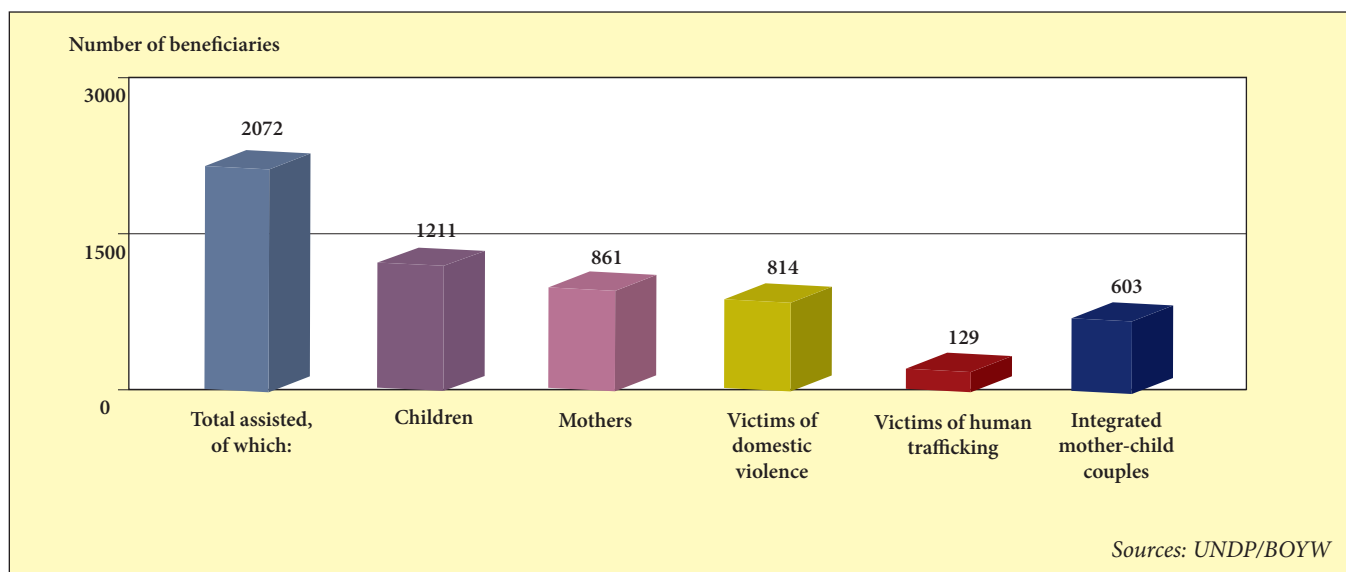
During 2006-2010, **2,072** beneficiaries received assistance by means of the three Maternal Centres, out of which:

- **1 211** children and their **861** mothers
- **126** pregnant women at difficulty in the last quarter of pregnancy at the moment of entering the Centre
- **814** victims of domestic violence

- **129** victims of human trafficking
- **603** mother-child pairs were reintegrated in the family or society during this period
- **159** mothers got vocational training
- **196** beneficiaries were employed.

In terms of the residence area of the beneficiaries, on average, 2/3 come from the rural area.

Achievements of the Maternal Centres during 2006-2010





In the last four years, the Maternal Centres proved to be an efficient tool for the community for combating social marginalization and exclusion of some categories of people.

Due to a viable partnership between the Maternal Centres and the local public authorities and subsequent to the joint efforts there was significantly decreased the number of children abandoned upon birth in the healthcare facilities.

Thus, in Cahul rayon, 8-9 children per year were abandoned in the maternity ward until 2007. Since the opening of the Maternal Centre, the number of abandoned children decreased to 2-3. Due to the intervention of the specialists from this centre, the abandonment of 21 children was prevented from 2007-2010.

In Drochia raion, 6 children per year were abandoned in the maternity wards from 2001 to 2005. The creation of the Maternal Centre in Drochia town contributed to the decrease of abandonment to 2 cases per year.

In Causeni rayon a significant decrease of child abandonment upon birth is also noticed. If from 2002-2005, 10 children were abandoned in all in the Causeni maternity ward, in the following years one case of abandonment was registered until 2010.

Altogether, the rate of child abandonment upon birth decreased by 80% on average compared to the previous 4 years, due to the activity of the Maternal Centres.

Another result of the Maternal Centres' activity is the cooperation with the local public authorities on facilitating the access of mothers with children and pregnant women to the social benefits and services stipulated by the legislation in force. In this regard, from 2006-2010, with the support of Maternal Centres' social workers, 440 mothers accessed and exercised the right to financial benefits: child benefits, social aid, and material aid. In the same period, 514 beneficiaries obtained identity cards, birth certificates, graduation diplomas with the support of the Centres' specialists.



# Assistance and Social Reintegration Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings:

## a new start

Although the Government of the Republic of Moldova improved its efforts of combating trafficking in human beings in recent years, the problem still exists.

The most recent reports find failures of the Republic of Moldova with respect to the elimination of human trafficking; it is still being a source-country for the human trafficking. The Assistance and Social Reintegration Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (ACVTHB) supports the Government's effort related to the prevention and combating of human trafficking,



being also one of the primary activities in the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project.

Another reason for the creation of the Centre stems from the need to align to the international standards on assistance for the victims of human trafficking, to replicate and diversify the assistance services for this category of population.

The Centre was officially opened in March, 2008.

The Assistance and Social Reintegration Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking is the area devoted to people, potential victims and victims of human trafficking, from the Eastern rayons of the Republic of Moldova.

This Centre offers support by the trafficked people's psycho-social rehabilitation actions, providing the beneficiaries with services that can improve the consequences of trafficking and exploitation, respecting the individual identity, integrity, and dignity.

The primary goal of the ACVTHB is to recover and prepare the beneficiaries for the independent life and this means a multidisciplinary intervention, which fights the social marginalization and stigmatization of the victim.

The social rehabilitation of a victim of human trafficking a complex process, in which the victim of trafficking, subse-





quent to the support provided by the ACVTHB, overcomes the status of victim, and becomes capable of exercise fully his or her abilities.

The Centre provides assistance and protection for the victims of human trafficking for 3-6 months, with the possibility of extending up to 12 months, depending on the physical, psychological, and social status of the victims.

A victim of human trafficking is enrolled in the Centre on the basis of a written referral from the IOM, La Strada, CP-THB, the Centre for Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings, other governmental and non-governmental structures providing assistance to victims of human trafficking.

