

MEASURE Evaluation

ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN

Newsletter

April 2018

Note from MEASURE Evaluation

Welcome to the first Alternative Care for Children newsletter. This newsletter provides updates since the 2017 workshop in London to foster communication and knowledge sharing across Armenia, Ghana, Moldova, and Uganda. As a reminder, we have created a webpage related to this work, which features your country pages. Please visit www.measureevaluation.org/our-work/youth-and-adolescents/alternative-care.

Assessment Workshop Conducted in Four Countries

MEASURE Evaluation, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), conducted workshops in Armenia, Ghana, Moldova, and Uganda. The workshops yielded concrete suggestions for improving areas of alternative care systems. Country core teams (CCTs) are reviewing assessment reports. When they are complete, final reports with recommendations will be posted on the website.

The workshop assessments involved 165 people across the four countries (Armenia: 66; Ghana: 28; Moldova: 26; and Uganda: 45). Participants included representatives from USAID, the

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and staff from several country ministries, including from ministries of health, education, internal affairs, justice, and social welfare. National and subnational representatives from government departments, international and national nongovernmental organizations, and community service organizations also attended.

Key Learning from Assessment Implementation

The country assessments provided rich information that will enhance future assessments:

Clarifying statements in the tool. Despite local adaptations, translations, and further adaptations and piloting of the tool in some countries, interpretations of some statements varied. The MEASURE Evaluation team is currently working on clarifications to the master tool, which should address many of those issues, as will expanding the definition list to include more country-specific examples.

Ensuring the right participants and group formation. Each country workshop used a slightly different method for breaking the assessment participants into groups and in selecting the number of groups that reviewed each tab in the tool. Having a conscious mix of participants from



The Minister of Labour and Social Affairs opens the workshop in Armenia

Participants in Uganda discuss an aspect of care reform



different organizations and agencies and with different technical backgrounds ensured lively discussion and debate about the contents in the tabs.

Consensus building. All countries added additional time to the agenda to obtain consensus where there was disagreement.

Strong facilitation. This facilitation was vital to the success of the workshops. CCT members and others who facilitated group work did an amazing job in leading discussions and building consensus on the tabs. The fact that senior-level members of government facilitated lent credibility to the workshop and ensured active and engaged participation.

Action Planning

The next step in the assessment tool process is for each country to develop action plans, according to the schedule below:

Moldova: April 19

Armenia: April 27

Uganda: Late April

Ghana: Mid-May

"[Giving feedback] on the [assessment tool] is an eye-opener for those of us who do not work with the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development. Based on the discussion, we need to strengthen multi-sectoral collaborations around alternative care issues to ensure [that] children's needs are effectively addressed."

—Workshop participant, Uganda

"This is the beginning of a new, big work that is waiting for us after summarizing the assessment results. We will develop an action plan and will present correspondingly both to the [government] and donor organizations for the successful completion of the reforms. Routine monitoring indicators and data quality assurance methods will also be developed to measure the efficiency of the activities."

—Sona Harutyunyan, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Armenia



Workshop participants in Ghana meet to discuss the assessment



Moldovan participants analyze one of the assessment tool tabs. Small groups with a mix of participants to review tabs was seen as a best practice for participating in this type of workshop.

What's Coming Next?

Now that the assessment workshops are complete, the MEASURE Evaluation teams are starting to work with CCTs and other stakeholders on activities related to monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Here is a quick look at the ways we're planning to support governments:

1. *Enhance routine monitoring indicators for alternative care.* We developed a reference list of indicators from sources such as Better Child Network (BCN), Family for Every Child, and government documents. These are reference indicators to conduct mapping of routine monitoring in each area of alternative care. The indicators are likely to vary by country—for example with adapted wording and unique definitions to fit the country context. The point of listing them is to provide the types of routine monitoring indicators each country should consider. Countries should build their routine monitoring systems keeping in mind these indicators—or similar adaptations of them.

2. *Provide tailored technical assistance based on assessment results and CCT priorities.* In each country, MEASURE Evaluation met with the CCT to confirm M&E capacity building needs, and to discuss implementation approaches and activity budgets. With the CCT, we prioritized capacity building activities based on areas of importance and feasibility. Training and follow-on mentoring will target different audiences based on need.

We will conduct capacity building on topics such as these:

- In Armenia, we will conduct basic training in M&E to introduce a wide group of stakeholders to similar M&E concepts. This will provide a platform for further mentorship on indicators.
- In Ghana, we will train and mentor the staff of the Department of Social Work on the use of alternative care data.
- In Moldova, we will mentor ministry staff to revise the M&E framework for the child protection strategy as



Moldovan Secretary of State Viorica Dumbraveanu addresses M&E workshop participants

well as a review of the Social Assistance Automatic Informational System (SIASS) database and feasibility of adding a case management model to enable monitoring of children at risk over time.

- In Uganda, we are supporting the development of the management information systems of the Children’s Home and Remand Home.

- Improve the M&E framework of current strategies in Moldova
- Use knowledge acquired for the development of upcoming policy documents
- Use knowledge acquired to develop successful grant applications
- Improve their reporting, particularly focusing on results achieved

Spotlight on Moldova: M&E Capacity Building Workshop

In March, Moldova held a three-day workshop in Chisinau on M&E capacity building. The purpose was to build the capacity of care reform specialists from various government agencies. Topics included M&E skills, such as understanding the role and utility of M&E; learning how to use logic models for the design, monitoring, and evaluation of policy documents; understanding how to select and formulate good indicators; and developing M&E frameworks for policy documents, among other skills.

MEASURE Evaluation trained 24 participants in M&E skills, encouraging them to focus on job-specific tasks, to reflect on practices they could change at their workplaces, and ways to apply what they learned. At the end, participants reported their commitment to:

The MEASURE team will continue to mentor participants as we work to do the gap analysis on indicators.

For more information on MEASURE Evaluation, please visit www.measureevaluation.org.

For more information on alternative care for children, please visit www.measureevaluation.org/our-work/youth-and-adolescents/alternative-care/alternative-care-for-children?searchterm=alternative+care.

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