

Ukraine: Inna's Story



“I do not want Dasha to be ashamed of her mother. I want her to hold tight to my hand and feel proud that she has a mother who loves and protects her little girl.” Inna.

Life had been very difficult for Inna, her father had left when she was a baby and her mother had found it difficult to cope. Their living conditions were extremely poor and when Inna discovered she was pregnant, it put intolerable pressure on her relationship with her mother. At 17, Inna found herself alone, unable to care for her newborn daughter, and was referred to our Mother and Baby Unit in Kherson.

At the Unit it was clear that Inna was a wonderful mother to Dasha, but she was lonely and depressed. She continually wrote to her mother, but received no reply. We helped Inna to accept that their relationship could not be reconciled, and we worked with the local authority to find her a house in a nearby village. Additionally, we found her a job and a place for Dasha at Kindergarten.

As Inna was concerned for her younger brother, whom she had had to leave at home, we arranged for him to live with her in their new home, where we can support the whole family.

Mother and Baby Units

Mother and Baby Units are just one of the range of services we set up to help prevent child abandonment and keep these vulnerable families together. The Unit provides mothers with short-term residential care, giving them time to bond with their babies, and the opportunity to learn parenting skills, finish their education or gain employment so they can lead an independent life. Additionally, we work with the mothers to help them repair damaged relationships so they can return to their families.

For mothers in crisis situations - at risk of having to place their children in care - our Mother and Baby Units ensure that children are not growing up in institutions, but where they belong - with their mothers who love them.

Tetiana Bondarenko one of Hope and Homes for Children's Project Managers in Ukraine said, “I am proud, in 2007, that 96% of the young women we supported in our Mother and Baby Units were able to go on to live independently with their babies. I consider this the biggest achievement of my work.”



Above: Facilities at a Mother and Baby Unit