The success of the intervention is ensured by a good inter-institutional cooperation of all social actors involved in the combating of this phenomenon at a district or rayon level and at a national and even trans-national level.

## BENEFICIARIES

- ◆ Potential victims of trafficking in human beings
- ◆ Victims of trafficking in human beings and their children

## STAFF

- ◆ Service Coordinator: 1
- ◆ Social Worker: 1
- ◆ Psychologist: 1
- ◆ Lawyer: 1
- ◆ Family Doctor: 1

## CAPACITY

The Centre has 8 accommodation places. Annually, the ACVTHB can provide assistance to about 40 people in residential regime.

## ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Centre operates on the basis of the Regulations on Organization and Operation, developed in line with its mission, taking into account the legal provisions in force on the prevention and combating the trafficking in human beings.

Assistance and Social Reintegration Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings	
Place	Contacts
Causeni	tel. (243) 2.69.75

# At 35, Ana finds another destiny at an enterprise in the town

**A**na has worked hard all her life. She's only 35 years old, but her weathered hands and wrinkles around her mouth look like those of an old woman. An agronomist by profession, Ana lost her job after the collective farm in her native locality, a small village in Cahul rayon, was closed. The care she had to provide to her two small children, a jobless husband and ageing parents, as well as her debts, prompted Ana to leave Moldova four years ago in order to find a job abroad. She was promised a job at a marketplace in Moscow. Instead, she was taken to a remote villa in Chechnya, far away from "civilization", where she was forced to have sex with clients. She was humiliated daily, burned with cigarettes, kicked in the stomach and called the worst names.

Assisted by doctors brought to the villa, she gave birth to a baby girl in Chechnya. A month and a half after the delivery, the child was taken away while she was returned to the clients. "I wanted to end my life, but they didn't let me do it. Deprived of any hope that she would be able to resume a normal existence, the day of salvation came. I managed to escape together with other girls. I was lucky, they were not. They lost their lives", Ana recalls.

Back home, Ana wanted to commit a suicide for the second time in her life, because members of her family turned their backs on her and did not accept the child she was carrying in her arms. Her husband left her, her mother cursed her for dishonouring her and the villagers mocked her. Desperate, she wanted to get rid of the youngest daughter, because she reminded her of when she was in slavery. Following the advice of some acquaintances, she resorted to the help of an Assistance Centre for the Victims of Human Trafficking.

After two years of humiliation and sexual slavery, she managed to start her life once



again. "Gradually, we succeeded in giving up the idea of abandoning her youngest child. Then, we helped her to get closer to her parents and to cope with stigma from people around her", the Centre's coordinator says. Moreover, for security reasons, Ana and her children were provided accommodation at the Centre for a period of time, because one of the traffickers was looking for her.

With the help of the Centre's specialists, Ana obtained the child's birth certificates and other documents and thus she enrolled them in the local kindergarten. Because of living for a number of months in a basement, Ana's third child had severe health problems and was hospitalized for two months. With that accomplished, Ana also received treatment and during this period of time she was supported by the Centre's employees. Through the agency of the Centre, several non-governmental organizations helped Ana with children's clothes and foodstuffs. Also with their support she was enrolled in a training programme for seamstresses, after which she found a job at an enterprise in Cahul town. Now, that she has a job, she has begun with hope and support, to shape a new destiny for herself, the same as she does at her workplace, making clothes with a needle and thread.

She has now got back her smile, has straightened her back and says that she found a solution how to fight the traffickers – nobody should believe them or be allowed to become an easy prey for them. This is what she tells girls at risk and other people visiting the Centre.

## SERVICES PROVIDED IN THE CENTRE

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

- - development of social investigation, conduct of activities included in the social reintegration plan of the victim, developed together with the social worker: mediating the relationship with the family and with the local public authorities, return to school, vocational counselling and support to participate in a qualification course, mediation for finding a workplace.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE

- individual and group counselling to overcome and accept the trafficking experience, counselling related to the reintegration in the family, counselling focused on the issue and on emotions in order to adjust to the situation, and counselling for the cooperation with the investigation bodies, if needed.

### LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- legal counselling and mediation in the relationship with the investigation bodies, law court, representation in the law court.

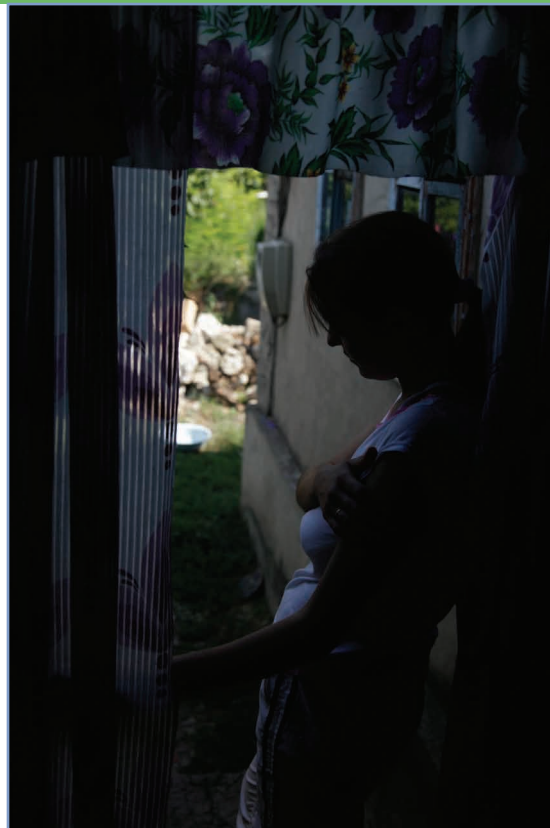
### HEALTH CARE

- provision of first aid in emergency situation; referral of cases to specialized doctors.

**D**uring 2008-2010, assistance by means of the Assistance and Social Reintegration Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings was provided to **127** beneficiaries that represent **70** cases, out of which:

- **45** mothers and **57** children
- **7** pregnant women
- **18** young people

Out of a total of **70** cases, **23** people were under-age when entered the Centre. In **6** cases assistance was provided to people from the Eastern raions of the Republic of Moldova, the other **64** being from the raions on the right bank of Nistru River. Sixty-three cases were integrated in the family and society with the support of the Centre's employees. Nine beneficiaries got vocational training and **14** were employed.



