

Institution: University of Central Lancashire
Unit of Assessment: 22
Title of case study: Services for Children in Out-of-Home Care
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study describes the impact of research on new approaches to the organisation and delivery of social work services for children in out-of-home care, with international work led by Bilson and work in England involving Stanley, Bilson, Larkins and Ridley. The national evaluation of Social Work Practices has had significant impact on the development of this model of service delivery, and is shaping the long-term future of independent social work organisations in England. The international work has contributed to reducing the use of institutional care for children in developing countries and has provided tools for developing social services.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Since 2003 Bilson has undertaken research and consultancy with UCLan colleagues, building on his earlier research for UNICEF and the World Bank. This work addresses gatekeeping and quality control and has provided toolkits which have been used by governments and NGOs for reducing numbers of children in large state run institutions that were the legacy of the Soviet Union. Research [1,2,3] included: evaluation of the PIAD project in Georgia for World Vision, pilots in Philippines, Romania and Kazakhstan of a methodology for data collection on UNICEF's international indicators for children in state care and children in conflict with the law; producing an advocacy document on institutional care in Sri Lanka [1]; evaluation of EveryChild's TACIS project in Moldova [1]; evaluation of EveryChild's regional country programme strategies 2004–2007 in Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova Russia and Ukraine; piloting a research tool for service planning in Tajikistan; and a review of progress in developing gatekeeping mechanisms for UNICEF CEE/CIS region with research in Bulgaria, Ukraine and Kazakhstan [2]. In 2012, Bilson and Westwood undertook a literature review of social work for children without parental care in resource constrained settings for EveryChild [3]. An action research toolkit designed by Bilson for developing social work in middle and low income countries is being trialled in Brazil, Bulgaria and Indonesia. Bilson has also carried out a review of social work in Uganda leading to a Government plan for developing social care.</p> <p>Bilson, Ridley and Larkins were members of the team led by Stanley that, in partnership with researchers from King's College London and Institute of Education, undertook the evaluation of Social Work Practice (SWP) pilots [4] for the Department for Education. The evaluation was underpinned by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 which required that the pilots be evaluated and made provision for the roll-out of SWPs subject to the evaluation findings. The study used a matched control design with integral process evaluation and identified the strengths and challenges of the SWP model as implemented. While some pilots were found to provide user-friendly services and examples of positive practice, the pilots failed to consistently achieve continuity for looked after children, and did not out-perform comparison sites on all outcomes. The evaluation reported that the SWPs remained dependent on local authorities for a range of services and concluded that SWPs were unlikely to replace the functions of local authority children's services. The evaluation findings have been disseminated through a series of peer reviewed papers [5, 6] and through national and international presentations to practitioner, policy and research audiences hosted by organisations such as Making Research Count, BAAF and Social Services Research Group. The study received coverage in the professional and national press and in the influential Munro Report (2011) and the reach of the research has been extended by invited lectures at the University of Melbourne and Griffith University.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Key Research Outputs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bilson A. and Cox P. (2007) "Caring about Poverty: Alternatives to institutional care for children in poverty" <i>Childhood Poverty</i> Vol. 13, No 1 pp. 37-55 2. Bilson A. (2010) <i>The Development of Gate-Keeping functions in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS: Lessons from Bulgaria, Kazakhstan and Ukraine</i>. UNICEF, Geneva

<http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/gatekeeping>

3. Bilson A. and Westwood J.L. (2012) *Making Social Work Work: Improving social work for vulnerable families and children without parental care around the world: A literature review*. EveryChild, London <http://www.everychild.org.uk/docs/MakingSocialWorkWork.pdf>
4. Stanley, N., Austerberry, H., Bilson, A., Farrelly, N., Hargreaves, K., Hollingworth, K., Hussein, S., Ingold, A., Larkins, C., Manthorpe, J., Ridley, J. and Strange, V. (2012) *Social Work Practices: Report of the National Evaluation*. London: DfE. <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR233>
5. Stanley, N. Austerberry, H., Bilson, A., Farrelly, N., Hargreaves, K., Hussein, S., Ingold, A., Manthorpe, J. Ridley, J. and Strange, V. (2012) *Establishing Social Work Practices in England: The Early Evidence*. *British Journal of Social Work*, doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcs101
6. Stanley, N. Austerberry, H., Bilson, A., Farrelly, N., Hussein, S., Manthorpe, J. and Ridley, J. (2013) Turning away from the Public Sector in Children's Out-of-Home Care: an English Experiment. *Child and Youth Services Review*, 35, 1, 33-39.

