

International Annual Conference

FINANCING FAMILY STRENGTHENING AND CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES IN THE CONTEXT OF MOLDOVA- EU ASSOCIATION AGENDA

2023 Theme: Financing for Better Care



CONFERENCE REPORT



Organized by:



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Special thanks are extended to the conference speakers who shared their wealth of knowledge on the importance of public investments in family-based care and social protection programs; and made calls for action to policy makers, practitioners, researchers and all other stakeholders.

We also extend our gratitude to the following institutions for tirelessly supporting the planning and organization of the financing conference, including making financial contributions that resulted in a successful event:

- UNICEF Moldova
- The World Bank
- Public Association Child, Community, Family Moldova (CCF Moldova)
- Public Association Keystone Moldova
- Public Association Partnerships for Every Child (P4EC)

We appreciate the invaluable inputs of the conference participants, representing local and national public authorities, civil society organizations working in the child protection sector, international organizations, and experts contributing to the social assistance reform efforts.

Thank you!

Anne SMITH

Global Director

Changing the Way We Care

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INTRODUCTION

The International Conference on Financing of Family Strengthening and Child Protection Services is an annual event hosted by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. The conference is designed to engage stakeholders from central and local governments, non-governmental, private, and academic sectors, as well as international experts and organizations, to work together to unpack the challenges faced in ensuring adequate public financing for strengthening families and protecting children, and to propose solutions for how these challenges can be met. The first annual conference was held on June 20–21, 2023, and focused on financing of family strengthening services and care of children without adequate parental care, including redirection of funds from residential institutions to family-based care in line with national policy and European Union recommendations in the Association Agenda. Future conferences will discuss other priority services such as social and educational inclusion, early intervention, inter-sectoral cooperation for primary prevention of risks for children, and others.

The objectives of the first annual conference were to improve public financing for care system in Moldova, specifically to:

1. Discuss progress and challenges, including financing gaps, in meeting the minimum quality standards for key services designed to support families and provide family-based alternative care for children without adequate parental care. Discussions focused on five key social services currently available in Moldova, which are proposed to be included in the basic package of services funded by the national budget.
2. Discuss the costs for delivering key services per national standards and costing methodologies developed to date.
3. Discuss relevant evidence and recommendations for strengthened provision and financing of services that enable family-based care.
4. Highlight and address policy recommendations and research questions emanating from the conference on strengthening the quality and budgeting of key services for supporting families and family-based alternative care.

The conference engaged over 200 international and local participants responsible for and/or supporting child protection and care reforms in Moldova, as well as other countries. The conference was organized with technical assistance and funding from USAID, MacArthur Foundation, and GHR Foundation via Changing the Way We Care, UNICEF, and the World Bank.

The conference was structured around plenary sessions where key speakers presented on important themes and learnings to consider in investing for better care; and breakaway sessions where other stakeholders analyzed key services designed to support families and enable family-based care for children without adequate parental care. Participants in the breakaway sessions shared their recommendations for planning, managing, and financing key services for better care, which were shared in a plenary session and are included in Session 2 of this report for consideration in policy development and conference follow up activities.

Conference video recording is available at the following links:



Overview of Care Reform in Moldova

At independence, Moldova inherited a social welfare system that was both costly and harmed children. The system was based heavily on residential institutions that the United States and many countries in Europe had begun to abandon almost a century ago because evidence showed incontrovertibly that they were harming children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social development. In many cases, the institutions had high rates of mortality, abuse, and neglect.¹ In contrast, the Soviet welfare model was based on the principle of full employment, with minimal development of the critical areas of social work, case management, and alternative care services. In short, pregnant women in the Soviet period faced two choices at delivery: keep and care for the baby or place it in an institution.

In the past fifteen years, the Government of Moldova shifted from this legacy and has made significant progress in care reform and transitioning children from residential care institutions to family-based care. Despite challenges faced in the provision of family-based care and limited resources, Moldova is increasingly recognized as one of the best examples of childcare and protection reform in the region.²

Through joint efforts of government, civil society, and international organizations the number of children living in institutions in Moldova decreased from 17,000 in 1995 to 11,544 in 2007³ and then dropped to 1,365 in 2016 and even further to 685 in 2021.⁴ The number of children in family-based care increased from 0 in 1995 to 6,562 in 2007, then nearly doubled to 11,115 in 2016 and continued to increase to 14,515 in 2021.⁵

The number of residential care institutions has dropped from 67 large-scale residential institutions in 2001⁶ to 15 in 2022.⁷

This transition from residential care to family-based care was achieved through considerable service development and diversification, funding allocation, strengthening of professionals working in social, educational and medical fields, focusing on inter-sectorial collaboration and changes in practice.⁸ Public attitudes also shifted positively towards supporting vulnerable families and preventing unnecessary child separation from the family.⁹ As reported in the 2021 Moldova KAP study conducted by CTWWC¹⁰, a large part of the population showed a certain level of awareness of the impacts of institutionalization and a preference

Table 1: Number of Children in Residential vs. Family-based Care in Moldova



Source: Biroul Național de Statistică al Republicii Moldova

¹ Van IJzendoorn, MH, Bakermans-Kranenburg, MJ, Duschinsky, R, Fox, NA, Goldman, PS et. al. (2020). Institutionalisation and deinstitutionalization of children: a systematic and integrative review of evidence regarding effects on development. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 7:8.

² Hope and Homes for Children, Lumos and CCF Moldova. (2020). EU support for care reform for children in Moldova in the 2021-2027 period. November 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.hopeandhomes.org/publications/eu-support-for-care-reform-for-children-in-moldova-in-the-2021-2027-period/>

³ Stela Grigoraș, Minister of Health, Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova. (2017). Childcare Reform in Moldova: Achievements and Challenges. Presentation given at a workshop in London in September 2017, facilitated by MEASURE Evaluation, funded and supported by DCOF/USAID. Retrieved from: https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/1C_MoldovaCountryPresentation_FINAL_EN.pdf

⁴ <https://social.gov.md/informatie-de-interes-public/rapoarte/>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Stela Grigoraș, Minister of Health, Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova. (2017). Childcare Reform in Moldova: Achievements and Challenges.

⁷ Interview with Partnerships for Every Child (P4EC), April 2021.

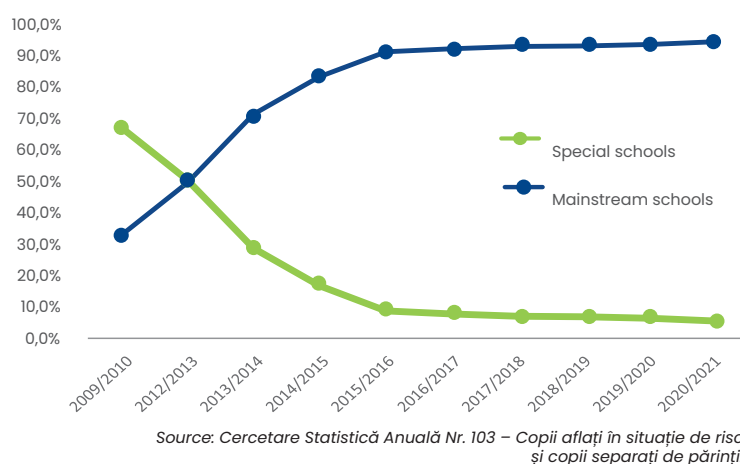
for biological family environments or alternative family care, namely extended family (kinship) or foster care, over institutions.

The 2020 report on care reform in Moldova developed by Hope and Homes for Children, Lumos, and CCF Moldova, notes that of the 1,210 children in residential care in 2019, 80 were children under three years old, 328 were children with disability and 200 were children who were placed in institutions for tuberculosis treatment.¹¹ Of the children with disability living in residential care institutions, most have been living there since early childhood and have been separated from their families for a very long time.¹² This was a challenge for family reunification and as global evidence illustrates, the earlier placement in institutional care occurs and the longer the placement, the more severe the negative impact on children's development.¹³

Despite these challenges, when considering the number of children with special needs living in residential care institutions, the effort to transition children from residential care to family-based care has also extended to children with special needs (Table 2¹⁴).

