

# Families for Children Program



**Program goal.** A core value of the child-welfare system today lies in accepting the idea that all children have the right to live in safe and permanent families. USAID Families for Children Program (FCP) that is implemented in Ukraine by Holt International Children's Services is based upon this fundamental principle.

Families for Children Program was launched in October 2004 to develop a continuum of integrated family-based services for children outside or at risk of getting outside family care. An integral component of the Program is support to children and families affected by HIV/AIDS.

**Program locations.** The Program operates in seven localities in five regions of Ukraine: Dnipropetrovska (Dnipropetrovsk city and Novomoskovskiy Rayon), Kyivska (Brovarskiy Rayon), Cherkaska (Uman city and Umanskyi Rayon), Donetsk (Gorlivka city) and Odeska (Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy rayon). In each locality the continuum of services is tailored to meet the needs of the local community.

## Program Strategies

Community  
mobilization

Capacity  
building

Support to expand  
available services  
and introduce  
new services

Dissemination  
of successful  
practices

**Program areas.** FCP focuses its efforts in three main areas: introduction of family preservation services, development of domestic adoption and promotion of foster care and family type homes as alternatives to institutional care. In each of the areas FCP trained child welfare professionals, developed and piloted models of social services, conducted surveys, developed and published manuals, curricula and guidelines.

In 2009 the Program is focusing on dissemination of successful practices and their integration into existing

network of social and child welfare services for vulnerable children and families.

Dissemination of successful and innovative child-welfare practices has become feasible through a network of Regional Training Centers in five regions of Ukraine and a Center for Innovative Technologies at the State Institute of Family and Youth. Supported by FCP the training centers provide professional development and on-going training opportunities for the cadres in child-welfare sector.



## FAMILY PRESERVATION



Prevention of child abuse and neglect is one of FCP priority areas. The best way to protect children is to strengthen and support their families because this way we do not only protect a child from abuse and neglect but prevent trauma due to child separation from family and placement in an “out-of-home” environment.

Families can change. They never wish harm to their children. Often they do not recognize the child’s needs and do not have parenting skills. With proper support and training parents can master parenting skills to provide better care for their children.



For four years development of family preservation and strengthening models was one of Program’s primary goals. The process was sometimes challenging since implementation involved a change in attitudes and values.

The new concepts include strength-based approach, support to parents in their will to combat alcohol or

substance abuse, therapeutic classes for vulnerable children, parenting skills development. These are the fundamental principles of family support services to at-risk families introduced by Families for Children Program in its pilot sites. Newly established models have proven to be highly effective and gave rise to further development and replication of family preservation model.

□ FCP developed Practical Guidelines on the Implementation of the Family Preservation Model. The Guidelines are recommended by the State Social Services for social workers who deal with vulnerable families with children.



□ The adapted and piloted “Make Parenting a Pleasure” training curriculum is recommended by the State Social Services, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and the State Institute for Family and Youth.

□ Families for Children Program trained a national team of child welfare trainers. Specialists trained to support families with children in difficult life circumstances are on the team.

□ To call public attention to families with children experiencing hardships FCP together with the Center for Ukrainian Reform Education and the Converging Worlds video production studio supported production of a TV public service advertisement.

**As of May 1, 2009 over 150 families that raise more than 200 children have received servicethrough the established models.**

## CHILD ADOPTION

Unfortunately family preservation and family reunion is not always attainable. Yet, every child deserves a permanent family. Adoption is a way to build a family and create family relationship that mean safety and permanency, devoted parenting, unconditional love, lifelong support and the rights of a full-fledged family member for a child.

□ With the support of Families for Children Program Ukrainian child welfare specialists and state officials got acquainted with successful international practices to develop domestic child adoption.

□ Guidelines for prospective adoptive parents “Adoption. Step by Step” and training module for prospective adoptive parents “Parents in Process” were developed and published by FCP as part of its Grant Program.



□ The Program trained a team of trainers to work with adoptive parents.

□ To promote the idea of domestic adoption FCP together with Magnolia TV and the Center for Ukrainian Reform Education produced a series of TV announcements that showed life stories of children who found their families or still wait for a family.