# Economic Integration of the Beneficiaries

One of the priority directions in the activity of the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project refers to the economic integration of the beneficiaries.

In methodological terms, the economic integration is considered to be a complimentary part of the social integration process; it finishes the latter.

In case of the BOYW Project, several methods were applied, which, generally, can be broken down into two basic categories: activities related to the mediation for employment and activities related to the creation of new workplaces for the project beneficiaries.

Taking into account both the content interference of these two categories and the several confusions that happen when the actors from this area apply these two notions,



we think that it is necessary to define these two categories from the very beginning.

With respect to the first category, we would like to say that the mediation for employment is the set of actions taken by the staff of the reintegration services in order to facilitate the employment of the beneficiary on a workplace that already exists on the labour market.

In case of the second category – creation of new workplaces – we mean the direct financial or material contribution of the project to the creation of new workplaces on the labour market, where the project beneficiaries would be subsequently employed.

## 1. Mediation for Employment

### WHAT DOES VFIS MEAN?

The idea of a network of Vocational Formation and Integration Services (VFIS) is not really new – until now it was successfully carried out by other projects with foreign funding. The need of the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project to set up its own network emerged subsequent to the findings and outcomes obtained during the first year of functioning by Social Reintegration Centres for Youth, as well as by other stakeholders on the Moldovan social stage (relevant international organizations, National Agency for Labour Force Employment –



NALFE) regarding the employment of vulnerable groups, especially youth employment. These analyses and observations showed a high unemployment rate among young people aged between 15 and 29r. The network of 9 Voca-

tional Formation and Integration Services became fully operational in January, 2008.

## SOME PROBLEMS OF THE LABOUR MARKET

The analyses performed by the NALFE specialists regarding the labour force market phenomena detected a series of key-problems that needed a solution. These problems are:

- high rate of unemployment among youth;
- very low rate of participation and employment;
- non-involvement of economic units in the labour force vocational training and training of staff not taking into account the labour market demands;
- insufficient capacities of NALFE structures, in terms of coverage with information and training programmes, and mediation for employment, particularly in the rural area;
- economic units' passive participation in submitting to NALFE the information about vacancies;
- high number of workplaces with low productivity and remuneration;
- the monitoring and forecasting system of the labour market is at the initial stage;
- low flexibility of NALFE bodies with respect to the requirements and changes that happen on the labour market;

- poor experience of NALFE bodies with respect to stimulating the creation of new workplaces;
- low accessibility of people from rural areas to the NALFE services, due to their financial constraints.

In these conditions, it is clear that professional formation services needed to be created that would support the social-economic development process and integration of socially marginalized categories through vocational orienting, training and integration services. For this purpose, the project decided to set up a network of Vocational Training and Integration Services (VFIS) managed by the partner NGOs.



## SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE VFIS

### SERVICES FOR YOUTH

#### INFORMATION

on the labour market, vacancies, possibilities of professional re/qualification, classification of activities, legislation in this area, etc.

#### PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING AND ORIENTING

which assesses the potential and the possibilities of professional re/integration.

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

for qualification courses depending on the young person's option and education level, but also in line with the labour market requirements.

#### MEDIATION

on the labour market by establishing relations between the young people and likely employers.

#### SALARIES CO-FUNDING

To increase the efficiency of young people reintegration on the labour market and to keep the workplace for up to 4 months, the

VFIS contributes to the salary co-funding of these young persons if:

1. The employer commits himself/herself to hire, by employment contract, the VFIS beneficiary for at least one year.
2. The paid salary is not lower than the minimum salary in the national economy.

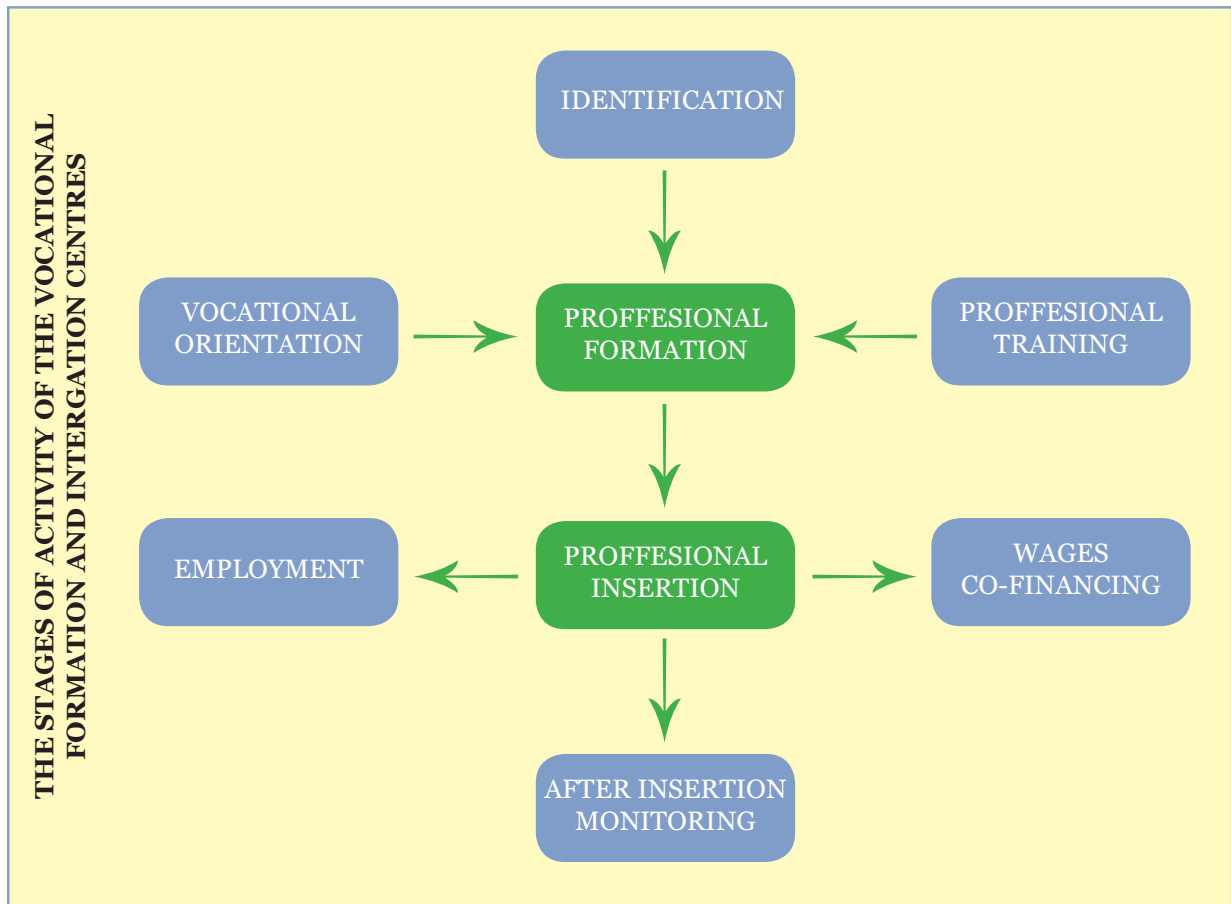
The salary co-funding is also a measure to support the young people at their workplace during the probation period, when their productivity is low due to the poor skills needed for the new tasks. If these conditions are met, VFIS will co-fund the beneficiary's salary with an amount of up to MDL 500 per month for a period of 3 months since the day the contract was signed.