In two of the residential care institutions (the institution for girls in Hîncești and the institution for boys in Orhei), most of the residents are currently adults with disabilities who have lived in the

Table 2: Percentage of Children with Special Educational Needs in Residential vs. Mainstream Schools



institution their whole life and have nowhere to go.¹⁵ This highlights a critical challenge whereby adult residents live in institutions which were designed, organized, staffed and budgeted for the care of children.¹⁶

Residential care for children in Moldova is nearly exclusively provided by the government: the Ministry of Health manages institutions for pre-school children (0–7 years old) and two homes for children with tuberculosis; the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection manages institutions

for children with disability; the Ministry of Education manages residential care for school-age children; and a small number of institutions are managed by local public authorities.¹⁷

Gatekeeping Commissions have been established in every district of the country to prevent unnecessary placement in institutional care.¹⁸ These Gatekeeping Commissions meet to review every application for placement of a child in residential care, consider the most

⁸ Hope and Homes for Children, Lumos and CCF Moldova. (2020). EU support for care reform for children in Moldova in the 2021–2027 period. November 2020.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Changing The Way We Care SM (2021). Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Reintegrating Children into Families and Prevention of Child–Family Separation.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Interview with Keystone Moldova representative, April 2021.

¹³ The Leiden Conference on the Development and Care of Children without Permanent Parents. The Development and Care of Institutionally Reared Children (2012). Child Development Perspective, 6 (2), pp. 174–180. Abstract available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.17508606.2011.00231.x/abstract>; Bucharest Early Intervention Project (2009) Caring for Orphaned, Abandoned and Maltreated Children. Available at: <http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/BCN/details.asp?id=12323&themeID=1003&topicID=1023>; Nelson, C.Fox, N. & Zeanah, C. (2013). Anguish of the Abandoned Child. Scientific American.com

¹⁴ <https://social.gov.md/informatie-de-interes-public/rapoarte/>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Interview with CTWWC–Moldova, April 2021.

¹⁸ Interview with Partnerships for Every Child (P4EC)–Moldova representatives, April 2021.

appropriate alternative care placement option that is available and ensure that institutional care is only considered as a last option. Within the care reform agenda, the work of community social workers is very important. They work to address social and parenting challenges that families may be experiencing, as well as monitor and support children placed in family-based alternative care with an aim of future family reintegration.¹⁹

Though Moldova has achieved notable successes in care reform, the Evaluation of the 2014–2020 Child Protection Strategy and its Action Plan²⁰ shows that progress is still lagging behind in terms of strengthening the institutional capacity at the local level to prevent the separation of child from family, extending availability of foster care services, coordinating the deinstitutionalization process across the Government, and developing the specialized services available at the local level. Interviews with key informants²¹ further highlighted challenges faced by Local Public Administrations (LPA) to provide adequate support to effectively enable family-based care of children and adults returning from residential institutions.

The Social Assistance Reform concept – Restart²², recently launched by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Moldova is meant to address some of these challenges by proposing national budget financing for a basic package of social services, strengthening the basic quality standards, and making improvements in the planning and budgeting processes. The reform initiative provides opportunities for analysis and discussion on the basic package of services and their associated costs to support at risk families and ensure family-based alternative care for children without adequate parental care.

Making an investment case for family care

Care reform is not just about deinstitutionalization. It is about ensuring that vulnerable families receive the supports they need so that children can meet their full potential. It is also about providing safe, high quality, appropriate and supported family-based alternative care options that some children need such as guardianship, foster care, and adoption.

There are both short and long term economic and social benefits to shifting from residential care towards a fully family-centered social welfare system. In the short term, cost savings can be realized from transitioning away from residential facilities towards community services for children and families. Institutions are capital and resource intensive because of their round-the-clock operations, staffing requirements, and high recurrent costs for utilities, food, and other expenses. Evidence generally shows we can serve from 8–10 children through family services for every one child in an institution.²³ A recent study found that Moldovan institutions for young children cost from 245,000 MDL to 339,000 MDL per child.²⁴

More importantly, in the long term, community-based social services for children and families have been shown to strengthen long-term human capital. Human capital is defined by the World Bank as ‘the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate throughout their lives,

¹⁹ Stela Grigoras, PhD, Director, Partnership for Every Child, Moldova, and Florence Martin, Director, Better Care Network. (2015). The Role of Community Level Social Service Workers in Care Reform. Retrieved from: <https://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/blog/role-community-level-social-service-workers-care-reform>

²⁰ UNICEF. (2021). Mid-term Evaluation of Implementation of the Child Protection Strategy 2014–2020 and its Action Plan for 2016–2020 in the Republic of Moldova.

²¹ Interview conducted with Mr. Constantin Gudima, Head of finance department of the Ocnita Local Public Administration (LPA)

²² <https://social.gov.md/comunicare/ministerul-muncii-si-protectiei-sociale-a-lansat-reforma-sistemului-de-asistenta-sociala-restart/>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Changing the Way We Care (2022). Residential institutional evaluation findings and recommendations. Retrieved May 15, 2023: [EN Final Summary Residential Assessments \(bettercarenetwork.org\)](https://www.bettercarenetwork.org/en-final-summary-residential-assessments)

There are significant costs to economies and societies of inaction. Studies from around the globe on the costs of inaction are compelling. When children are exposed to a range of adversities, including loss of family care, violence, abuse, and neglect, evidence shows that this leads to (i) increased health care costs for both physical and mental health issues; (ii) higher costs to the criminal justice system, as these children are much more likely to come in conflict with the law; (iii) higher social welfare costs to address lifelong social problems these children develop; and (iv) as suggested above, a major drop in productivity and lifelong earnings. A recent comprehensive analysis found that adverse childhood experiences are costing Europe and the United States an estimated \$1.3 trillion a year.²⁶

Reforming care in Moldova to strengthen families and reduce reliance on institutions should not be taken in isolation. Children and families have a broad spectrum of needs. Some of those are income related and require social protection programs that provide cash support while promoting long-term resilience, such as through labor market programs or other measures. But the drivers of institutionalization are not just income related. An array of risks and vulnerabilities can lead to children being separated from family and placed in residential institutions – disability, mental health issues, substance abuse, violence in the household, and other factors. However, if these risks are identified and addressed early, separation can be prevented. There is increasing evidence that combining cash supports with social services – so called ‘cash plus care’ – is leading to high economic returns in some countries.²⁹ Moldova should accordingly seek to coordinate, oversee, monitor, and evaluate programs and services that provide both economic and social supports to families and children facing the risk of child separation and residential placement or addressing the needs of children placed in family care from residential care.

²⁹ Ozler, B (2020). How should we design cash transfer programs? World Bank Blogs. Retrieved May 15, 2023 (world bank) <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/how-should-we-design-cash-transfer-programs>.

OFFICIAL CONFERENCE OPENING

Welcome remarks and statements on the conference objectives by partners – the Parliament of the Republic Moldova, United States Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova, the World Bank, UNICEF, and Changing the Way We Care Initiative.



Igor GROSU

Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

Speaker Grosu welcomed participants in the conference and shared Moldova's commitment to ensure that all children grow up in a safe and nurturing family environment.

Speaker Grosu shared the following key messages:

- Every child has the right to grow up in a family and this right must be guaranteed and enforced by the state;
- Moldova has come a long way in ending institutionalization of children thanks to the joint efforts of social workers, civil society organizations, and many others;
- However, the fact that over 700 children continue to live in residential institutions; that babies continue to be admitted to residential care; that there are families in vulnerable situation and children at risk of separation from their families; that not all

children in need can benefit from early intervention services, shows us that we still have much work to do together;

- I am convinced that today we will reach a common understanding on which social services should be guaranteed at the community, regional, and national levels, on what the quality of these services should be, how we should finance these services, and what policy, administrative, and organizational measures we should take to design an efficient and sustainable model for provision of care and child protection services;
- I am convinced that we can consider this conference a turning point to the final phase of the care reform and the achievement, by 2027, of the objective – zero children in residential institutions, an objective set in the Moldova-EU Association Agenda;
- Our goal is to invest in a visionary and effective way to ensure that we have programs and services that strengthen families and prevent their separation. We need more services for vulnerable families and for people with severe disabilities;
- To achieve this goal, we need to take a close look at existing services and their funding and determine what we are missing and what is not working;
- We are aware that our resources are limited, but this is an area that we cannot negotiate, the alternative is unimaginable;
- I am convinced that, with the support of our partners and the expertise of the participants in this conference, we can achieve an improved vision for better care at the community level;
- I welcome the social assistance reform “Restart”, recently launched by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and its goal of achieving a truly equitable and inclusive social assistance for all children and people in Moldova through a basic package of social services funded by the national budget. Our current reliance on the number of plane tickets sold³⁰ to pay salaries for personal assistants or to cover family support services needs to end;
- Finally, we need to appreciate the important work carried out by our social workers. They continue to be among the least paid while working on the frontlines to address marginalization, social exclusion, poverty, addiction, and discrimination. I am glad that the social assistance reform is designed to address the pay gap for social workers and that it emphasizes the importance of continuous training and career growth for the social service workforce;
- We have an ambitious Parliamentary agenda in the next several months and are scheduled to vote on new and significant legislation regarding social assistance reform. I take this opportunity to ask the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to ensure a broad consultation of the proposed legislation and to involve our civil society colleagues as much as possible;
- I take this opportunity to thank our partners, the United States Embassy, United States Agency for International Development, the European Union, the global initiative Changing the Way We Care, the World Bank, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, civil society organizations active in the field of child protection – CCF Moldova, Keystone, Partnerships for Every Child – for their valuable support over the years in strengthening the national child protection system and developing social services for children; and
- Thank you to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection for their support in organizing this unique event.

