



## **Keystone Human Services International**

### **Charles J. Hooker, III – Chief Executive Officer**

#### **Overview**

Keystone Human Services International works globally to provide services and create political, social and economic change that supports people with disabilities to be valued, fully participating and contributing members of their society.

Our global commitment centers on Keystone's strategic intent to "Advance the Human Spirit" of children and their families by fostering strong, community-based, comprehensive human service systems throughout Moldova, Russia, and beyond. By transcending physical borders and empowering ourselves as well as other providers, we come that much closer to creating a safer world.

#### **Accomplishments**

##### *Republic of Moldova*

#### **Keystone Human Services International Moldova Association (Keystone Moldova)**

Ludmila Malcoci, PhD – Executive Director

#### **Community for All– Moldova**

Keystone Human Services International; the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family; Open Society Mental Health Initiative; and Soros Foundation – Moldova; have united to create a Community for All. With funding from the Open Society Mental Health Initiative, Keystone is helping to transform the system of care for individuals with disabilities from an institution-based system to a network of community-based services and supports.

Over the next several years, the men and boys at the Orhei institution will move to living arrangements within the community, reuniting with their families, joining foster families, or moving into shared living, community homes or supported living arrangements. These community-based alternatives to institutionalization will support not only the men and boys from the institution, but also children (girls and boys) and adults at risk of institutionalization, providing opportunities for all people to remain in the community.

The C4A-Moldova Program is active in 28 out of 35 rayons in the Republic of Moldova. To date, the Program has delivered services to 2,206 persons, including 1,114 children and adults with disabilities and 1,092 parents of children and adults with disabilities. In addition, through the Equal Access to Education grant from Open Society Foundations-London, 87 children so far have received inclusive education support in 10 additional pilot schools, 120 children are served by the Playground Room and 25 additional children are assisted by Mobile Teams throughout Moldova.

Sixty-eight individuals have been moved from Orhei institution so far. From the total number of the children and men that have left the Orhei institution, forty-two have been reunited with their families; fourteen individuals are now living in Community Homes ; and twelve individuals are supported in various other community living services. The Program has created sixty-three family-based services and twenty-two community based services to support the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. It has also contributed to the creation of 159 new jobs in Moldova.

C4A-MD has also contributed to the legal framework development for the regulation of newly created services. With C4A-MD support, the following has been achieved: Strategy for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities; the Regulations and Standards for Community Homes Services, Supported Living Services, and Mobile Team Services; and the Methodology of Implementation of Inclusive Education in Schools.

### **Children and Family Centers**

Keystone Moldova operates two Children and Family Centers based on Keystone's successful Head Start Center model, with program integration to address the specific needs of each community where these Centers are established.

Located in the village of Tudora, KHSIMA's first program was designated "The Unity Center" (*Unitate*) by the children who are supported there. This Center serves an average of 23 children annually, whose circumstances indicate an environment of extreme risk, particularly due to poverty, alcoholism, and being left behind when parents leave to find work in other countries. For many children, the hot meal they receive at the Center is their only meal of the day. Satisfaction of local families and community leadership has so increased the demand for services that a larger facility is being developed.

The "Vis" (Dream) Children & Family Center opened its doors in the town of Bacioi, a suburb of the Capital of Chisinau. This program also focuses on the community's most vulnerable children. Thirty-five (35) children and their families are served annually. Participants learn life skills, nutrition, cooking and hygiene, in addition to English, music, and art classes. They have educational opportunities, gain self-esteem, and most importantly, have fun. Students also experience a nurturing environment, which is heated and well-lit. This Center is a place where they can access a computer, have a hot meal, complete their homework, build friendships, and engage in after-school activities.

Apart from the daily services for children, the Centers provide weekly activities for teenagers who have graduated from the children's programs. The Centers also provide psychological support activities for parents. A highly qualified psychologist conducts meetings with the parents of the children. The psychologist has group and individual sessions helping parents realize their problems and providing solutions for them.

