

MEASURE Evaluation

ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN

Newsletter

November 2018

Note from MEASURE Evaluation

Welcome to the second Alternative Care for Children newsletter. This publication provides updates from the six months following the assessment workshops on care reform that were conducted in Armenia, Ghana, Moldova, and Uganda. The Alternative Care for Children Newsletter is meant to be a useful tool to foster communication and knowledge sharing across countries. A web page related to this work also exists, and features your country pages. Please visit www.measureevaluation.org/our-work/youth-and-adolescents/alternative-care.

Use of Findings from Assessment Workshops Conducted in Four Countries

MEASURE Evaluation, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), supported core country teams (CCTs) to conduct participatory workshops in Armenia, Ghana, Moldova, and Uganda. These yielded concrete recommendations for improving alternative care systems. Final reports for each country self-assessment can be found on the MEASURE Evaluation website. Following the assessment workshops, lead government agencies and CCTs in Armenia, Moldova, and Uganda held workshops to discuss findings, set priorities, and create action plans. Findings from

the assessment have been used in various ways by state and nonstate actors. An action planning workshop for Ghana will be held in December 2018.

Advocacy for policies and service delivery. In **Armenia**, the Child Protection network, which consists of about 40 national civil society organizations, has used the assessment results as evidence to advocate amendments to legislation on adoption. In **Moldova**, a government decision has been drafted to approve a regulation for organizing and institutionalizing training systems for social assistance staff, including those working in alternative care at the community and rayon (i.e., district) levels.

Improving routine monitoring and availability of information for alternative care. Building on the assessment findings in **Uganda**, MEASURE Evaluation supported the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) to identify priority routine monitoring indicators and develop indicator reference sheets for alternative care. Six indicators were selected for inclusion in the country's National Standard Indicator Framework. In **Ghana**, MEASURE Evaluation supported the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) subgroup to review existing routine monitoring indicators for alternative care. As a result of this exercise, an additional 10 indicators were prioritized. In **Moldova**, MEASURE Evaluation worked with an M&E focal group composed of specialists



July 2018 M&E training for CCT and key stakeholders in Yerevan, Armenia.

All photos:
© Camelia Gheorghe,
consultant, MEASURE
Evaluation

First meeting of the monitoring and evaluation focal group, Chisinau



from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (MoHLSP), National Bureau of Statistics, and National Social Work Agency to assess existing indicators for alternative care and identify additional indicators applicable to the country context. Based on this exercise and feedback from the CCT, UNICEF Moldova, and stakeholders from the rayon level, a refined list of 20 indicators was developed. In **Armenia**, based on concerns raised by service providers during the assessment workshop, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) revised a module in the national electronic database (called Manuk) to include the documentation of all services provided to children in all types of care institutions.

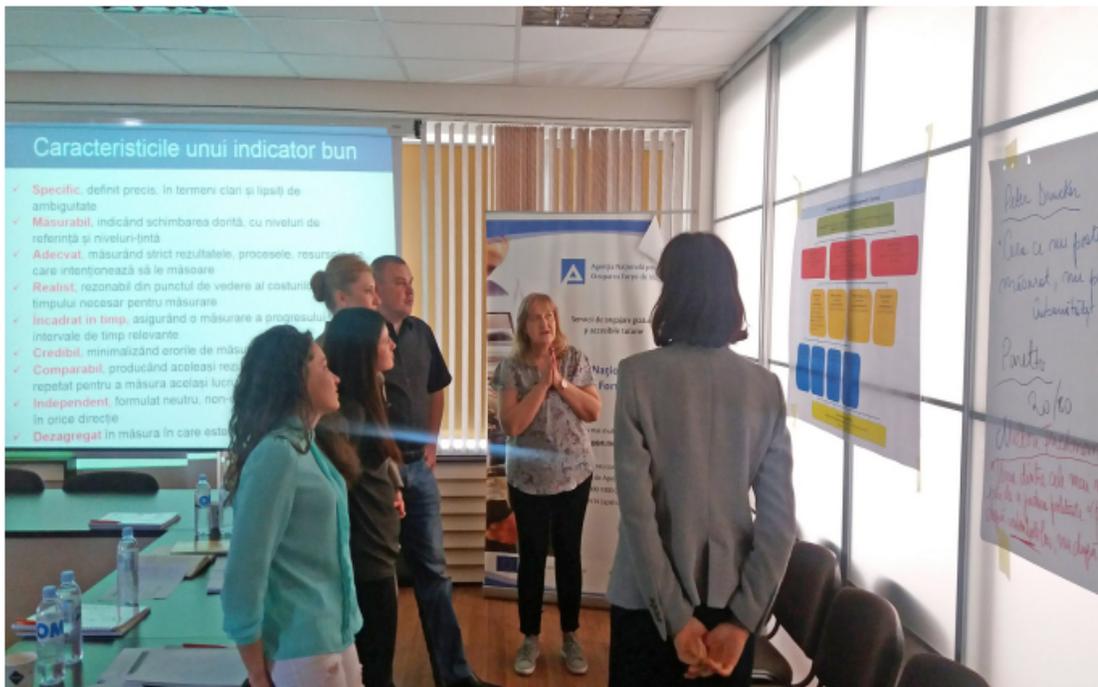
Improving coordination. In **Moldova** a working group composed of MoHLSP, several non-governmental organizations, and UNICEF was established and used the assessment results to develop a concept note on a new social service for supervised independent living (“assisted social housing”). This working group met in July 2018 to discuss best practices, decide on an appropriate approach for **Moldova**, and prepare legislation for this service. In **Uganda**, in response to assessment findings that indicated the lack of coordination mechanisms for stakeholders in alternative care, UNICEF collaborated with the MOGLSD to initiate monthly alternative care stakeholder coordination meetings with representatives of government agencies, development partners, and civil society.