³⁰ Editor’s note: select social services are currently funded through the Population Support Fund, which is partially funded from airport tax revenues.

"The United States is proud to support the Government of Moldova in its efforts to provide social protection to its most vulnerable people and we are committed to continue this support through programs such as Changing the Way We Care."

H.E. Kent Logsdon,
US Ambassador
to the Republic of Moldova

Photo credit: Schimbator Studio

Kent D. LOGSDON

United States Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova

The United States Government, through the USAID funded initiative CTWWC, supported the financing conference preparation and more broadly invested over \$18 million dollars in Moldova's child protection and care reforms efforts. Ambassador Logsdon joined Speaker Grosu in welcoming participants to the conference and shared the United States Government's continued commitment to support Moldova's care reform journey. Key messages from H.E. Ambassador Logsdon included:

- The well-being of families and children is essential for the well-being of a country;
- Your presence at this event demonstrates Moldova's commitment to ensuring a safe and protective family environment for all children;
- Moldova is now recognized as a regional leader in care reforms, thanks to its significant achievements in transitioning children from institutions to family care;
- A recent study concluded that investing in family is also cost efficient and benefits society as a whole. The costs of caring for one child in an institution, can cover the costs of services for 14 children in family based care;
- The United States is proud to support the Government of Moldova in its efforts to provide social protection to its most vulnerable people and we are committed to continue this support through programs such as Changing the Way We Care; and
- We share a common vision for all children to grow up in safe and nurturing families, free from violence, poverty, and danger and we applaud Moldova for placing children's care at the heart of its reform efforts.

"Sharing knowledge, exchanging view, and practical experiences is one of the best ways to find a solution for Moldova, the one that is family and child centered and sustainable, and will contribute to building strong and inclusive societies. However, it is a monumental challenge."

Inguna Dobraja,
World Bank Moldova

Photo credit: Schimbator Studio



Inguna DOBRAJA **World Bank Country Manager for Moldova**

The World Bank's expertise and research on human capital, cash plus care, and return on investments in social protection were front and center in the conference discussions and learnings. Ms. Dobraja shared the following key messages to note in planning Moldova's investments in social welfare programs:

- The issues we discuss today are important not only for Moldova, they are important for the whole region;
- Deinstitutionalization, promoting family-based care, ensuring access to quality early education, and addressing poverty and social exclusion is really an incomplete list of challenges that need to be addressed when strengthening families and protecting children. Most of these challenges are not easy and many countries are struggling with them, this is why sharing knowledge, exchanging views, and practical experience is one of the best ways to find a solution for Moldova that is family and child-centred, sustainable, and contributes to building strong and inclusive societies;
- Yet it is a monumental challenge and the demand for social protection has never been greater. This includes a pressing need to improve the management of social services, ensure a good match between the needs of the family and social services, while expanding access to both; and
- Going forward, the World Bank will continue to focus on strengthening human capital in Moldova, investing in education, health, enhancing access to quality child care, thus giving families flexibility to work. This agenda is becoming even more important with the EU accession in mind.



Ilija TALEV

Deputy Representative UNICEF Moldova

UNICEF Moldova, a partner, and co-funder of the conference preparation, has been at the forefront of Moldova's child protection and care reform efforts. Mr. Talev, UNICEF Moldova Deputy Representative, and an expert in public finance shared UNICEF's continued commitment to support Moldova's child protection reform and more recently, the newly launched social assistance reform agenda.

Mr. Talev shared the following key messages:

- Article 4, one of the lesser-known articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, explicitly obliges states to invest the maximum amount of resources they have at their disposal to achieve the realization of child rights. What that means specifically, was further defined by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, according to which the states are encouraged to make sure that the state budgets and the state resources are effectively efficiently, equitably, and sustainably invested in programs for children;
- Those investments have already paid off in a lot of countries around the world, including Moldova;
- The Republic of Moldova has made tremendous progress in reducing the number of children in institutions from more than 10,000 some 15 years ago to around 700 in residential care in 2023. This would not have been possible without strong political will. And the development of a multitude of relevant services and programs, from community to family support to personal assistance, guardianship and foster care;
- The evaluation of the 2014-2020 National Strategy for Child Protection praised the substantial decrease in the number of children in the residential system, but pointed out that we need to make further efforts to prevent separation through

early intervention policies and that much effort needs to be made to support deinstitutionalization of the most vulnerable, in particular children under the age of three and children with disabilities; and

- UNICEF will continue to provide technical and financial support to the Government of Moldova in completing the deinstitutionalization reform by 2026 and the reorganization/closure of all residential childcare institutions, including boarding schools and placement centres.



"This conference is a catalytic opportunity not only to contribute to a real paradigm shift within the country's social welfare system, but also to bring the experience and learning from Moldova to both the regional and global stage to support other countries around the world on their own care reform journey..."

Anne Smith,
CTWWC

Anne SMITH

Chief of Party, Changing the Way We Care

As the leader of the conference steering committee and an advocate of the collective impact approach, CTWWC Chief of Party Anne Smith emphasized the significance of multiple and diverse partners coming together in support of the Government of Moldova to unpack the challenges and identify evidence-based solutions for strengthening families and ensuring family-based care for all children without adequate parental care.

Ms. Smith stated that the conference will become an example of what can be achieved when collective and collaborative approaches are prioritized.

Ms. Smith shared the following key messages:

- CTWWC is a global initiative designed to promote safe, nurturing family care for children at risk of child family separation and children in residential care facilities. The initiative was developed to ensure that the negative impacts for children and residential care are mitigated and eventually eliminated;

- For children, there are several key reasons behind this. First, we know that residential care can adversely impact the cognitive, physical, and social emotional development of children. Particularly during the early years of development. Second, ensuring children grow up in family type settings is the best opportunity to allow children to reach their full potential and we know that strengthening families is directly correlated to improved academic performance for children and to their future success as adults;
- Furthermore, not only are there clear and important benefits to children, but we also know that the cost of supporting children in a family environment are significantly lower than supporting children in an institutional setting; and
- CTWWC views this conference as a critical opportunity to join and to accompany the Government of Moldova in its journey towards effective and sustainable family care throughout the country. We also see it as a catalytic opportunity. Not only to contribute to a real paradigm shift within the country's social welfare system, but also to bring the experience and learning from Moldova to both the regional and global stage to support other countries around the world on their own care reform journeys.



Message from people with lived experience

The conference opening remarks concluded with a message from people with lived experience of the care system. Pavel, Mariana, and Luiza, all in attendance at the conference, shared their top priorities for a better social assistance system in Moldova, focused on family-based care, and equal access to services for all children and families in need. Follow the link to see the video message.



SESSION 1: SETTING THE STAGE AND PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN CONCEPTS DRIVING THE CONFERENCE



Keynote address on the importance of investing in family care by Philip GOLDMAN, President of Maestral International and Member of the CTWWC Governing Board

Dear Speaker Grosu, Your Excellency Ambassador Logsdon, Mr. Perciun, Minister Buzu, and all of our distinguished guests in attendance today.

I am so excited to be here, because over these two days, we are going to talk about the future of Moldova like it has never been talked about before. But before we talk about your future, let's take a brief foray into your past.