The following categories of young people can benefit of these services:

- post-institutionalized (orphans or deprived of parental care);
- without shelter;
- with interrupted educational cycle;
- from vulnerable families;
- young spouses from vulnerable social-economical environments;
- young single mothers or fathers who are unemployed.







## SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS

VFIS provides the following services to companies:

- selection, professional formation and proposal of young people for employment;
- assistance for employers during the initial period of young people employment;

- consultancy on the legal facilities granted to the employers that hire marginalized people.

## SERVICE STRUCTURE AND HOW BENEFICIARIES ARE APPROACHED

VFIS consists of two major components:

- RESOURCE CENTRE COMPONENT**, which manages the youth counselling and information services, analyzes the labour market, keeps in touch with partners, employers and other public actors.
- MOBILE TEAM COMPONENT**, which identifies beneficiaries, undertakes interventions and mediates on the labour market.

On one hand, the VFIS supplements the services provided by the NALFE, which being a static structure has no possibility of active search; on the other hand, it develops other

services, such as analysis and forecast of the labour market. Thus, a major role is played by the Mobile Teams, which travel in rural and urban settlements, in order to find and select young people from the target-group, to inform them about the services they can benefit of, to make interventions for the respective young persons, and after the counselling stage - qualification or re-qualification, mediation on the labour market.



## MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM OF SPECIALISTS

The team of a VFIS consists of 5 specialists who have been trained in the following fields: psychology, sociology, labour market, social assistance, pedagogy, public administration, law, and marketing.

### STAFFING SCHEME

The Resource Centre has a multi-disciplinary team consisted of:

- Service Coordinator
- Psychologist
- Labour market analyst

The Mobile Team consists of the following specialists:

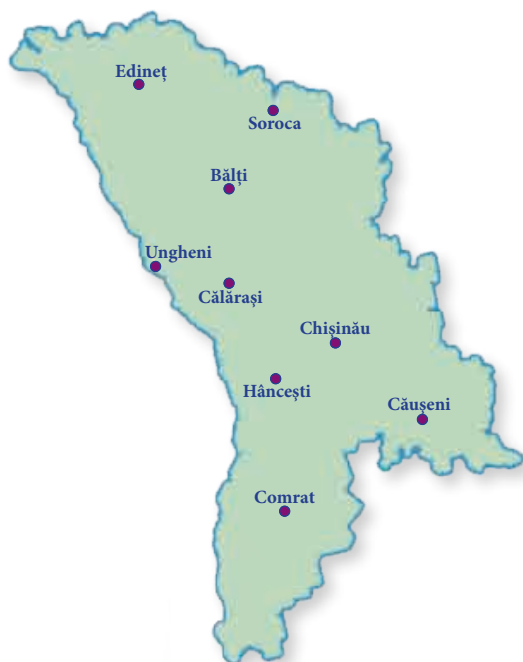
- Adviser for professional information and orientation (2 positions).

The team is led by and subordinated to the Service Coordinator.

## PARTNER NGOS

The Vocational Formation and Integration Services are open in nine settlements:

Ungheni, Hancesti, Soroca, Edinet, Balti, Causeni, Comrat, Calarasi, and Chisinau.



Vocational Formation and Integration Services		
Place	Organization	Contacts
Edinet	Public Association "Dem-os"	18B, Alexandru cel Bun str., Edinet, tel. (246) 2.40.18
Soroca	Youth Resource Centre "Dacia"	21, Mihai Sadoveanu str., Soroca, tel. (230) 2.36.19
Balti	Public Association "Onoarea si Dreptul Femeii Contemporane"	144 Decebal str., Balti, tel. (231) 7.07.78
Ungheni	Association of Civil Education "Viitorul incepe azi"	8, George Meniuc str., Ungheni, tel. (236) 2.31.15
Calarasi	Public Association "Epitrop"	11, Makarenko street, Calarasi, tel. (244) 2.31.20
Chisinau	Public Association "Centrul de Consultanță în Afaceri"	98, 31 August 1989 str., off. 308-308A, Chisinau, tel. 21.00.89, 21.00.94
Hancesti	Public Association "Asociația pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane din Moldova"	9 Independentei str., Carpineni village, Hancesti rayon tel. (269) 2.02.40
Causeni	Public Association "Asociația Psihologilor Tighina"	1, Mateevici str., Causeni, tel. (243) 2.16.80
Comrat	Public Association "Asociația Femeilor din Găgăuzia"	160, Lenin str., Comrat, tel. (298) 2.10.51, 2.88.99

During 2008, 2009 and first two quarters of 2010 **3891** young people got assistance by means of VFIS, including:

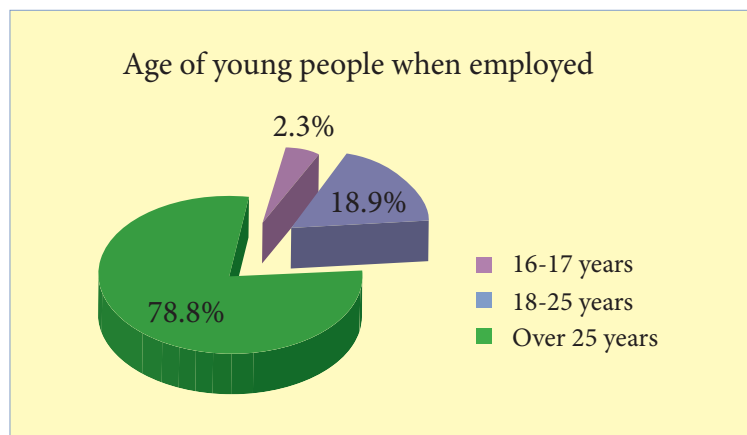
- Benefited from vocational orienting – **3212**
- Enrolled to professional formation courses – **2034**
- Employed – **1711**
- Benefited of co-funding to the salary – **882**.

