Focus 8: Gatekeeping: Developing procedures to screen referrals, assess need and authorise placement

Promising Practice 8.2: Gatekeeping systems in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has developed gatekeeping systems to keep the number of children in state care at a minimum level. By developing a filter system in each region and at each point of entry into and exit out of the system, United Aid for Azerbaijan has developed a gatekeeping system in Guba and based this system on a number of components of entry/exit mechanisms. First, there is an agency coordinating the assessment of children’s situations, considering possible alternatives to institutional placement and referring to appropriate service providers. In Guba this is provided by the Internat (institution) in the absence of any governmental coordination at this stage, which although may not be viewed as ideal, means that a gatekeeping policy has been introduced. Second, a range of services have been developed in the community to provide help and support to children and their families. In addition, decision-making is based on assessment and review of children’s needs and family circumstances through the development of a Child Protection Council, which reviews care plans and ensures each child’s needs are being met as well as highlighting the needs of families whose children are at risk of institutionalisation. Finally, there has been the development of a simple information system which keeps track of all children that enter and exit state care. This provides the necessary information for performance indicators which are useful for assessing the role of social workers, the changing function of an institution and the efficacy of each service within a community.

Experience in Guba has shown that it is possible to develop gatekeeping mechanisms in accordance with international standards of social work practice. The gatekeeping system has made it possible to prevent some children from being placed in institutions. However, it is recommended that local reforms need national commitment from government to succeed and gatekeeping mechanisms must be adapted to local and regional needs.

For more information see: Trialing Gate-Keeping Systems in Azerbaijan
http://www.crin.org/docs/Gatekeeping%20UAFA.pdf