



# HealthProm

Ensuring vulnerable children have the best start in life

Annual Review **2017-18**

# About us

HealthProm strives to ensure that vulnerable children have the best start in life. Established in 1984, our mission is to support children and their families in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Afghanistan and enable them to overcome the barriers of poverty, social exclusion or disability in order to have their rights realised.

## What We Do

We **strengthen families and communities** through engagement of parents and carers and facilitation of peer support, we **increase access to health and social services** by improving the physical accessibility of services and raising awareness of the availability and right to use services, we **promote education for all** by improving professional capacity in inclusive education and reducing stigma, and we **support policy development** through mobilising civil society organisations and advocating for the rights and needs of vulnerable children and their families.

## Where We Work

HealthProm currently works in Afghanistan, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Ukraine. We recently completed work in Kyrgyzstan.

AFGHANISTAN	RUSSIA
BELARUS	TAJIKISTAN
KYRGYZSTAN	UKRAINE
MOLDOVA	

## Our Values

- Commitment to local engagement and partnership;
- Respect for human rights;
- Empowering individuals and communities;
- Commitment to learning, innovation and exchange, and
- Promoting inclusion and equality across sectors.

## The Challenges

HealthProm works to address three key challenges where it operates:

1. Poor maternal and child health (Afghanistan and Central Asia);
2. High levels of child institutionalisation, and
3. Social exclusion of children with disabilities.



# Foreword



One could be forgiven for gaining the impression from international press coverage of relations between Russia and the West over the last year, that constructive cooperation between our countries is on hold. This is not so. As we have done since our creation in 1984, HealthProm continues to promote direct contact between experts, professionals and local organisations in our respective countries with a shared interest in supporting vulnerable children and families.

This report sets out what we have been doing over the last year. We are excited by the progress made in raising awareness of the issues, building capacity to address them and sharing ideas and experience of what works. We are also doing more to develop and use tools to measure changes in child development related to our work. We will take all this forward in the new strategy we agreed at the end of 2017.

The motto of the Sustainable Development Goals is to leave no one behind. This is at the core of HealthProm's work. Yet across the world, vulnerable groups including children with disabilities and children living in institutions remain left behind. This is why HealthProm's work remains so important. A recent Lancet study (2018) has shown that the global burden of developmental disability among young children under the age of five has not changed significantly since 1990. The continued relevance of our core work with vulnerable children and families, particularly those living with disabilities, was also highlighted by the Global Disability Summit held in London in July 2018. HealthProm, along with other international organisations, signed the *Charter for Change* that was created in association with the Summit which outlines renewed global commitment to supporting the rights of individuals with disabilities, particularly those that are most marginalised.

Uncertainties about the UK's future relationship with the EU and a difficult climate for raising funds for our work represent key challenges as we plan ahead. But we are confident that on the evidence of the catalytic role we can play and by building on our partnerships locally and internationally we will find a way forward. We are grateful to all our funders who have supported our work over the last year.

**Simon Ray** • Chair of the Board of HealthProm

# Afghanistan

Over the past year, HealthProm and partners have continued to deliver a comprehensive package of services to improve maternal, newborn and child health in two mountainous districts of Balkh Province, Afghanistan. These include outreach antenatal care and birth planning provided by government midwives, training and supervision of Community Health Workers, village-based Safe Motherhood Groups and Men's Support Groups, and health education in schools. We have also implemented a system for sustainable emergency transport for women in labour, and operate a maternity waiting house so that women and their husbands living in rural villages can be close to a health centre at the time of delivery. Our approach also addresses wider determinants of health through improving nutrition and livelihoods as well as access to clean water.

In early 2018, our Afghan team in Mazar-e-Sharif successfully registered as an independent local NGO by the name of HADSO (Health for All Development and Service Organisation).



## Local Partners

- Health for All Development and Service Organisation (HADSO)
- Bakhtar Development Network
- Balkh Provincial Directorate of Public Health

We deliver a comprehensive package of services to improve maternal, newborn and child health.