Research Projects:

Lead: Bilson

2004 World Vision - Evaluation of the PIAD project in Georgia [Awarded to A Bilson; grant title: Evaluation of PIAD Georgia; Sponsor World Vision; Period of grant January 2004 to March 2004; Value of the grant: £2,734 not including travel and subsistence]

2004 – 5 UNICEF – Development of International Indicators and methodology for data collection in the fields of children in state care and children in conflict with the law. (\$90,000) Includes pilots in Philippines, Romania and Kazakhstan (travel paid directly by UNICEF) [Awarded to A Bilson; grant title: Unicef Performance Indicators; Sponsor UNICEF; Period of grant October 2004 to June 2005; Value of the grant: \$90,000 not including travel and subsistence]

2005 Save the Children Sri Lanka – Produced advocacy document on children's rights and institutional care (see outputs 3 and 4) (with Pat Cox, UCLan) [Awarded to A Bilson; grant title: The Status of the Rights & Protection of Children in Institutions in Sri Lanka; sponsor: Save the Children; Period of grant: 22nd July 2005 to 5th August 2005; Value: £2750.00]

2007 EveryChild – evaluation of EESCCA region country programme strategies 2004 – 2007 in Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine (with team including Pat Cox, UCLan) [Awarded to A Bilson; grant title: EveryChild EESCCA Programme Evaluation; sponsor: EveryChild; Period of grant 1ST NOVEMBER 2006 TO 31ST MAY 2007; Value: £17575 not including travel and subsistence]

2009-10 UNICEF CEE/CIS - Knowledge-building Support to the Child Care System Reform in CEE-CIS. Study on gate-keeping functions in three countries [Awarded to A Bilson; grant title: UNICEF CEE/CIS - Knowledge-Building Support to the Child Care System Reform in CEE-CIS; Sponsor UNICEF; Period of grant 2009-2010; Value of the grant: \$30,150 not including travel and subsistence]

Lead: Stanley

2009-12 DCFS/DfE (£820,000) - Evaluation of Social Work Practices (with Bilson, Ridley and Larkins, UCLan, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education and Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King's College London).

The commission to evaluate SWPs was awarded through competitive tender.

All journal papers and the reports commissioned by EveryChild and the Department for Education were peer reviewed.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Bilson's international research focusses on developing social work and gatekeeping (alternative services and better decision making) for children in or at risk of entering institutional care and his research substantially informs UNICEF analysis [E]. Bilson and UCLan colleagues (Buffin, Cox,

Westwood, Roy and Young) have provided advice and research for government and NGOs in 13 countries and senior government representatives (often at ministerial or deputy ministerial level) have been involved in all these projects. In several countries this has influenced national policy, led to new community-based services and helped to reduce the number of children placed in institutions.

Specific examples of changes that can be attributed, at least in part, to research and consultancy on gatekeeping include the development of national and regional community services and gatekeeping systems in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Sri Lanka and Ukraine. See EveryChild's evidence to the Committee on the Rights of the Child's Day of General Discussion in 2007 outlining developments in services and gatekeeping based on Bilson's model in Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine (all countries where Bilson led research or consultancy) [A, B, C, E, Contacts 1 to 3].

For example, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Social Welfare in Sri Lanka accepted the recommendations of Bilson and Cox's advocacy document and outlined plans to "reach an agreement consensually on these best practices to ensure uniformity in practice." [B, 1] The government of Sri Lanka made changes in their approach to children in need of care with the Ministry for Women and Children as well as the Ministry of Justice, which introduced diversion programs for child offenders following advocacy by Save the Children using Bilson and Cox's report with other evidence.