The analysis of beneficiaries' situation by their social status reflects that out of all people who got assistance about 79% were vulnerable young people, 17% were coming from single-parent families, and 4% are orphans. At the same time, out of all trained people, about 56.9% benefited of scholarships paid from the means of the grant and the share of the employed people out of the trained ones accounts for about 70%. About 61% (**2,374** young people) of the beneficiaries come from rural area and only 39% (**1,517** young people) come from urban area.

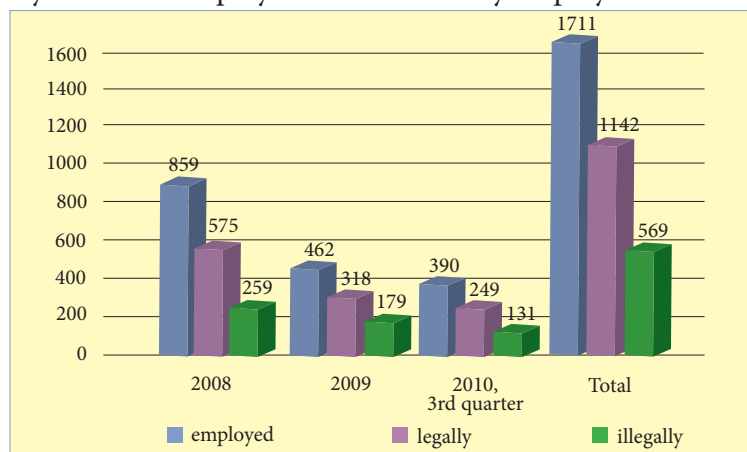
During the implementation of the project, it was found out that the most difficult is to find a workplace for young people aged between 16-17 years, because, according to the legislation, they shall be employed under special conditions and this makes the economic units reticent to employ them.



Also, another characteristic problem is the “shadow” employment. This phenomenon is a generalised one on the labour market of the Republic of Moldova and joint efforts of all involved actors (governmental and international institutions, economic actors, trade unions, specialized NGOs) are needed in order to diminish this phenomenon. Out of the young people employed by means of VFIS, the share of those employed in-the-shadow is about 33%.



Dynamics of employed beneficiaries by employment forms



Taking into account the aforementioned, we conclude that the Professional Formation and Integration Service still is an efficient tool by means of which support is provided to the disadvantaged young people that want to enter the labour market. Due to the innovative methods of meeting the applicants' needs, mobility, and prompt intervention, the services are equally requested by the young people looking for a workplace and by the employers; the role of these services became even more important during the economic crisis. The Professional Formation and Integration Service is an important partner of the territorial NALFE offices, contributing to the decrease of unemployment among youth, particularly of youth coming from rural areas.



## 2. Creation of New Workplaces

In line with the set objectives, the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project shall create, until the end of 2011, **400** new workplaces. In order to achieve this objective, there were developed and applied some basic modalities of generating new workplaces, namely.

Pentru atingerea acestui obiectiv au fost elaborate și aplicate câteva modalități de bază privind generarea de noi locuri de muncă și anume:

- by means of social entrepreneurship activities
- in cooperation with the private actors
- self employment.

### SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Widespread and capitalised in the Western Europe countries, the social entrepreneurship is still a relatively new idea in the Republic of Moldova. We can identify examples of such activities, but they are rare and have a sporadic character.

The social entrepreneurship notion has several interpretations. Unlike the traditional entrepreneurship, the social entrepreneurship has a social mission. While profit max-

imization is the main objective of the traditional entrepreneurship, for the social entrepreneurship the profit is just a way to accomplish the social mission.

There is a number of benefits resulting from social entrepreneurship activities and they relate, first of all, to the creation of new workplaces for the socially vulnerable groups; the profit obtained by these enterprises is reinvested in social activities; the social entrepreneurship often underlies the professional formation of vulnerable groups; many community services, environment protec-





tion activities are created on the basis of social entrepreneurship, etc.

Since 2007 till nowadays, with the support provided by the project, 9 social enterprises were founded by partner NGOs and 18 business plans were funded through them. They managed to create about 80 new workplaces due to the launched entrepreneurship activities. The area of social enterprises' activity is various, including diverse services, agriculture activities, production of construction materials, etc.

As opposed to other ways to generate new workplaces, the social entrepreneurship has both advantages and certain limits. With respect to advantages we could mention the social mission underlying the performed economic activity. This means the availability of the enterprise to perform economic activities with a minimum profit margin, or even with no profit. It allows the social enterprises finding a niche on the market in areas, which are not attractive for other private actors because they are profitless and thus their competitiveness is ensured. Because of this, the social enterprises are often generating not only workplaces, but also services needed by the community.