Thirty years ago, I joined the social protection team at the World Bank, in 1993, just after the breakup of the Soviet Union. My first trip with the World Bank was to, of all places, right here, Moldova. We were working with the IMF to undertake one of the first assessments of newly independent Moldova's social protection system. Some of you remember those days after your independence well. But others of you may be too young to remember or visiting from other countries. So, I want you all to walk with me and imagine what I saw as we undertook the assessment.

Again, its 1993. Politically, Moldova is creating its own governing structure out of the ashes of the USSR. It is working on a new Constitution, numerous political parties are forming, and the presidential and parliamentary systems are being put into place. Already, it is grappling with the Russian moves east of the Dniepr to seize control of the region, and we both see the substantial destruction that has already been wrought by the separatists. The transition from the Soviet economic and political model is already devastating Moldova. You and me see massive unemployment and hyperinflation, the struggles and failures of state-owned enterprises, and huge shocks to the agricultural sector. Moldovan families and children are suffering, facing the stressors not only of economic insecurity but of a highly uncertain future. Well, naturally, the first thing that you and I look for is what kinds of supports the Moldovan system might have available to help these children and families. And that's when you and I discover that the Soviet planning model, which was built around full employment, doesn't have many elements of a modern social welfare and child protection system that are needed to address Moldova's needs.

In particular, Moldova lacks a robust social work infrastructure. Social work and case management are the pillar of any effective social welfare system. Again, in 1993, there is very little available in the way of cash social assistance. There is no developed foster care system for children in need of family-based care, and limited availability of the social services newly vulnerable Moldovan families needed. Instead, what do you and I see? The legacy of decades of investments in the primary Soviet social intervention model. What is that model? It is the substantial network of residential institutions housing children, people with disabilities, and people of older ages in unimaginable conditions. On site visits, you see along with me horrific conditions that are crushing the children placed in these institutions physically and mentally. In fact, the conditions back then were so shocking that they inspired my own personal interest to commit to working in child welfare and protection.

So, as we bring ourselves together back to the present day, 2023, let's think about the costs of this legacy for present day Moldova. Let's first consider the children in those expensive and harmful institutions and the impact on them.

The U.S. and Europe recognized the harms of residential care on children in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and developed a family-centered approach to social welfare throughout the 20th century. You can say that the family-centered approach in those countries isn't perfect, but it beat a system where a large percentage of institutionalized children in the U.S. and Europe died in care, with many of the rest broken for life.

In 2017, the British medical journal The Lancet assembled a team of researchers to conduct a meta-analysis of global studies on the impact of residential care on children. I was a member of that team, and we published our findings in 2019, exactly a century after a large conference of experts in the U.S. called for the elimination of residential care and the creation of a foster care and adoption system in 1919. Our Lancet Commission found that even in the modern era, institutions present significant harm to children, regardless of where they are located around the globe. The children living in them have physical delays. They have cognitive delays. They have emotional and social delays. They have delays in language. They are at significant risk of physical and sexual abuse, sometimes perpetrated by staff, sometimes by other children. Institutions tend to take in high numbers of children with disabilities or other vulnerabilities. Often, children who enter healthy develop a disability because of their time in an institution.

It is not hard to see why the environment is so harmful. Let's look at the typical Soviet-era institution. There are three shifts of staff every day. Some of those staff stay for a long time, others come and go. Many of those staff have minimal training, and each one of them often has to care for many children, sometimes dozens for each staff member. Staff often rely on harsh physical punishment. Meals are at a set time and the food has little variety and has poor nutritional value. Children sleep in large dormitory style rooms and with no personal space other than perhaps a locker. Infants are taught to potty train at the same time every day. And we could go on. But with all that, perhaps one of the cruelest aspects of the system is the complete separation from participation in society. The children are not sent to school. They do not participate in community events. They do not recognize major life milestones. They do not learn basic life skills like how to shop or find a place to live. They do not learn important rituals like how to date, how to engage in religious observances, the joy of harvest festivals, or the warmth of hospitality in a household's *Casa Mare*. One thing Moldova can be proud of is that you understood this fifteen years ago and became a regional leader in deinstitutionalization.

In 1995, there were 17,000 children in institutions in Moldova. Through a determined set of joint efforts by government, international organizations, and civil society, you brought that number down to 685 in 2021. In 1995, there were zero children placed in family-based care because foster care did not exist. In 2021, there were 14,515 children in family-based. In 2001, you had 67 large scale institutions for children. Today, there are just 15. Every Moldovan district has a gatekeeping commission in place to prevent the placement of children in the remaining institutions and to secure the best possible care for them.

This incredible progress is what has made Moldova a leader in the region and has transformed Moldova into a demonstration country for others considering how to undertake reforms to progressively reduce reliance on institutions. So let's celebrate that remarkable and ongoing success, but also recognize that today, here, together, we have the opportunity to pave the way for something much bigger and long lasting. A paradigm shift in how Moldova will approach the care and protection of its children, and pave the way for European accession.

Since this is a conference about economics, let's talk about capital. Economists refer to different kinds of capital. There is financial capital. There is physical infrastructure. Capital can come in the form of natural resources and energy. And most importantly for us in this room, there is human capital.

The World Bank defines human capital as 'the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society.'

Let's take that technical definition and make it real for Moldova. Moldova needs people to work the fields, factories, in services, and in retail shops. That is human capital. Moldova needs the teachers and educators to train those workers. That is human capital. Moldova needs the physicians, nurses, and many others in the health care system to keep its population healthy. That is human capital. Moldova, like other countries, needs to reduce social ills like crime, substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and many others. That is building and protecting human capital. We have talked for many decades about what countries need to build capital for economic growth. These include roads, energy, communications, transport, and a

host of other variables. Well, now there is a huge upswell in global interest in what is needed to build our human capital.

Where does Moldova sit? Well, from 2010 to 2020, Moldova's Human Capital Index improved from 0.56 to 0.58. While the improvement is welcome, it is important to know that this means that Moldova's children will only be 58 percent as productive as they would be if they had complete education and full health status. Think of human capital as being built on a stool with three legs.

Moldova has been, like many countries, focusing its public investments in two critical legs of the stool that I just mentioned – health and education. Those two legs are absolutely essential components of building Moldova's economic present and future. Education from early childhood, for example, is strongly correlated with higher lifelong earnings. Physical and mental health also help to improve productivity. But the third leg of the stool is nowhere near as strong as it should be, and that is the social welfare leg. It is not strong in many ways because of the weak systemic capacity Moldova inherited at independence, but also because Moldova has had limited resources since independence to address so many needs. That third social welfare leg includes social protection, social services, and child protection.

Now why is that third leg so important? Because that is precisely the leg that deals with all the problems children face outside of schools and hospitals, and inside their households and communities. Most of our research from Europe and the US shows that educational performance in schools is not solely dependent on how you design the curriculum, improve the teaching, or enhance the technology. Much of that performance is also related to what happens in the child's environment when school is out of session. Evidence tells us addressing problems in the household and strengthening families is directly correlated to improved academic performance. For example, the City Connects program – which I spotlight because it has been collecting incredible data -- found that when it connected students at risk with a social work case plan and social service referrals, students had far better grades, were less likely to be absent, to have much lower dropout rates, and to score better on standardized achievement tests. The improvements for the most marginalized children were incredible. In the words of City Connects, life outside of school affects what happens in school. The same goes for health. Child maltreatment and neglect has been tightly correlated with poor physical development, cognitive delays, emotional and social delays, and social problems such as substance abuse. The effects of what happens in childhood are lifelong, and include cardiac problems, pulmonary disease, diabetes high blood pressure, cancer, and other chronic health problems.

Allow me to make one more point about social welfare. There is increasing recognition by social protection experts around the world that cash alone is not sufficient to address the spectrum of vulnerabilities that children and families face. While cash assistance can alleviate stressors on a household, it cannot address psycho-social needs, the needs of children with disabilities, violence and abuse in the household, and other risks. There are a number of recent exciting studies that show you get a bigger payoff by combining cash transfers with care services than you do from either cash or care alone. We are calling this approach 'cash plus care' and it is becoming a centerpiece of World Bank and UNICEF programming globally. So you really want that third leg of the stool – social welfare, delivered through cash plus care – to improve parenting practices and to prevent abuse and neglect as early as possible to build... what?... Human capital in Moldova.

