**Evaluation and Analysis of the Communication and Coordination of the Different Activities during the Implementation of the National Strategy "Vision on Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria" on a Municipal Level**

**(2012)**

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**Aims**:

1/ To provide information on the coordination between all parties on a local level, engaged in the implementation of projects, included in the Action Plan for implementation of the national strategy “Vision on Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria”.

2/ To provide analysis of the information, on which the decisions for the implementation of the Action Plan will be based.

3/ To perform evaluation and comparative analysis of the coordination process between the different units, structures and teams in the municipality, performing activities within the Municipal strategy for development of social services.

4/ To recommend ways for improving communication and coordination on local level.

**Participants**:

The evaluation includes:

1/ employees of the Child Protection Departments at the Social Assistance Directorates (territorial units of the Social Assistance Agency);

2/ representatives of municipal administrations, engaged in social services;

3/ local NGO representatives, working on development and offering social services in the community;

4/ employees in the field of services.

**Methodology**:

The evaluation has been conducted through detailed interviews in the period 2 May - 22 May 2012 in three municipalities of different types: small /Chirpan – 8 interviews/, medium /Ruse – 11 interviews/ and big /Sofia – 24 interviews/.

**Results**:

1. The coordination and communication are perceived by all experts interviewed as achieving information exchange through meetings and seminars, and not as a deeper process of coordination, interlinking and rationalization of the activities within all projects.
2. The available project units do not support the achievement of common coordination (by subject and by activity) on a municipal level. It is delegated to the existing municipal units, but since the projects do not envisage clear interlinking between the project activities on local level, the local authorities do not see coordination as an obligation.
3. There is no real coordinated interexchange between the projects on municipal level.
4. Having general information about the projects does not suffice for the good communication and sensible coordination between them on municipal level.
5. Winning the public and in particular the parents as one of the most affected social groups, was entrusted to the media, however no dedicated tools for communication were provided.
6. The purpose of deinstitutionalization and of the projects, aimed at fostering its implementation, is perceived mainly as a process of transferring children from the institutions towards the new services, and not so much as involving the families of the children.
7. The capacity of the people entrusted with coordination on municipal level is insufficient, both as project management capacity, as well as the level of expert skills in deinstitutionalization and reform.
8. The media coverage is extremely important, but does not have sufficient influence for creating common perception and attitude among professionals and citizens for the purpose of deinstitutionalization and the projects, aimed at its achievement.
9. The good practices that experts outlined were few. Mainly joint trainings and seminars, as well as working meetings were mentioned.

## Recommendation:

The research demonstrated the necessity to work on all levels for achieving change in the perception of better communication and coordination. Many of the participants assessed highly the communication and coordination precisely because they understand it mainly as exchanging data and information. It is important that the main message is that good communication and coordination exist only when on a local level there is common coordination, interlinking and rethinking of all project activities. That could be achieved by:

* Developing common and open channels of communication between projects on all levels.
* Changing of the functions of the management units on national level, in order to improve coordination among them.
* Changing of the functions of acting units and creating new structure for enhancing coordination and communication on district level. The aim is to guarantee unity and connection between the project activities on regional and municipal level.
* Developing new functions of the structure on a regional level.
* Improving coordination on municipal level regarding organization (planning, implementation, monitoring and control), as well as in relation to the local development strategies.