## STATES OF GUERNSEY

This work has also been made possible by the generous support of a number of Trusts and Foundations (please see the full list at the end of this report).

# Belarus

Our work in Belarus aims to protect and promote the rights of children with severe disabilities and life-limiting conditions in four regions – Minsk, Mogilev, Gomel and Grodno. Working in partnership with the Belarusian Children’s Hospice, a key component of this work has been the development of a model of community-based advocacy services for families living in these regions. This involves a team of Regional Coordinators and a Legal Adviser that assist parents and carers in understanding their rights to state benefits and services. They provide individual support to families and advocate on their behalf with local authorities and service providers. Over the past year, the project’s Regional Coordinators provided face-to-face consultations with more than three hundred families.



Photo courtesy of HealthProm

Another element of our work is strengthening the organisational capacity of the Belarusian Children’s Hospice itself to enable them to become an even stronger national advocate for children with severe disabilities and life-limiting conditions. Last year, the Hospice collaborated with the government’s Republican Centre of Palliative Care for Children to develop a monitoring system to assess the quality of care provided to seriously ill children living in state institutions. These children are amongst the most vulnerable in Belarusian society, and the monitoring exercise highlighted the significant need for improvement at both national and local levels.

## Local Partner

- Belarusian Children’s Hospice

The project’s Regional Coordinators provided face-to-face consultations to more than three hundred families last year.



Funded by the European Union

## Belarus Story

Milana from Gomel, Belarus has a severe physical disability that limits her growth and mobility. But it has never limited her mind or her creativity. She started talking and singing at a very young age, and then began drawing and making collages from different materials. At only six years old, Milana can read and write proficiently.

Her mother says, “We hoped we could send Milana to an art school but I really feared going there. I didn’t think it would be possible for my child to be in a mainstream school. I thought they would ask me, ‘what are you doing here?’. So for my first meeting with the Director of the school I brought Alena, the Regional Coordinator for Gomel, to help me explain my situation and my daughter’s abilities”. Alena works for HealthProm’s partner organisation, the Belarusian Children’s Hospice, which provides support and advocacy for children with disabilities and their families in several regions of the country.

“The Director of the school wasn’t immediately sure about the situation, and asked a lot of questions about Milana’s health. But she agreed to give it a try and let Milana attend classes at the school”.

From September 2017, Milana started attending one-to-one singing and drawing classes. The school hopes to put her into a mainstream class with other children in the future. The school even mentioned the possibility of developing a class just for children with disabilities in the future, as it acknowledged that there might be other children like Milana living in Gomel who are talented in the arts. Without the vital support provided through our project’s model of community-based advocacy, Milana’s mother may not have been able to advocate for her daughter to attend a mainstream school.

“

I didn’t think it would be possible for my child to be in a mainstream school”



Photo courtesy of the Belarusian Children’s Hospice

# Moldova

HealthProm has been implementing a European Commission funded project in Moldova since 2016. Working in collaboration with Moldovan NGO, Partnerships for Every Child, and UK organisation, Mellow Parenting, the project aims to improve access to pre-school support for children with special needs, and to strengthen cooperation between local authorities and civil society organisations working in this sector. One of HealthProm's key contributions has been the design and delivery of a training programme for professionals focusing on three therapeutic interventions used with children with disabilities: Portage (a home-based educational support approach), the Makaton language programme and Therapeutic Interactive Music Making. The past year saw the continuation and consolidation of this training programme, and the continued capacity development of local professionals. The first ever cohort of Moldovan trainers in Therapeutic Music recently completed their training, and are now able to train other professionals across the five regions where we work.

One of HealthProm's key contributions has been the design and delivery of a training programme for professionals from five regions of Moldova.

In December 2017, HealthProm hosted a group of Moldovan professionals in the UK to receive additional in-depth training in Portage. Participants were able to meet with UK Portage specialists and observe the method in practice in various settings, offering a unique participatory learning experience.