Leveraging resources across partners. In **Armenia** and **Uganda**, civil society organizations used assessment findings to develop their proposals for grant applications to donor agencies. In **Moldova**, recommendations relating to the development of M&E and information systems have informed a new five-year USAID country program, and a local NGO has used recommendations to finalize the residential care reform and strengthening social services networks to inform its grant application for European Union funding. In **Ghana**, the alternative care system assessment informed the development of priorities in the Department of Social Welfare’s annual USAID work plan.

Strengthening Capacity in Monitoring and Evaluation

After the assessment workshops, MEASURE Evaluation worked with CCTs and other stakeholders to identify priority activities related to M&E. There are several ways we have supported governments in each country:

Armenia: In July 2018, MEASURE Evaluation conducted a three-day M&E capacity-building workshop with 26 participants, representing government ministries (including the MOLSA M&E Department, and the Ministries of Education, Health, and Justice) and civil society. The training was deemed to be successful and applicable to the everyday work tasks of trainees, who



Moldova DAMEP mentoring workshop, June 2018

mentioned particularly the sessions on defining theories of change, developing SMART indicators (which means strategic, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timebound), and appropriate baselines and targets. As a result of this training, the MOLSA Child Protection Division will revise its policy documents to include baselines and targets for the division's indicators.

Ghana: In August, MEASURE Evaluation conducted a three-day M&E capacity-building workshop with 15 participants from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) and civil society. DSW, MEASURE Evaluation, and UNICEF conducted site visits in October 2018 to review the strengths and weaknesses

of the current routine monitoring system, which focuses on reporting for residential homes. This assessment provided insight into how the routine monitoring system is working. It also resulted in a series of recommendations to improve data flow and routine monitoring from residential homes, as well as regional and district social welfare and community development offices. It included a one-day orientation on data quality and data use approaches, which MEASURE Evaluation facilitated with the DSW M&E unit and DSW care reform staff.

Uganda: In October 2018, MEASURE Evaluation conducted a two-day training workshop to build the capacity of specialists from the MOGLSD, government agencies, and civil society in M&E for alternative care. As part of the training, participants learned about the importance of routine monitoring and SMART indicators and reviewed and validated prioritized indicators to monitor Uganda's alternative care system. Also in October, an assessment of the Children First Software, which is being piloted in five residential homes, was conducted to understand issues in system design and interoperability, data privacy and access, and ability to capture and report on the agreed-upon indicators.

Moldova: Training and mentoring workshops in M&E were conducted in April and June 2018 to build the capacity of the Policy Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorates (DAMEP) from the MOHLSP and the Ministry of Interior. These workshops focused on developing M&E frameworks and strengthening quality reporting on policy implementation. From these workshops, a new template for the annual social report was developed and will be piloted by the Child Right's Protection Directorate. Further, a one-day training on data quality and data use was held in September 2018.

Webinar

We thank all who participated in our first webinar in July 2018, which focused on prevention of family separation and on workforce. Details about the next webinar are forthcoming.

Resources

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

For 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.

This publication was produced with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of MEASURE Evaluation cooperative agreement AID-OAA-L-14-00004. MEASURE Evaluation is implemented by the Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partnership with ICF International; John Snow, Inc.; Management Sciences for Health; Palladium; and Tulane University. Views expressed are not necessarily those of USAID or the United States government. FS-18-316

