

## SUMMARY OF A COMPLETED PROJECT

Grant proceedings: Support of foster family care development in the Czech Republic  
Organisation: Sdružení pěstounských rodin (Foster Families Association)  
Project name: Assisted contact  
Duration of project: January 2010 – March 2011  
Size of grant: 279 070 CZK

### Aims and results achieved:

#### 1. To inform social and legal child protection institutions and foster families about the issue and needs of children in foster family care

Information about the Assisted Contact service was provided to both social and legal child protection institutions and also foster families (articles in the Foster Family Care Handbook, at various events - 8 foster family days, the International Conference of Visegrad Countries, the distribution of promotional materials, etc.).

#### 2. Cooperation from social and legal child protection institutions in the overall development of a child's development

Promotion of the idea also among non-profit organisations and social and legal child protection institutions, their involvement in promotion. As well as sending out promotional materials face-to-face meetings were also held (108 contacts), a specialist discussion was held on the subject of children who are growing up in foster family care meeting their original family and finding how foster parents support the child's need to know about its origins and whether they have contact with their original family. The cooperation that has been formed has been maintained through repeated contact and ascertaining foster families' need to use the service (231 contacts).

#### 3. Follow-up and functioning contact between 5 children or sibling groups with their biological families

*Problem in realising the project:* A lack of users to fulfil the aim of the service, contact made within 1 family.

*Solution realised:* Intensive cooperation formed with non-profit organisations and their experience in contact between children in foster family care and their biological families acquired.

In total there were 14 cases where a child growing up in foster family care had contact with its original family. These cases were analysed in detail with the aid of a qualitative strategy and compared according to the categories created.

#### 4. Individual plan for the development of contact for particular families

An individual plan was created for a child using the Assisted Contact service. The procedure for creating it is described in the supplement to the Assisted Contact Manual.

#### 5. Methodology and sources for developing this type of service

Compilation of an Assisted Contact Manual on the basis of ongoing assisted contact, professional discussions about existing legislation, information obtained from social and legal child protection institutions, discussion of the issue with professionals at workshops and the experience of other professionals, specialist publications. Intensive cooperation with certain non-profit organisations, qualitative research derived from case reports.

### **Overall assessment of the project by the Organisation:**

It was discovered that foster parents have insufficient knowledge about this issue but during the implementation of the project it was possible to repeatedly draw attention to the fact that this is a current and often unresolved problem which when a child becomes older can endanger not only the development of the child's identity but also the stability of the foster family.

During the project there was an increase in the interest shown by foster parents in information about this issue. Information became more available and foster families were able to discuss this subject openly with professionals. However, the prevailing atmosphere in society and also among foster families is still not particularly well-disposed towards children growing up in foster family care having contact and therefore more attention needs to be paid to this subject and the idea needs to be promoted more.

Foster parents also believe that there are insufficient mechanisms to help them prevent children from being traumatised by having contact with their biological families (courts often do not take into consideration the expert reports concerning children and favour the parent's right over the child's right). Therefore foster families need to be given support in asserting the child's interest when considering whether it is suitable for the child to have contact and considering carefully a suitable form of contact and other important conditions.