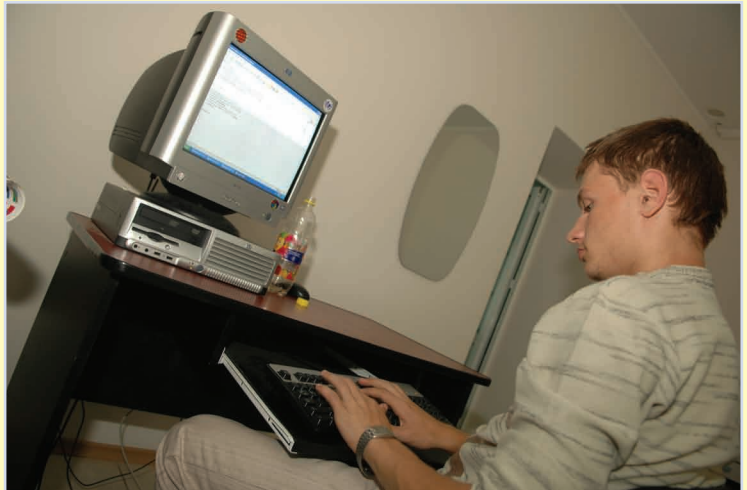
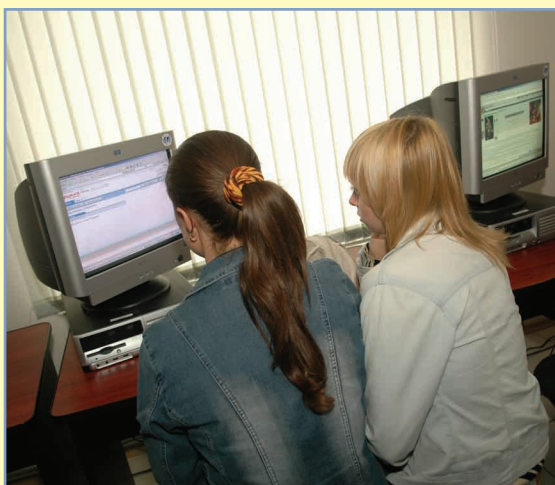
At the same time, the social enterprises have certain limitations. Because they are managed by non-profit actors, with very poor or zero economic experience and approach, the launching and strengthening the social enterprises is a very difficult and long process. Particularly the lack of experience and the non-profit approach determine the limited character, in terms of volume, of the launched businesses. Because of this not all social businesses succeed. Out of all 18 business plans funded by the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project, 3 businesses had stopped.

# Today, Mihai knows not only how to manage an Internet Cafe, but also his own life

**B**ecause of a slight locomotory disability, Mihai from Mingir was regarded as a sick child that couldn't be enrolled in the first grade. Only when he turned ten years old, his parents, advised by some villagers, took him to a boarding school in Hancesti. Even if he entered the school long after his peers, he was one of the best pupils in the class, appreciated and respected by his teachers and classmates.

After graduating from the boarding school, Mihai studied another two years at high school. Then again, he found himself in trouble, as neither his parents, nor the other four siblings could help him. The small disability allowance that Mihai received couldn't cover all his expenses and the boy started to look urgently for a job. Because of his locomotory disability, neither a single employer, nor the local Employment Agency could offer him a job. After lengthy searches, Mihai came to the Social Reintegration Centre for Youth from Hancesti.

Through the agency of the Vocational Formation and Integration Service (VFIS), Mihai attended courses for IT operators.



It was very easy for him, a person with a light locomotory disability, to learn and in a short time he got to like the computer very much. Also as a part of VFIS, Mihai was employed as administrator at an Internet Cafe in Hancesti and obtained co-financing of salary. The Centre's staff also helped him to find a place to live in Hancesti at a reasonable price and provided all the assistance he needed during the first months of employment.

Now, at twenty-three, Mihai stands firmly on his feet. Finally, he is financially independent, which gives him the opportunity to look forward positively. Although his income is small, he says it is enough for living, and due to the life skills gained during his stay at the Centre he learned how to use his money reasonably and even to make some savings. "I am proud that I found a proper job and that sometimes I manage to help my parents with some money. Thanks to the help received at the Centre, I am more self-confident now", says Mihai.

## COOPERATION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Another way to generate new workplaces is the cooperation with the private sector. Compared to the social entrepreneurship, the cooperation with the private actors has more advantages due to the experience and place on the market they have. Under the creation of new workplaces, the support provided by the project to the private actors was both direct and indirect.

The directly provided support was allotted on the basis of business plans selected by means of a tender, being provided under the form of money or equipment. The support was provided on the basis of some grant agreements. The maximum amount provided by the project for the creation of one workplace is USD **1500**, the contribution of the private actor being similar or higher. The maximum amount allotted for a business plan did not exceed USD **15 thousand**.

The indirect support was provided on the basis of partnership agreements signed previously with the private actors; the project contribution is expressed by the identification of beneficiaries, professional orienting, paying the training costs, and, if needed, salary co-funding during the benefi-

ciaries' first months of work. The private partners' commitment referred to the creation of proper working conditions, procurement of equipment and other resources, thus ensuring in fact the creation of new workplaces.

Due to the experience the private actors have, this way is most productive. During the project implementation, in partnership with the private actors, over **600** new workplaces had been created.

Though, the cooperation with the private sector also has some limits. Taking into account the limited character of the support provided by the project, it was attractive only for the small enterprises, being ignored by the medium and big ones.

Another issue is the low social responsibility manifested by most private actors from the country.



## SELF EMPLOYMENT

In parallel with the social entrepreneurship and the cooperation with the private sector, the BOYW Project also supported directly the self employment of the beneficiaries. From methodological point of view, this way contains several consequent stages, in particular:

- identification of beneficiaries;
- training of beneficiaries;
- financial/material support;
- follow up support.

The final result of the provided support is the launching of own businesses, which allow the beneficiaries' self employment.

At the first stage the beneficiaries were selected, on the basis of their availability and capacity to perform own entrepreneurship activities. Subsequently, the selected groups of beneficiaries were trained in the area of starting their own business. During



the training program, the beneficiaries had been helped to identify the ideas and areas of entrepreneurship activities, on the basis of which they further developed their business plans. The BOYW Project, during the training stage, used the training opportunities provided by various partners, for instance Winrock International, with funding provided by the USAID. The best business plans had been selected and they subsequently received financial support or equipment. In order to strengthen and ensure the success of the new launched businesses, the beneficiaries continue to







receive consultative support from project experts.

Compared to the first two described methods, self employment generated the lowest results. This is explained by the generally low training and experience of the beneficiaries from the target group, which significantly diminished their availability and capacity to start and successfully perform their own entrepreneurship activities.

Since the project was launched, the successful self employment of 7 beneficiaries was achieved. We can call the opening of a hairdresser's in Soroca town by a beneficiary of the Centre from this settlement a success - it generated 3 workplaces offered to the beneficiaries; a hairdresser's and manicure services in Calarasi - 2 new workplaces; and a photocopy outlet in Hancesti, which employs one person.

The economic integration process is particularly important; it is the end of the social integration process. The set objectives were integrally achieved despite the deficiencies and limits shown by every modality.