Funded by the European Union

## Local Partner

- Partnerships for Every Child

## UK Partner

- Mellow Parenting



Photos courtesy of HealthProm

# Russia

Our work in Russia promotes the inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education in four regions of Siberia (Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, Altai and Tomsk). We work across sectors, engaging local community groups, parents of disabled children, schools and local Departments of Education to raise awareness and strengthen capacity to improve education opportunities for children with disabilities.

A key part of this project is training staff from local schools in key principles of inclusive education, ranging from how to make educational facilities more accessible to children with special needs, to concrete skills in working with children with various disabilities such as autism, Down's Syndrome and cerebral palsy. Over the past year alone, HealthProm and its local partner implemented eight training courses for school teachers from three of the target regions. Our work also engages with local disability organisations, some of which are parent-led, in order to develop their capacity to better advocate for the rights of children with disabilities and their families.

In addition to professional capacity development, we also continue to support parents of children with disabilities through open seminars and other outreach to raise awareness of educational opportunities that may be available for their children.



Funded by the European Union

British and Foreign School Society

## Local Partner

- Krasnoyarsk Centre for Community Partnerships

Over the past year, HealthProm and its local partner implemented eight training courses for school teachers in several regions of Siberia.



# Tajikistan

Working in partnership with local NGOs and in association with UNICEF, the core objective of our work in Tajikistan is to support the development of safe, community-based social services to reduce the social exclusion and institutionalisation of vulnerable young children.

With funding from the EC, UK Aid and Grand Challenges Canada, and in association with UNICEF, we support the government of Tajikistan to transform traditional Baby Homes from closed institutions into community-oriented Family and Child Support Centres. We also continue to work closely with UNICEF and local authorities to develop and embed safe and nurturing models of alternative family care for institutionalised children such as foster care and kinship care. We work to promote safe and optimal child development in all our activities and provide training to professionals in child protection.

New support from Grand Challenges Canada in 2017 has allowed us to expand into a relatively new area for HealthProm, the measurement of child development outcomes related to our work. A Developmental Psychologist engaged for the project has overseen the design of a series of assessment tools. Data collection began in 2017 and is still underway. We expect this to produce an evidence base to validate our current work as well as direct future initiatives.

In October 2018, HealthProm hosted a visiting delegation from Tajikistan including the First Deputy Ministers of Health and Education, senior officers from the President's Executive Office, local government, UNICEF and delegates from our partner organisations. The study visit took place in Scotland with support from Falkirk Council and provided the opportunity to exchange knowledge and observe UK practice in family support methods, foster care services and child protection.

## Local Partner

- Sarchashma
- Hayot Dar Oila
- Iroda

## UK Partner

- Falkirk Council



With new support, we are now able to measure child development outcomes related to our work.



## Tajikistan Story

Three year-old Mahbuba came to the Marvorid Family Support Centre in Khujand, Tajikistan in July 2017 following a diagnosis of cerebral palsy. The Marvorid Centre was opened by HealthProm and partners from local NGOs and government in 2014. Built on the grounds of an existing orphanage, or Baby Home, the centre provides a range of support services for children and their families.

After an initial assessment, it became clear that Mahbuba had several developmental issues. She was not able to walk without help, did not react to sounds and voices, and could not speak. As a first measure, the staff at Marvorid recommended that Mahbuba have her hearing tested. She was then referred to a speech therapist and physiotherapist at the Marvorid Centre.

The Marvorid Centre provides a range of support services for children and their families.

Following a year of therapy, Mahbuba has made significant progress. She is now able to walk on her own, respond to her name, and pronounce simple words. Her mother says that she is very happy and grateful to the Marvorid staff for helping her daughter to make such progress. The existence of the Marvorid Centre has made assessment and multidisciplinary support services available to children like Mahbuba in Khujand for the first time.