### **Equal Access to Education**

The "Equal Access to Education" (EAE) project was begun by Keystone Moldova to advance school inclusion for children with intellectual and other mental disabilities. This project is supported by a grant from the Early Childhood Program of the Open Society Foundations and is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, a number of Moldovan Local Public Authorities, and NGO Step by Step in Moldova. The promotion of inclusive education, especially from an early age, will help accomplish the commitments assumed by ratifying the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) to create a legal environment, practical support and social inclusion for people with disabilities, as well as to create equal opportunities for all people within the community. The educational inclusion of children with disabilities is a new approach and experience for the Republic of Moldova. In support of this direction, Keystone's EAE program has logged notable progress in its aim to increase equal access to education for all children. Project activities are centered around the promotion of inclusive education the local level; training and capacity building of education/pedagogical staff and of local public administration representatives in the implementation of inclusive education and Individualized Education Plans; development of a friendly/accepting/open-minded school environment for children with mental disabilities; and the development of both standards and regulations for inclusive schools and their promotion at the national level.

Through the EAE, Keystone has been piloting inclusive education in 15 community schools from 12 different rayons/regions. In 2012, the implementation of inclusive education was extended to seven additional schools for a total of 22 pilot schools from 15 rayons. Multidisciplinary teams have been established within each of these pilot schools and trained to manage and support the inclusive education

process. Each multidisciplinary team is comprised of the school director, psychologist, support teacher, coordinator of the Resources Center for Inclusive Education (if a Center exists at the school), school teacher, school nurse, speech therapist, and community social worker. As of the end of the school year in 2012, 146 children were supported in their local schools through the EAE project. There were 24 children with intellectual disabilities included in their local kindergartens within the Community For All – Moldova (C4A-MD) Program overall.

Keystone Moldova has also supported the development of Resource Centers for Inclusive Education in five different communities. As of June 30, 2012, 169 people had benefited from services delivered by the Resource Centers, including 64 children with disabilities/special education needs and 105 of their schoolmates. Keystone Moldova recently put out an RFP for the creation of additional Inclusive Education Resource Centers. Eight schools have been selected for this next phase of the project. EAE direct beneficiaries are not only children deinstitutionalized / prevented from institutionalization under the C4A-MD Program, but also other children with special educational needs from the communities, their peers, parents, school teachers and administration, and the Local Public Authorities.

### ***Russian Federation***

#### **Keystone Foundation for Social Assistance to Children and Families**

Maria Dolbunova – General Director

Keystone Foundation for Children and Families (KFCF) is Keystone Human Services International's avenue for services in Russia. Established in 2006 as a registered NGO in the Russian Federation, KFCF promotes initiatives to further the independence of people who are in need of services and supports due to disabling conditions, situations of poverty, abandonment, institutionalization and other adverse societal conditions throughout Russia. KFCF focuses on support for children with disabilities and their families, as well as thousands of children who languish in orphanages. Advocacy efforts highlight the importance of keeping children in the community and providing families with the necessary supports to promote a secure and meaningful life.

The Foundation also provides intensive leadership and technical training opportunities on a variety of topics, not only to its own employees, but to other emerging human service providers throughout Russia. With our person-centered philosophy of support, Keystone understands the essential nature of making long-term commitments to services. We believe that families and individuals deserve to know that their fragile circumstances will be supported competently and reliability, even if that means for a lifetime. As such, KHSI is committed to a long-term presence where we have initiated programs and services.

#### **Equal Access to Education for Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Moscow**

An extensive two-year initiative was developed for a model inclusive preschool program for children with intellectual disabilities in Moscow. The project was comprised of two phases. The first phase, funded by Johnson & Johnson, was to conduct expert assessment of the need, and analysis of the situation, regarding education opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities in Moscow; and to develop a strategy of implementation for a sustainable inclusive preschool program. The second phase is the long-range program to be built with an emphasis on sustainability and a focus on replicability and scalability, so that the model may benefit other regions of the Russian Federation. And it will address the core social and economic issues of the citizens of Russia.

In partnership with the Institute on the Problems of Inclusive Education (IPIE) - Moscow City Resource Center for Testing and Implementing Inclusive Practices, and Keystone Foundation for Children and Families, a Memorandum of Understanding was developed for a joint project on implementing innovative practices of support and social integration of children with disabilities.

The joint project focused on conducting capacity building seminars with Moscow Inclusive Education professionals and with the returning Open World delegates who had participated in Keystone's professional training program through the Open World Leadership Center, a program sponsored by the U.S. Library of Congress, which brings emerging international leaders to the United States for short-term professional trips.