**T**he obtained successes prove that the non-governmental sector, besides the public institutions, can contribute significantly to the economic integration of the socially vulnerable groups. But the practice suggests that in order to achieve higher results, a closer cooperation is needed among all sectors - public, private, and non-profit

# Ensuring the Sustainability of Social Reintegration Centres:

## best practices shall be borrowed and will continue

During the implementation of the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project, the issue of ensuring the sustainability of the created social services became crucial. In line with the concept of the project, the services had to be provided by local NGOs; thus the achievement of service sustainability became most difficult and expensive task by the course of time.

By sustainability we mean not only self-financing of the services, but also the increase of the institutional capacity, which would allow the ongoing and qualitative conduct of the created services, after the end of the BOYW Project.

If speaking about the institutional sustainability, special attention was paid to such aspects: providing the services with qualified human resources, recovering or creating the proper infrastructure for a good implementation of the activity, taking over the best practices of qualitative conduct of social services, both from the country and from abroad, creating and strengthening partnership relations with the community actors, promotion of new services at community level, etc.



Under the process of achieving the institutional sustainability, the project team faced a number of barriers; the most difficult of them related to the lack of qualified human resources with experience at local level; absence of the necessary infrastructure, which determined significant costs for its recovery; existence of an underdeveloped referral system, situation which made us extend the range of needed services. In addition, the position of the local public authorities was sometimes reticent – they were initially sceptic about the new services.



In order to overcome the aforementioned obstacles, the BOYW team put the competitiveness principle at the basis of the creation of social services. A tender was organized to select the implementing NGOs, the staff to be employed in the service, as well as the settlements where SRCs were to be created. Such an approach allowed both treating the process in qualitative terms and creating the SRCs in settlements with most chances to ensure the sustainability.

One of the primary conditions at the basis of creating the social services was the existence or availability of a public-private partnership in the candidate-settlements. This meant the availability of NGOs to be selected for the implementation of activities and availability of LPA and other community actors to contribute concretely to the creation and further support of the newly created services.

The contribution offered by the partners had a complementary character. The experience and available human resources came from the NGOs; the public authorities provided the room needed to accommodate the future services and the last but not the least – provided financial support.

If speaking about the contribution of the BOYW Project, it was a significant one. Due to the support provided by the project, the staff selected by competition benefited of many working/exchange of experience/training visits, both in the country and abroad.

There were arranged 34 events of this kind. Nowadays, 85% of the staff employed in the created services has higher education and an outstanding practical experience.

The contribution related to the provision of services with the needed technical infrastructure was also significant. With the financial support of the project, the technical design and reconstruction of the facilities where the SRCs were to be placed had been performed. Consequently, these facilities were fitted out with the needed hardware, equipment, and furniture. The total investment with respect to this amounted to USD 2 million.

Nowadays we can state that the created services are one of the most fitted out in the country. The proper endowment, besides the qualified staff, contributes both to the quality of services provided to beneficiaries and to their sustainability.

Special attention was paid to the strengthening of relationships with the community actors. When beginning the services, partnership agreements were signed by the partner NGOs, LPA, and UNDP Moldova, which



clearly stipulated the commitments of each party. By the course of time, the services established partnership relations with most of relevant community actors, being integrated, step by step, in the national referral system.

If speaking about the financial sustainability, we have to mention that the situation of partner NGOs was similar to the altogether situation faced by the associative sector in the country. The initial assessment highlighted several flaws related to the financial sustainability of the partner NGOs, among which:

- Low fundraising ability;
- Insufficient planning or even absence of planning related to fundraising;
- Existence of sporadic funding sources;
- Excessive dependence on the grants provided by the external donors;
- Insufficient capitalization of local funding sources.

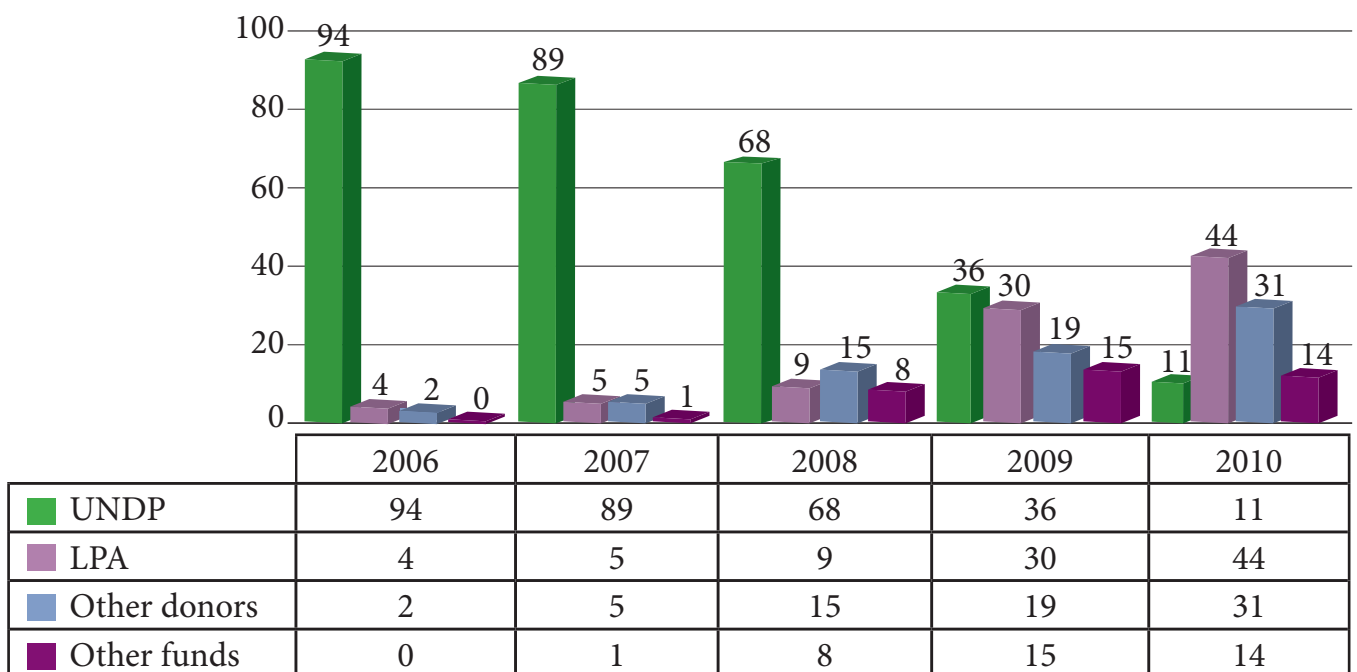
The goal set by the project team was quite ambitious – to reach self-financing in case of SRC funding. Taking into account that the created social services, due to their

complexity, were also very expensive, the task to achieve self-financing was a very difficult one. Thus, to meet the aforementioned objective, the project team planned to strengthen at the initial stage the fundraising skills of partner associations and, in the long run, to diversify the funding sources of the activities performed by the partner associations.