In short, we should not just be thinking about institutions during this conference. They are the entry point to something bigger. We should be talking about an exciting investment in a shift in Moldova's social welfare system that supports all of Moldova's children at risk, and that, in turn, becomes a pillar of Moldova's future approach to social welfare. This paradigm shift can be the foundation of how Moldova can align its social policies with those of the European Union.

In 2019, the European Commission established a Child Guarantee that seeks to ensure that all children have access to quality education, health, and social services, with countries also aiming to end reliance on their legacies of residential care. They are not doing this just because they respect child rights (they do). The EU is also doing this because it understands that children are their future – their human capital -- and that children need a holistic spectrum of supports to thrive. It is time for Moldova to step on that train!

Before I get into the key elements of the investment case, I want to ask us all a question. Why so much talk about the importance of family? What do families have to do with Moldova's human capital?

Well, dear colleagues, the concept of family is so embedded in who we are as a species that we often take it for granted. We have evidence of the critical roles families played in early human history. We see from cave paintings, burial mounds and other evidence that families, for untold millennia, have served to socialize children, to provide collective protection from enemies and predators, to work together to hunt and gather resources, to regulate sexual reproduction, and to provide family members with a social identity. Family runs deep in our genes, and in who we are. As I so often say, children are born wired to be in families. The more nurturing and protective those families are, the more a child is likely to thrive, and conversely, we see the bad outcomes I mentioned earlier when children are not nurtured. Our modern societies and markets have taken on some of the functions of our ancestors, such as defense and socialization, but they have not baked family out of the child.

So as you look at the future of your social welfare system, you need to look at that third leg of the stool – social welfare – and understand that that leg can only be strong if Moldova's policies work to ensure that Moldovan families are strong.

So, a team of economic experts has taken all of these grand ideas and converted them into a concrete investment case for Moldova. The case they will be presenting shortly is based on the assumption that Moldova will increase its investments in a minimum package of services for children and families. I am not going to spoil their upcoming presentation by telling you the details, but I am going to share one important number as a teaser. An internal rate of return is a common measure for determining the profitability of an investment. The economists are going to show you how through a combination of cost savings and education and health returns, investments in Moldova's minimum package will yield a discounted internal rate of return of 16.6 percent. That number may not mean much to you. But I spent a part of my career working in private finance. An internal rate of return of 16.6 percent would immediately generate the interest of a private investor as a high level of profit worthy of a closer look.

Let's take that closer look these next two days.

Let's also agree that Moldova can't secure these returns alone. These are challenging macro-economic times that are occurring against the backdrop of

regional turbulence due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moldova will need external support. I am going to close by making the pitch to some of you here in the room.

To my colleagues at the World Bank: I am going to put you first on the spot. What is being proposed today is squarely aligned with the Bank's latest approaches to integrated social protection services and the Human Capital Project. The projected IRR more than justifies the costs of borrowing. I can't help but wonder: might the minimum package be embedded in the Bank's social protection strategy for Moldova as part of a cash plus care approach? To the European Commission: You're next! Investing in the minimum package of services will address your observations in your Opinion on Moldova's Application for Membership in the European Union on the need for deinstitutionalization. Moldova also needs to set in motion measures to achieve the recently adopted EU Child Guarantee. Once Moldova joins the EU, it will also have access to structural funds that will further allow it to develop its social welfare system. Investing in the minimum package is a strong foundation for Moldova's future participation in Europe. To USAID: I want to recognize your important investments in this objective, which are consistent with the U.S. Government's Action Plan on Children in Adversity. Your support through Changing the Way We Care for a collective impact approach is helping to ensure that the Government of Moldova has the support it needs to make this program a success. You have also spearheaded the development of tools and resources Moldova and other countries need to strengthen the care and protection of their children. I encourage you to keep up the critical momentum, and in particular, those efforts that bring all of the key stakeholders together, like everyone in this room and many who were unable to attend. To UNICEF: your social policy and child protection teams around the world are seizing on the cash plus care agenda. You have a unique mandate before the Government of Moldova regarding children and years of experience in working with Moldova to strengthen its child protection system. I urge you to continue your important investments in this direction in Moldova. And for the rest of you in this room. Too many to call out by name. You are here for a reason. You have seen how hard Moldova has fought to change its system from the one I witnessed thirty years ago. You can make things even brighter for the next 30 years. Whether you are a Parliamentarian crafting laws, or a Government official overseeing policy, or a multilateral or embassy or donor providing resources, or an NGO providing services, or an expert providing advice, you have a role to play in strengthening Moldova's human capital for years to come. You have a role to play in building the third leg of the stool.

With your help and resources, we can help to create a system that supports the Moldovan children of today to become the European citizens of tomorrow.

It has been an honor to speak with you today, and I wish all of us success during the remainder of this conference.

Thank you.

"We have a firm commitment to have ZERO children in residential institutions and we will make every effort to reduce child poverty in Moldova."

DL. Alexei Buzu

Minister of Labor
and Social Protection of the
Republic of Moldova



Keynote address on the social assistance system reform agenda and the anticipated impact on children's care by Alexei BUZU, Minister of Labor and Social Protection

In March 2023, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection launched the ambitious Reform of Social Assistance System RESTART. The goal of the reform initiative is to improve access and quality of social services in Moldova. The reform has implications for the organization and governance of the social assistance system, human resources, and financing of services. Minister Buzu welcomed the conference participants, provided an update on the social assistance reform process and its expected outcomes for the child protection and care reform agendas.

He shared the following key messages:

- We have seen the chart that shows the success story of deinstitutionalization in the Republic of Moldova and, indeed, it is a proud moment. We should celebrate the success, but this is not enough and we should be mindful of the challenges that cause the separation of families;
- We planned the social assistance reform with three major challenges in mind;
- First challenge is poverty, especially child poverty, which is on the rise. With all the investments and interventions over the past year, poverty in Moldova, including child poverty, has increased. Nationally, we have 28 percent of children living in poverty. In rural Moldova, we have 40 percent of children living in poverty. For us, for the Ministry's team, for me personally, as the Minister, this is an extremely complicated number, and it is a number that I am most afraid of;
- The second challenge is that we have structural problems in our social assistance system. We do not see all the children who are at risk, we do not see all the children who are in poverty, and it seems that we do not, through our

interventions, help these families and these children overcome this situation. Consistently, the numbers from the National Bureau of Statistics show that without social welfare interventions, child poverty would increase by 5.4 - 6 percent. So, we need to intervene much more effectively;

- A third challenge is that services, including care services, are unevenly present on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. We have districts where the situation is better. We have areas where the situation is much more complicated. I have spoken with many social workers and they say that deinstitutionalization goals are important, but what happens when children are at risk and we do not have services at the community or raion level to support families to overcome the situation?
- This is why I state that deinstitutionalization is an important step, but it is not enough. We have to make sure that in this area we don't come up with half-measures that do not fully solve the problem. That is essentially what the social assistance reform is all about. It is about a proper fight against child poverty, increased efficiency to ensure that all children, including the most vulnerable, have access to adequate protection. Those 700 children who are still in residential care are the most complicated cases and we all need to understand that proper reintegration of these children requires much more sophisticated and... yes, much costlier solutions, because their needs are much more complex;
- Now, a few words about the stages of the social assistance reform. First, we want to improve planning and budgeting related to social services. We will soon start a needs analysis in nine regions of Moldova, where new social assistance agencies will be created. In particular, we will try to identify what are the unmet needs of the most vulnerable groups in those regions and we will try to see what services they need, and we will develop an investment plan for the next three years. We want to invest in improving access to social services;
- A second important element of the reform is related to the quality of services. We want to improve case management, implement a child protection information system, and we will work to invest in prevention. While we often say that prevention is important, we often don't budget for prevention. We, at the Ministry, are now trying to understand which prevention services are most important, how they should be operationalized and funded, and yes, how much they cost;
- Another important element of the reform is investment in human resources. The work of social workers is quite complex, but the level of pay is not commensurate with this work. We will try to address this injustice. We will come up with a much more appropriate approach to human resource development. We will work to define training needs and we will increase the capacity of the system to deliver needed trainings; and
- A final important element of the social assistance reform concerns proper management. We need to understand the impact of our interventions. In September of this year, we will appoint a Chief Performance Officer. The aim is to ensure that all the resources used in social assistance are used as intended and with maximum efficiency;

I am confident that we will have two very productive days. We have a perfect mix of practitioners, international and local experts, and fellow decision makers in this room and together we have the capacity to tackle the complex issues we currently face. Thank you.