Bilson's 2010 report for UNICEF influenced the Bulgarian government's strategy to close all its large institutions. Bilson's recommendation to OAK Foundation led to a grant of \$500,000 to establish the Know How Centre on Alternatives to Care for Children at the New Bulgarian University which supports the government's implementation of deinstitutionalisation and disseminates good practice. He continues as international consultant having co-led a team evaluating the early institutional closures to identify good practice, using the toolkit developed from Bilson and Westwood's literature review. Bilson is leading one section of the Centre's €900,000 project to establish and evaluate models for preventative services in two Roma communities [Contact 1].

Examples of the reach of this research include Bilson's current work helping the Ugandan government develop a vision for social care [Contact 2] and in Lithuania where, following national newspaper coverage of his key speech at Kaunas university, Bilson made a presentation in Parliament (broadcast on the internet with extracts on national television) to the Minister of Justice and other government and presidential advisers. This stimulated wide public debate on institutionalisation. Bilson also supported Gelbėkit Vaikus (Save the Children) in establishing the first pilot projects to implement gatekeeping entry to institutions in 15 municipalities. The government has made a commitment to close all its large institutions, and Bilson continues to support this, including giving a presentation to the deputy minister and advisory team responsible on 5/8/2013 [Contact 3].

The Evaluation of Social Work Practices has achieved significance and reach of impact in determining both the form and shape of the 'second wave' of SWPs in children's and adults services and the long-term future of this model. Senior DfE officers noted that the Evaluation contributed to Government policy on SWPs and to cabinet policy on mutuals, the 'right to challenge' and 'right to provide'. The evaluation identified the weaknesses of the SWP model and provided messages for future contracting out of children's services. These officers noted that the evaluation highlighted the central role of local authorities in supporting SWPs and found that most SWPs never achieved full independence. As a consequence of the Evaluation, future government policy was described as more likely to focus on contracting out rather than 'spinning off' children's services [Contact 4]. The DfE consultation [F] on the future of SWPs cited the 'mixed findings' of the evaluation and proposed arrangements offering local authorities flexibility to delegate social care functions to SWP providers should they choose to do so. At the time of writing, Government is developing regulations to permit this and the evaluation has been cited in both the Government consultation on these regulations and in UNISON's response to it. The optional nature of these proposals contrasts significantly with government plans for the probation service which is being substantially privatised; this reflects the significant impact of UCLan's evaluation.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

A. Holiček R.A.M., Severinsson A.N. and Reichenberg, D. (2007) *Child Care System Reform In South East Europe: A Sub-Regional Analysis Based On Country Assessments In Albania, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Serbia*. UNICEF CEE/CIS, Geneva; available from http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/SEE_CC_multicountry.pdf accessed on 15/10/2013

B. Soysa W. H. W. (2005) "Note from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Social Welfare" in A. Bilson and P. Cox, *Home Truths: Children's Rights in Institutional Care in Sri Lanka*. Save the Children in Sri Lanka and email from Dharshini Seneviratne 06/02/2013.

C. EveryChild (2007) Written Contribution for Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion
<http://www.crin.org/docs/UN%20Discussion%20Day%202007%20submission%20from%20EveryChild%5B1%5D.pdf>

D. Bilson A., Nyeko J., Baskott J, and Rayment C. (2013) *Developing social care and support services in Uganda*. Oxford Policy Management, Oxford.

E. UNICEF (2013) *Children Under the Age of Three in Formal Care in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: A Rights-Based Regional Situational Analysis* UNICEF, Geneva
http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/UNICEF_Report_Children_Under_3_2013_amended_January_2013_Web.pdf

F. Department for Education (2013) *Consultation on Changes to the Delegation and Inspection of Functions for Looked After Children and Care Leavers*. London: DfE.

Contact 1: Galina Markova, Director, Know How Centre on Alternatives to Care for Children, New Bulgarian University

Contact 2: Joanna Baskott, Social Care Services Portfolio – Lead, Oxford Policy Management and former Regional Head at EveryChild

Contact 3: Rasa Dičpetrienė General Manager Save the Children Lithuania

Contact 4: Rosanna King, former Head of Joint Social Work Unit, DfE.