Photo courtesy of Sarchashma

# Ukraine

Our work in Ukraine continues to build the capacity of parents of children with disabilities to engage with policy-makers and advocate for the development of Early Intervention services. Supported by the European Commission, this project works across ten regions of Ukraine and focuses on three areas: 1. Increasing the capacity of parent-led civil society organisations to undertake policy-related advocacy and collaborate in networks, 2. Improving parent engagement in the development of data to support the case for Early Intervention services, and 3. Strengthening the representation of parents of children with disabilities in public media.

A key platform that underlies this work with parent-led civil society organisations is the All-Ukrainian Parents Forum for Early Intervention (AUPFEI). Formed in 2015 by HealthProm and partners, the AUPFEI is now recognised as a national body in Ukraine.

Additional funding from UNICEF and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office further enables the engagement of parent advocates by supporting their participation in high profile national events such as the EURLYAID conference on Early Intervention, which took place in Kharkiv in October 2018.

**“**I was categorically against keeping the baby, so we signed an official document to give up our daughter to the state. That was a very dark time in my life. To live knowing your child will be brought up by the state, and that no-one would kiss her, not on her little heels, or her little cheeks. But then we listened to our hearts, and took our baby back, the very day before she was due to be transferred to the baby house. And once we had done that, we heard about the Early Intervention Centre. That was over seventeen years ago. The Early Intervention Centre made me realise that I am very strong!

Parent of a child with a disability, sharing her story at the EURLYAID conference on Early Intervention, Ukraine, October 2018

## Local Partners

- Charity Fund Early Intervention Institute, Kharkiv
- National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine

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Our advocacy forum for parent-led civil society organisations, the All-Ukrainian Parents Forum for Early Intervention, is now recognised as a national body in Ukraine.  
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Funded by the European Union



# Key Achievements

**1,090** families with children requiring palliative care received support consultations in Belarus.

**241** teachers and social workers in Siberia took part in training to develop their skills in inclusive education.

**1,363** pregnant women living in remote villages of northern Afghanistan received basic antenatal care.

Parent advocates in **Ukraine** participated for the first time in a meeting of the National Early Intervention Policy Platform, attended by high-level government representatives and stakeholders.

In **Tajikistan**, HealthProm became part of a cross-Ministry Working Group providing support for the implementation of new foster care legislation.



# Your support

We are grateful to our generous supporters who have donated their time and money towards our work to ensure that vulnerable children have the best start in life. We couldn't do this without you.

We also wish to thank all our volunteers and interns for their hard work and commitment.



## Regular donations

Regular giving provides essential support to the running of our projects. You can set up a regular donation on our website [www.healthprom.org](http://www.healthprom.org). Any contribution, no matter how small, helps to support our work with vulnerable children.

## Fundraise for us

Check our website and social media for news about regular fundraising events. From sports challenges to concerts, there are fantastic ways that you can help raise vital funds for our work.

## Corporate involvement

We are always looking for companies to engage with our work. If your company is interested in nominating us as a charity of the year or sponsoring our events, please get in touch.

## Legacies

Bequests can provide essential funding for HealthProm to continue its work in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Afghanistan. To find out more about how your legacy could help, please contact us.

## Contact us

HealthProm, 200A Pentonville Road, London N1 9JP, United Kingdom

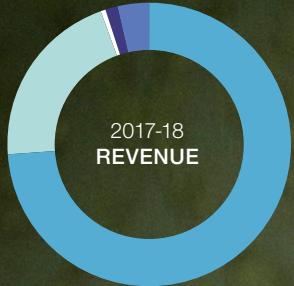
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# Financial summary



- Statutory £699,037
- Trusts & Foundations £194,434
- Events £6,195
- Individuals £13,874
- Others £32,160



- International activities £871,159
- Operational programme support costs £29,216
- Cost of generating funds £8,010



# Thank you

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our funding partners.  
We would like to thank the following donors:



A partnership of:



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