SESSION 2: BREAKAWAY DISCUSSIONS ON KEY SERVICES DESIGNED TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND ENABLE FAMILY-BASED CARE FOR CHILDREN WITHOUT ADEQUATE PARENTAL CARE



Breakaway discussions, with participation of local and central government officials, civil society organizations, experts and representatives of international organizations, aimed to facilitate a discussion amongst the diversity of participants on the progress and challenges toward meeting quality standards of five key services considered to be part of a proposed minimum package; to explore and document both positive aspects and the main gaps and obstacles related to the successful provision of key services; to outline policy and finance recommendations to address the identified gaps and challenges; and to provide information that might help to inform cost implications of those recommendations. Additional breakaway and technical discussions were organized around perspectives of the lived experience and international perspectives on strategic questions of Moldova's Social Assistance Reform Agenda.

Conclusions and recommendations of the breakaway group discussions on social support service for families with children

- Budget for support programs (e.g., parental programs);
- Increase staff for provision of family support service (e.g., dedicated child protection specialists and others, such as psychologists to support provision of family support programs);
- Enforce compliance and intersectoral cooperation; and
- Improve management of human resources by focusing on supervision and ongoing training/development support.

Conclusions and recommendations of the breakaway group discussions on foster care services

- Budget resources to cover the administrative costs of running the foster care service, including transportation costs and community outreach programs;
- Budget resources for adapting houses for placement of children with disabilities (access ramps, furniture, equipment according to the individual needs of the child);
- Increase cash assistance to ensure an adequate standard of living for children placed in foster care;
- Increase salaries of foster carers and include foster care in the basic package of services and ensure that salaries are paid from the national budget;
- Provide respite services according to the specific needs of the child and amend the foster care service regulations to reflect this;
- Address the issue of insufficient/lack of health care for children placed in foster care; and
- Budget for recreational and other activities for children in foster care.



Conclusions and recommendations of the breakaway discussions on the social service “Personal assistance”

- Revise the minimum quality standards (as related to eligibility and monitoring mechanisms);
- Develop a mechanism for granting annual and sick leave to personal assistants;
- Develop a funding mechanism to allow for the establishment of personal assistant staffing units in educational institutions;
- Develop standard operational procedures for personal assistance service;
- Ensure on-the-job and continuous training of personal assistants and service managers in line with minimum quality standards and identified training needs. Conduct the initial training in accordance with the curriculum and course material approved by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection;
- Include personal assistant services in the basic/minimum package of services funded by the national budget (including resources for competitive salaries, space accommodations and provision of assistive technology, staff training, and transport to ensure monitoring of the services provided); and
- Increase cash assistance for people with disabilities.

Conclusions and recommendations of the breakaway group discussion on the social service “Mobile Team”

- Provide adequate supplies and equipment for service provision: car, teaching materials, support materials for parents and others;
- Allocate additional resources for motivating salaries, initial and continuous training programs;
- Centrally allocate specialized human resources to support provision of services where there is a shortage of specialists (speech therapist, physiotherapist, nurse); and
- Revise eligibility criteria for acceptance of beneficiaries in the service.



Conclusions and recommendations of the breakaway discussions on the social service “Respiro”

- Increase salaries for respite service staff;
- Strengthen the mechanism for community health care collaboration for the provision of care at the beneficiary’s residence;
- Improve placement decisions based on compatibility of beneficiaries by disability and age criteria (children/adults);
- Diversify the range of services provided to beneficiaries placed in respite care;
- Ensure accreditation of all respite services (no respite service in Moldova is currently accredited);
- Revise the duration of respite placement (possibility of extension if necessary, including for a fee);
- Simplify the procedure for repeated placements;
- Allocate resources for transportation costs to respite services; and
- Involve respite service managers in budget planning processes to ensure that needed supplies are budgeted for (such as medicine, hygiene products, and others).

Conclusions and recommendations from the perspectives of the lived experience

- Facilitate ongoing participation of people with lived experience in policy development and decision-making processes;
- Emphasize and ensure continuous training of all specialists working in the child protection system and related sectors (e.g. health, education, law enforcement);
- Allocate resources for prevention and specialized services for children with disabilities;
- Allocate resources for a continuum of services for care leavers and reduce red tape in accessing services; and
- Empower people receiving services for integration into society and independent living.



Technical discussions on strategic issues of Moldova's Social Assistance Reform Agenda

Technical discussions involved international and local experts, civil society representatives, and public officials. The discussions focused on quality management in social work and were structured around the following questions:

Q1: What are the key components of quality management in social work?

Key takeaways from discussions:

- Clarify the concept of “quality management” and its areas of application;
- Determine the purpose, role and expectations for the application of “quality management” in social work;
- Train social services workforce to provide care and support service to children;
- Support parents and family service providers;
- Involve and listen to the views of children in all decisions affecting their lives;
- Develop clear methodology for assessing institutional capacity of providers and needs-based response mechanism;
- Develop monitoring framework for quality management in the social care system (clear indicators, mechanism for collecting and processing data based on indicators, and clear mechanism for use of collected data);
- Allocate and clarify the responsibilities for quality management in social assistance carried out by each institution, in particular for quality management of social services (functions of the State Social Inspectorate and functions of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection);
- Address potential confusion between quality management and internal control/audit functions;
- Consider creating a new position of a social work adviser qualified in the field of children's rights (based on

the Scottish experience / Social work adviser); and

- Encourage the creation of Professional Platforms (e.g. Association of Foster Care providers).

Q2: What are the challenges in applying quality management principles in social work?

Key takeaways from discussions:

- Resistance of people to changing social norms and professional culture in the child protection system and fear of innovation in the social assistance system;
- Quality management cannot be built without increasing salaries for employees in the social assistance system (better salaries, better working conditions, performance-based pay);
- Paper-based social assistance system;
- Limited opportunities for professional growth in the social assistance system;
- Limited capacity for cross-sectoral collaboration – social work, education, health, finance;
- Lack of unified case management system/ approach that would ensure cooperation among social protection, education, health, and other professionals; and
- Related to the above and important to emphasize – tendency of the system to see and treat problems separately (educational problems are only analyzed by the education system, health problems by the health system, etc.)

Q3: What recommendations do you have for overcoming the identified challenges?

Key takeaways from discussions:

- Dialogue and involvement of practitioners in all stages of the design of quality management mechanisms;
- Integration of case management in services in all three domains: social protection, health, and education;
- Ensuring that the “quality management” system has a positive impact on strengthening the social assistance system and not a destructive one;
- Strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration in the field of child rights protection;
- Provide a mechanism to monitor how the data collected is used;
- Quality management should emphasize the flexibility/adaptability of public policies and the social assistance system: a policy or service that is current today may not be current in two years’ time; and

- Quality management – a new approach to service delivery: focus on integrated services that respond to complex challenges.

Q4: What resources are needed to implement recommendations and ensure quality management in social assistance?

Key takeaways from discussions:

- Expertise and innovations from other European countries on the application of quality management mechanisms (e.g., good practices from Scotland);
- Human and financial resources for digitization;
- Qualified workforce open to learn processes in digital format;
- Ensuring effective cooperation between the academic system and the social protection system and between the social welfare system and the employment agencies; and
- Qualified specialists in the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.

SESSION 3: MAKING AN INVESTMENT CASE FOR BETTER CARE



Plenary session included expert presentations on investment case for family care, including a brief overview of the global evidence on how family strengthening yields economic and social returns when embedded in social policy, a brief description of current and projected financing flows and levels relevant to Moldova's care reform, an estimation of investment and recurrent costs for services needed to care for children at risk of residential care, comparison of those costs to the costs of residential care in Moldova, and an outline of possible domestic and external financing sources for the needed investments.