□ Families for Children Program supported three surveys on adoption. The purpose of the surveys conducted among Ukrainian adoptive families in 2006 and 2007 was to identify the motives for adoption and

the barriers of adoption and determine the ways of overcoming the barriers. In November, 2008 sociological company “Ipsos Ukraine” with technical support from the Families for Children Program conducted all-Ukrainian survey in response to the request from the State Department on Adoption and Child Protection of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports. The survey was aimed to study public opinion on the rights of orphans and children deprived of parenting care to have a family and to assess the readiness of general population to adopt children. One of the survey’s objectives was to learn socio-demographic characteristics of prospective adoptive parents and identify informational gaps and needs.

## FOSTER CARE AND FAMILY TYPE HOMES



Development of foster care and family type homes as alternatives to institutions is an important area of Program activity.

□ The Program developed Practical Guidelines on Foster Care. The Guidelines were reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports of Ukraine. In collaboration with the Ministry FCP trained and certified more than 100 regional trainers on foster care.

□ Through FCP efforts first time ever in Ukraine HIV positive children deprived of parental care were placed in foster care.

□ The Program developed the Training Module on Care and Support to HIV-positive Children. The Module was approved by the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports of Ukraine.

□ In collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports Families for Children Program trained 59 regional trainers on the use of this module.

# FCP GRANT COMPONENT

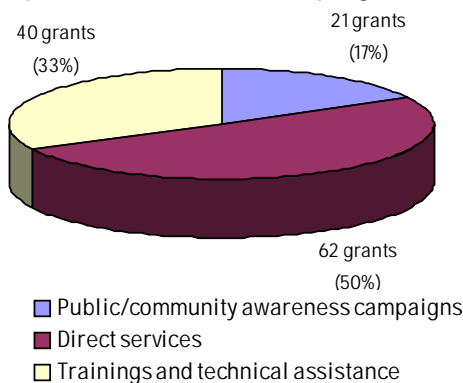
One of the key components of Families for Children Program was its grant program aimed to expand the existing services and introduce new services.

Another essential task of the grant program was providing opportunities for further development and dissemination of models introduced in Program pilot sites.

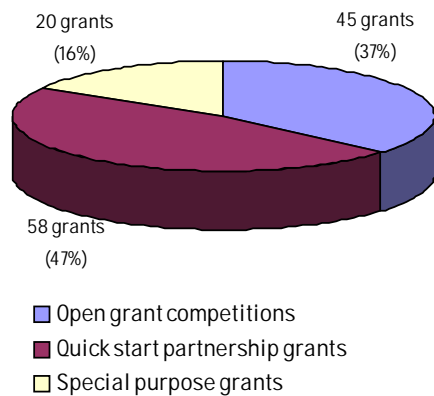
**As of May 1, 2009 Families for Children Program has provided support to 123 grant projects worth \$ 932, 323**

## CATEGORIES OF GRANT PROJECTS

FCP grant projects provided direct services to vulnerable families and children, performed trainings and conducted public awareness campaigns.



## TYPES OF GRANTS



Families for Children Program developed clear mechanisms and procedures of grant competitions:

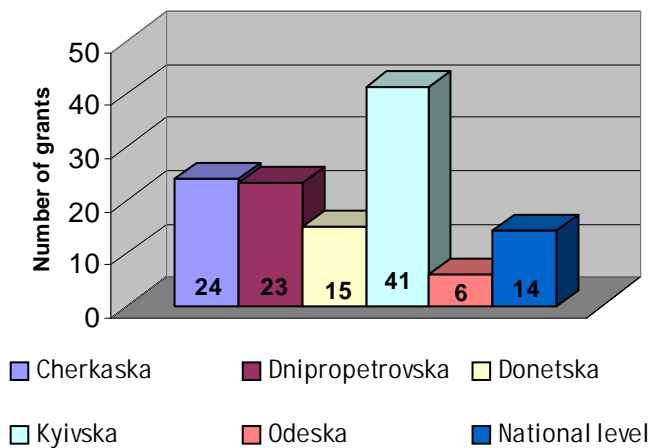
**Open Grant Competition:** all organizations working in the field of child welfare were invited to participate in the 4 open grant competitions.

**4 Special Purpose Grant competitions** were conducted among organizations that have the ability and experiences to implement the projects tasks.

**Quick Start Partnership Grant Competition** is an on-going mechanism that issues unsolicited grants to organizations that require additional funds to implement their projects successfully.

## REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PROJECTS

Implementation of the grant projects was performed in FCP pilot sites as well as nationwide.



## SOURCES OF FINANCE

The grant projects were financed through several sources: general FCP funding (DCOF), USAID HIV/AIDS funding and Holt International additional funds.

