

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT**

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Transnational Project with the Republic of Moldova
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: October 7, 1997	
REPORT AUTHOR: Alexis Jay	
REF:	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Social Work Committee of an application to the Ecos-Ouverture programme for funding to support the development of child care services in the Republic of Moldova.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Moldova declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. It is a republic of approximately 4.5million people, and has borders with the Ukraine and with Romania.
- 2.2 Between 1995 and December 1996, the MOLSERV Project, funded by the European Union Ecos Ouverture Programme, undertook an urgent review of the systems for child care in Moldova. The principal partners in this project were the European Children's Trust, Piemonte Region (Italy), Strathclyde Regional Council, Bacau County Council (Romania) and Moldova.
- 2.3 North Lanarkshire Council inherited the responsibility for this project from the previous authority, and consolidated links with Moldova through the funding of a study tour which took place in April of this year. Senior members and officers of the key municipalities in Moldova visited Council provision for vulnerable children and studied the systems, methods and structure surrounding North Lanarkshire's services.
- 2.4 As a direct consequence, the capital city of Chisinau has opted to take forward a decentralised model of public administration, and has created a unified model of children's services.

3. CORE SECTION

3.1 The European Children's Trust, is a highly respected charitable organisation with a proven track record in technical assistance and aid to emerging Eastern European democracies, particularly in Romania. They approached North Lanarkshire Council earlier this year with a proposal to extend the work begun under the MOLSERV project, with a number of other partners, to formulate a major project bid under the Ecos-Ouverture programme. This programme promotes inter-regional co-operation with areas outside the European Union, and funds projects up to a maximum of ECU600,000 - approximately £428000.

3.2 Following detailed discussion with the European Children's Trust and contact with senior personnel of the municipality of Chisinau, a funding proposal has been submitted to the Ecos-Ouverture programme, with the undernoted partners :

- ◆ North Lanarkshire Council
- ◆ Piemonte Region
- ◆ Highland Council
- ◆ Bacau County Council
- ◆ The European Children's Trust
- ◆ Moldovan Municipalities of Cricova, Chisinau and Tiraspol

It is proposed that North Lanarkshire Council holds the status of Lead Partner.

3.3 The principal objective of the project is to provide the necessary technical assistance to make the newly created Children's Department a practical reality in the capital of Chisinau, and to develop similar models within two other neighbouring areas.

It is further intended to use inter-regional co-operation to promote transferable methods of public administration. This will encompass the main components of local government infrastructure, including the creation of administrative, financial and monitoring systems, as well as the development of appropriate child protection and family support procedures and practices. It is envisaged that some assistance could take the form of 'short-burst' input from public administration and child care experts from North Lanarkshire and the other partners, which would be supported from the total project funding. Other inter-regional activities could include study tours and joint training.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The total project value is £545000, with the split of costs between the seven partners and the European Union being 25% / 75%, equalling £136000/£409000.

The proposed contribution from North Lanarkshire Council is £30000 in total , spread over three financial years, with the likely phasing being 1998/99 - £7500, 1999/2000-£15000 and 2000-2001 - £7500. It is anticipated that these costs will be met from within the existing Social Work budget.

The outcome of proposals submitted to Ecos-Ouverture will not be known until March or April 1998.

5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

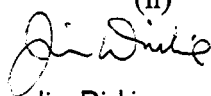
- 5.1 The award of funding from the Ecos-Ouverture programme is subject to standard conditions of grant. North Lanarkshire Council already has experience of participation in this programme through the supervision of the grant award to the MOLSERV project.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Social work services in Moldova have greatly benefited from both the previous project inherited by North Lanarkshire Council, and from the study visit to the area undertaken earlier this year. The members and officers involved in the study group have subsequently reshaped their child care services, drawing heavily on the models they observed in North Lanarkshire, and particularly on the decentralised social work structure.
- 6.2 Through the offices of the European Children's Trust, a major proposal has been developed for infrastructure support to the new departments, with previous and new partners being approached to participate in this proposal
- 6.3 Such participation clearly has major advantages for the beneficiary partners in Moldova where progress towards state systems of protection of vulnerable children and reform of local public administration can be greatly accelerated.
- 6.4 Participation in the proposal also affords North Lanarkshire Council the opportunity to play its full part in European affairs , by assisting one of the New Independent States in the extremely difficult transition to local democracy and responsible local government.

Committee is asked to:

- (i) note that:
- [a] the Director of Social Work has reached agreement on the project submission with the partner agencies listed in paragraph 3.2
 - [b] the project has been submitted to the Ecos-Ouverture Programme
 - [c] it will be advised of the outcome of the submission ; and
- (ii) remit the matter to Policy and Resources Committee for its interest.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work

18 September 1997

further information on this report please contact Alexis Jay, Head of Social Work Services. (TEL: 01698 332001)