*"Total government expenditure on **residential care** was **1.8 times** higher than that on **foster care** between 2017 and 2021."*

Flore Rossi,
UNICEF Moldova

Flore ROSSI
Child Protection Specialist,
UNICEF Moldova

Family-type Care vs Residential Care Costs: An analysis of the recent developments in government expenditure and the costs per child in family-type care and residential care

Ms. Rossi presented a recent analysis conducted by UNICEF Moldova aimed at providing a better understanding of the government spending towards foster care and residential care services for children deprived of parental care, as well as to estimate the cost per child of such services. Ms. Rossi shared the following conclusions of the analysis:

- A similar number of children were placed in planned foster care and residential care over the five-year period 2017 – 2021, though there were diverging trends across the two services. Between 2017 and 2021, approximately 5,167 children were placed in foster care and 5,272 children were placed in residential care. The number of children in foster care increased gradually each year, whereas the number of children in residential care decreased sharply. In 2021, 1,069 children were in foster care (an increase of 6.9% from 2017) and 712 children, or half of the total number of children institutionalized in 2017, were in residential care;
- Total government expenditure on residential care was 1.8 times higher than that on foster care between 2017 and 2021. Residential care expenditure was 102.8 million Moldovan Lei (MDL) in 2021, having increased by 41.0% from 2017. Family-type care expenditure was 55.9 million MDL in 2021, following an increase of 44.0% from 2017. On average, residential care spending has been 1.8 times higher than foster care spending, and that is despite the fact that the number of children cared for has been similar across the two services;

- Some of the difference in expenditure on the two services can be explained by the profile of the children receiving care. Approximately 8.7% of the children in foster care and 21.0% of the children in residential care had a disability. This implies that the care needs of children in residential care are greater, both in terms of specialized staff, but also special needs facilities. It is also likely that there is a greater number of children with severe disabilities in residential care than in foster care. Both these aspects explain part of the difference in expenditure on the two services, though the magnitude of this difference is hard to quantify;
- However, coupled with the number of children receiving care, this difference is explained to a greater extent by inefficiencies in adapting costs to the number of beneficiaries. In family-type care, cost per child increased by 34.7% in the five years to 2021, with foster care recording a significant increase of 41.0%, and family-type children's homes a more modest 11.4%. In residential care, the cost per child trebled, from 48,367 MDL to 144,359 MDL per child. The cost per child in residential care has been consistently higher than the cost per child in foster care – 1.2 times higher in 2017 and as much as 2.8 times in 2021. This ratio of costs per child in residential care and family-type care increased yearly as the number of children in residential care fell. This reflects inefficiencies in reducing spending and adapting to a lower number of beneficiaries in residential care;
- Whereas budget data shows that expenditure on both family-type care and residential care increased over the period under analysis, at a greater rate than inflation, not much can be inferred from it about the adequacy of this expenditure. It is not possible to draw any conclusion from this data about the quality of the services provided and whether this was in line with the standards, nor to what extent this expenditure met the demand for family-type care and residential care. Anecdotal evidence suggests that budget funds are allocated towards these services is based on the availability of funds, rather than needs. In addition, many of the benefits and allowances paid to children and their carers are not adjusted to inflation so often these pay-outs decline in real terms. Other evidence points to the fact that system failures may sometimes lead to situations when young adults (18+) are cared for in residential centers for children, as they cannot be transferred to specialized institutions for adults. This in itself puts pressure on the child protection system, through greater expenditure needs, and restricts the release of the funds for child-focused purposes;
- While not immediately linked to the objective of this paper, a side conclusion emerging from this analysis is that there is no evidence that any savings have been realized from the transformation/closure of residential institutions and that these have been reallocated towards alternative family-type services. As noted from the analysis, despite the halving of the number of children in residential care between 2017 and 2021, government expenditure on this type of care increased considerably leading to the conclusion that savings are yet to be realized; and
- More broadly, in the absence of an operational performance-based budgeting system it is not possible to link results to the use of funds and analyses such as this are unnecessarily complicated. Findings from a previous assessment under this project indicate that although performance indicators are set during budget preparation, they are not systematically used to link the funding of public sector organisations with the results they deliver. In other words, foster care and residential care expenditure is not linked to the number of beneficiaries of these services. This makes it difficult to monitor and to analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of the government spending in these areas, as well as build cases to maximise the allocation of funds toward programmes that work and away from those that don't.



"Cooperation, from my point of view, and the experience we have as a country... has proven to be the key. We have been able to get to this level, to the results that we have, only by cooperating. You could only succeed when you work as a team.."

Daniela Mamaliga,
Partnerships for Every Child

Daniela MAMALIGA Director, Partnerships for Every Child

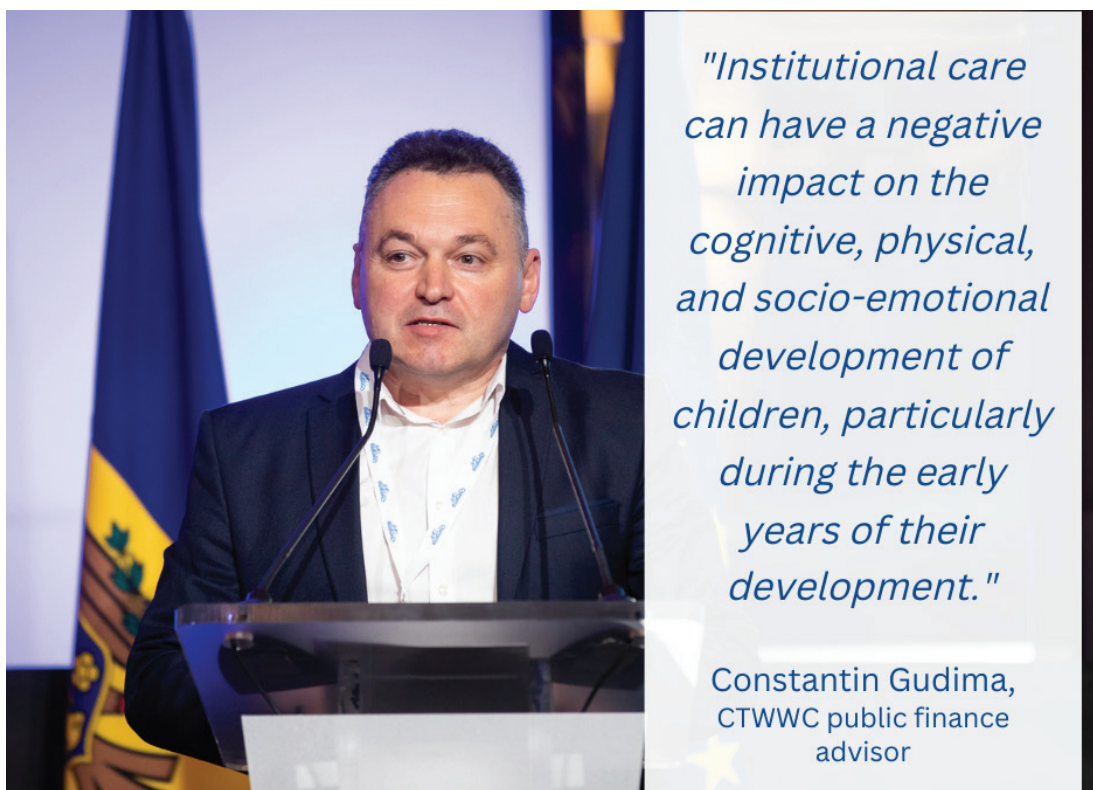
Findings and recommendations from financial assessments of six large scale residential institutions

Ms. Mamaliga presented the findings and conclusions of a comprehensive 2022 financial assessment conducted by CTWWC in six residential institutions – Auxiliary Boarding Schools from Hincesti and Anenii Noi, placement centers for children with disabilities from Hincesti and Orhei, and two placement centers for young children from Chisinau and Balti. The financial assessments aimed to inform political decisions on the future of the six institutions, including their transformation/reorganization plans. Ms. Mamaliga shared the following main findings and conclusions of the financial assessments:

- The assessment analyzed the annual costs per child for services provided by each residential institution;
- The highest costs per child were recorded in institutions for young children in Balti and Chisinau: 338,990 – 244,646 MDL per child;
- In the institutions for children with severe disabilities in Hincesti and Orhei, the largest share of the average annual cost per beneficiary is spent on care services. Expenditure for rehabilitation services is between 0.4% (Hincesti) and 0.7% (Orhei), and expenditure for development of life skills is between 5.3% (Orhei) and 10.5% (Hincesti). Educational services are lacking in both institutions;
- Staff costs represented the largest expenditure for all institutions: up to 84% of overall costs; and
- The average annual cost for caring for a child is increasing in all six institutions, even if the number of children and staff is decreasing in some of them; In some institutions the cost of caring for a child has increased by more than 50% or even doubled.