At the first stage, in order to strengthen the fundraising skills, the partner NGOs benefited of many training events in areas like: planning the fundraising process; fundraising techniques; financial management; social entrepreneurship; etc. The training events were combined with a number of practical exercises, further supported by follow up activities. Consequently, the beneficiary NGOs improved significantly their fundraising skills; this process became planned, consequent, and efficient. If in 2004 the average budget per organization did not exceed MDL 100 thousand, nowadays the average annual budget is eight times higher.

It should be mentioned that significant changes were also made with respect to diversifying the funding sources. If, at the stage of launching the first services, the main funding sources were the grants provided by the UNDP Moldova, during the next years the situation has changed materially and focused on other funding sources, like LPA, other donors, and social entrepreneurship.

The diversification of funding sources





With respect to diversifying the funding sources, special attention has to be paid to the efforts made by the project team for launching of social entrepreneurship activities. In the previous section several social benefits generated by this phenomenon have already been mentioned. Although the objective to generate additional financial resources is not a basic one, it is still a primary one.

Several difficulties and challenges have arisen during the implementation of the BOYW Project for the successful conduct of the Social Entrepreneurship component. We will mention just some of them: the lack of a proper legal framework that would regulate the area of social entrepreneurship activities, the lack of entrepreneurship skills of the local non-profit organizations, scepticism towards the success of social entrepreneurship activities, a lack of resources of local non-profit organizations when founding social enterprises, insufficient sustainability of the social mission of non-profit organizations related to the economic activity, etc.

For the successful launch and conduct of social entrepreneurship activities, the project team provided training, study visits abroad, follow up support as well as financial support under the form of grants for the beginning of social business. Nine social enterprises were created in all (Edinet, Drochia, Soroca, Calarasi, Chisinau, Ungheni, Hincesti, Causeni, and Comrat), by means of which 18 business plans were funded, with a total amount of USD

172,000. Even if at the beginning of first social entrepreneurship activities, at the end of 2007, the financial results seemed to be quite low, not exceeding 1% of the funds accumulated by the partner organizations, the share of revenues increased further on, accounting for about 15% of the total accumulated financial resources. In absolute figures, the profit from social entrepreneurship activities amounted to about USD **27,000**; in 2009 – over USD **15,000**. The total turnover of social enterprises during this period amounted to over USD **80,000**; in 2009 – USD **52,000**.





**W**ith respect to the financial sustainability of the created services, the private sector has is of special importance. Due to their economic activity, economic units have significant possibilities that would allow supporting the social activities in the community. But, up until now, the involvement of the private sector in the support of social initiatives is still very low.

There are several reasons that explain the reticence of the private sector, but the most obvious is the deficient legal framework – the Law on Philanthropy and Sponsorship, Law on Concession, Law on Social Services, etc. Another major reason relates to the absence of some traditions and low social responsibility manifested by the private actors in the country.

Out of the four main funding sources, the most important is the funding coming from the public budget. The data presented in Graph no. 1 show an outstanding increase, from 4% in 2006 to 44% in 2010.

From our point of view, the basic funder role of the public authorities is a justified and explainable one, taking into account the highly centralized status of the social, as well as financial-fiscal systems in the Republic of Moldova. In addition, the public authorities have the basic responsibility to solve the social issues faced by the community.

Of course, every funding source has certain advantages, as well as limits, and because of this, the diversifying of sources is important. Even if the principal role of social entrepreneurship is not achieving self-financing, accumulated experience shows us that maximizing the revenue generating activities can use significant resources of the organization and this could lead to the decrease in the basic activity of the organization. At the same time, the role of and cooperation with the public authorities and the private sector is not fully exploited and this cooperation should not refer only to the financial aspects.

The diversifying of funding sources, besides the ongoing strengthening of institutional skills, is the key to the success in achieving the sustainability of services created with the support of the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project.

# Epilogue

There is a beginning, as well as an end in the life cycle of every project. Six years of activity are a long enough period to make a summary of the obtained results and the necessary conclusions.

Although this stage does not mean the end of the BOYW Project itself - the activity has to be finished at the end of 2011 - the mission of the project will keep going further on. The continuity of the project will be ensured by its accomplishments, changed human destinies, sustainability built during all these years, positive practices that are or will be taken over by other actors.

The project mission deserves to be carried on as long as the country faces the issue of social marginalization of people in the society; the combating of this flaw needs joint long-term efforts.

As project manager I ask myself “What was most difficult in the implementation of the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project?”. I recall that when the project was launched I met many sceptics, who were not believing in the possibility to achieve the set objectives, that is to create a large network of complex social services in a short period of time and believing even less in the possibility to ensure their sustainability, taking into account that they had to be managed by NGOs. Now, after 6 years of activity, I can state proudly that these objectives were achieved.

The most difficult thing during project implementation was not to create the 10 SRCs and 9 additional services, but to ensure their sustainability. Because the sustainability involves several dimensions and, of course, does not refer only to self-financing, as people usually think. Sustainability also means developed institutional capacity. I am now content with myself because the efforts we made allowed ensuring the sustainability of SRCs.

Finally, I would like to mention that the obtained project results do not represent the merit of one person only or of some people from the BOYW Project team. This is the merit of an extended team of partners. That is why I would like to bring acknowledgments to my colleagues from the local non-governmental organisations, to the teams of specialists from the social services created with the project



support, to the representatives of central and local public authorities, which supported and contributed to the creation and further functioning of the social services, to the colleagues and partners from international organisations, who worked together with us, and, the last but not the least, to the donors - US Government by means of USAID, Government of Romania, the “Emergency Fund”, created by George Soros in 2009 - who provided financial support for the activity of the Better Opportunities for Youth and Women Project.

**Viorel ALBU**  
Manager of the UNDP Project  
Better Opportunities for Youth and Women