The project evolved into the International Conference “One World For All” held in Khabarovsk Krai. The conference focused on:

- Education Social Role Valorization and Person Centered Planning workshops for large groups of specialists and family members from various geographic areas on the basis of *Moscow City University of Psychology and Education (MCUPE)*;
- Implementation of new knowledge on the bases of centers of medical-social-support, NGOs, parent’s associations, etc. , and topic oriented workshops for smaller teams (e.g. integration of children with Autism and intellectual disorders, physical therapy, case management, etc.) depending on specific needs and focus of the children and family served by the organization;
- Analysis and replication of practices / methods in other areas / regions with support of experts from IPIE and MCUPE;
- Concluding conference devoted to the discussion of the process and results of implementation of Keystone’s experience in Russia.

The achievement was the presentation of a form of an interaction model of the State, commercial and non-commercial sectors in improving the quality of life of people with special needs in Russia through the participation in the work of the Interagency Coordination Council of experts and the NGO’s, deal with the problems of people with disabilities, including autism and severe multiple disorders in Russia.

### **Support of Psychologists in Beslan**

The Project of Psychological Support in Beslan continues, with the staff monitoring data on those being served, as well as the outcomes of the program. Inclusive methods are now being used in the work of Beslan psychologists: children and youth with disabilities are now participating in small group work.

### ***Other Initiatives***

#### **Open World Leadership Center - Russia Civic Hosting Program**

The Open World Program was enables emerging Russian leaders to gain firsthand exposure to the American system of democracy through visits to local governments and communities in the United States. The principles of accountability, transparency, and citizen involvement in government are among the concepts emphasized. In February, 2012, a delegation of twelve professionals were hosted and focused on social issues/social services. Training activities for this program include visits to health care facilities, schools, homeless shelters, social service agencies, and NGOs focusing on the community’s health, safety, and well-being. Delegations examine issues surrounding child welfare, elder care, disability rights, special education, and the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases and other medical conditions prevalent in Russia.

#### **Clinton Global Initiative/Keystone Global Partners**

As a returning member of the Clinton Global Initiative, Dennis Felty’s efforts have lead to a formal *Commitment for Action* in support of the Initiative’s Global Health priority. This Commitment centers on the Keystone Global Partners (KGP) program. The KGP model is built on years of Keystone Human Services’ work empowering community leaders and professionals through our International Practical Training Program and International Professional Exchanges. Global education initiatives and professional development partnerships are some of the most effective means to share and distribute resources, and to build the strongest possible systems of care for children and adults with disabilities throughout the world. KGP aims to apply the strengths of America’s private nonprofit sector to help build the capacity of emerging non-government organizations (NGOs) in countries that are just beginning to develop their human service systems in the areas of autism, education, health care, intellectual disability, mental illness, and physical disability. The ultimate goal of the program is to advance systems of care – coordinated networks of services and supports – for people with disabilities around the globe.

#### **International Federation of Educative Communities (FICE)**

FICE, an international organization developing systems of care throughout the world, has re-established FICE-United States, with Dennis Felty serving as President. The major focus of FICE-USA is to organize

sponsoring partnerships, and develop a structure to partner with other international sponsors, and promote the growth of activities with FICE-South Africa. FICE-USA helps to assist sponsoring organizations connect with others around the world without the tremendous process of donations of money and assistance. FICE-USA will invite like-minded individuals and organizations providing supports and services to children and families throughout United States to join together as members, and will work to encourage the creation of supportive networks of members, organizing seminars, conferences, educational trips and professional training in support of member organizations through information sharing and dissemination critical to the global community and vulnerable children.

#### InterAction

Keystone is proud to be a member of InterAction, the largest alliance of U.S.-based international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focused on the world's poor and most vulnerable people. Its more than 190 member organizations operate in every developing country, working with local communities to overcome poverty and suffering to improve quality of life. InterAction recognizes that our global challenges are interconnected and that we can't tackle any of them without addressing all of them. Leveraging our shared expertise, on-the-ground insights from 190+ member organizations and strategic analyses of the foreign aid budget, they are focused on a bold, new agenda to end global poverty and deliver humanitarian aid in every developing country.