Ms. Mamaliga concluded her presentation with the following call for action addressed to public authorities:

- Finalize the deinstitutionalization process;
- Set a moratorium on new admissions, especially for children under three years old;
- Reallocate resources from residential institutions to community-based prevention and support services and family-type alternative care services;
- Strengthen inter-sectoral cooperation for primary prevention and timely and appropriate support for children and families;
- Develop integrated services for children, including inter-budgetary financing mechanisms;
- Strengthen inclusive education; and
- Make a political commitment to continue Moldova's care reform process.



Constantin GUDIMA
CTWWC public finance advisor

Investment case for family care in Moldova

Mr. Gudima presented the Investment Case for Family Care, developed by a team of CTWWC international and local consultants. The report assessed the existing financing of residential and family care services, using the best available data and estimated the resources required to fund the spectrum of programs and services Moldova needs to (i) prevent children from being placed in residential care; (ii) place children in safe, nurturing, and supported families; and (iii) transform residential settings into community assets that effectively meet community needs. Mr. Gudima presented the case for investing in a more child-centred social welfare system in Moldova.

Key messages & takeaways of the Moldova Investment Case for Family Care included:

- According to the 2021 statistics from the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, there are 33,666 children in need, or about 6.2% of children living in Moldova. There are 598 children living in institutions, of which 184 are children with disabilities.
- Residential care can have a negative impact on the cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development of children, particularly during the early years of their development.³¹ The UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children recommend residential institutions be of limited use for all children and avoided completely for children under the age of three.³²

³¹ Berens, A. E., & Nelson, C. A. (2015). The science of early adversity: is there a role for large institutions in the care of vulnerable children? The Lancet.

³² UN-General Assembly (2010), Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, A/RES/64/142.

- This advice is based on the compelling evidence about the risks and long-term impacts of residential care on children's development.³³
- The basic/minimum package of services proposed by the *Investment Case for Family and Child Protection* represents a cost-effective way to help children and families in need. It is estimated to cost 17,185 MDL per child, which is 14.3 times less expensive than the cost of placing a child in residential care (245,000 MDL per child), and 19.7 times less expensive than the cost of providing services to children with disabilities placed in residential care (339,000 MDL per child).
- Analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the minimum/basic package of services indicates that investment in these services is a sound investment with high returns, with savings to both individuals and government, and increased lifetime earnings as a result of school participation. Each child would boost their lifetime earnings by an estimated 25,421 MDL each year, and have access to adequate health services, essential for improving the health and well-being of children. It can lead to an additional 25,334 MDL per child, and would increase life expectancy, improve health, and reduce in poverty.
- An analysis conducted on the resources required to fund the basic package of services found that funding all five services adequately would require 578.5 million MDL for 2024, of which 545 million MDL would be in the form of recurrent costs, and 33.5 million MDL in one-off development costs.
- Medium-term costs for all five services were estimated. These show that the funding gap to adequately fund family child protection services is 87 million MDL for the first year, growing to 141.7 million MDL in the fifth year.³⁴
- Investment in family-based child protection services brings both direct and indirect benefits and savings to the state and individuals. The direct effect would be higher income leading to higher consumption and gross value added, and ultimately increased tax revenues, in addition to the velocity of money and the expenditure multiplier. Indirect effects are more difficult to measure, but lead to better health and well-being, which in turn lead to higher productivity and income.
- Other areas that benefit from investing appropriately in family-based child protection services are the juvenile justice system, police, detention centers, and prisons. Cost savings can also be achieved by reducing the need for courts to intervene in cases of child abuse and neglect, and by reducing the cost of medical and mental health care, juvenile justice, and correction centers.
- The proposed basic package of services is expected to be a profitable investment once those children receiving the services enter the labor market. It is estimated to yield a return on investment within 3.5 years,³⁵ with an internal rate of return of 15.69%, and a net present value of 35.9 billion MDL.
- Transitioning children from institutional to family and child protection services allows more children to be reached with the same investment. For example, for almost the same investment to serve 598 children in residential care, 33,666 children, or 6.2% of all children in Moldova, can be reached with the basic package of services. The net present value of those returns is 94.3 million MDL.

³³ Browne, K. (2009). The risk of harm to young Children in residential care. Save the Children.

³⁴ Calculation includes only MPS services costs and not the residential and MLSP CP costs.

³⁵ Authors calculation on Education and Health returns in lifetime earnings and savings in Health, Justice, Correction centers and police.

SESSION 4: THE ROLE OF CHILD-CENTERED CASH PLUS CARE IN THE CONTEXT OF CARE REFORM – INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

There is increasing recognition by social protection experts around the world that cash alone is not sufficient to address the spectrum of vulnerabilities that children and families face. While cash assistance can alleviate stressors on a household, it cannot address psycho-social needs, the needs of children with disabilities, violence, abuse in the household, and other risks. A number of recent studies show you get a bigger payoff by combining cash transfers with care services than you do from either cash or care alone. The approach is called 'cash plus care' and it is becoming a centerpiece of World Bank and UNICEF programming globally. Speakers in the session shared international evidence and takeaways to consider in combining cash transfers with care services and the key role of case management in child protection and family strengthening.

"Millennials in Moldova are peaking in their childbearing years. There will be more children to nurture than over the last 20 years..."

*Roger Pearson
Development
Pathways, LTD*



Roger PEARSON

Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Development Pathways Ltd

Mr. Pearson shared key messages & lessons learned on the process of combining cash transfer and care programs:

- There are four basic ways in which governments around the world combine care programs and cash transfer programs, which are often managed by different branches of government. No one of these approaches is necessarily better than

the other, but to be successful, governments need to have good plans, periodical reviews, and you need to make adjustments along the way;

- Cash transfer programs tend to accelerate the use of digitized management information systems because they are absolutely essential when cash transfer programs expand. Under these circumstances, existing care services can take advantage of the technical support coming in as part of cash information management systems;
- Moreover, the process of building up cash transfer systems can be used as an impetus to further improve care services as the cash transfers tend to expand the reach of government to the household level in ways that the care services were not doing on their own. A cash transfer program may branch out very widely and show cases that the care services should be looking after, but which they didn't know about because of their limited reach;
- This often puts more strain on the care services that require more personnel to start handling those issues;
- Cash transfer programs and care programs are often representing two different cultures;
- Cash transfers teams tend to be economists and statisticians, with experience in measuring impact. There isn't much in-depth person-to-person service delivery with the cash transfer programs;
- Care services programs, on the other hand, depend on humans interacting with each other, which takes much more time. These programs tend to be underfunded, staff salaries are lower, so the challenge is to bring these two cultures together, to make for an effective combined program;
- Cash transfer programs have strong management information systems that should be integrated with the management information systems that care services use;
- There has been much work done in bringing these two management information systems together and many lessons were learned along the way regarding the problems that need to be considered in this process, including that these systems depend on a good national ID and civil registration system and that it takes a lot of leadership and effort to push these programs together over a multi-year time frame;
- This effort may be very timely for Moldova. Looking at the relatively recent population pyramid from Moldova, we can see that the millennials are coming into their childbearing years and that there will be more children born in the course of the next few years in Moldova. This underlines the importance of all the current work to strengthen Moldova's child protection system.



Francesco CENEDESE

Economist, World Bank Social Protection and Jobs practice, Europe and Central Asia region.

Mr. Cenedese made an investment case for case management systems and shared the following lessons learned and key messages from the World Bank's Case Compass Program:

- We are interested in case management because we know that citizens throughout their life cycles can experience various shocks, which can turn into vulnerabilities. They face multidimensional and complex needs on the one hand and on the other hand, we have governments responding to this by offering a myriad of different benefits and services;
- Case management is the social work practice that helps to match the clients' needs with the existing benefits and services. We, therefore, believe that case management is important because it takes a holistic approach looking at the family as a whole and at poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon, it has a clear and established methodology that involves assessments of needs and strengths, planning and implementation of an action plan, monitoring of an action plan, and evaluation and closing the case;
- We believe that digitizing the case management process can be very beneficial and that a well-designed case management information system can help social workers to spend more time talking to clients and to families and less time on filing papers and on bureaucracy. If all of this works well it can lead to higher quality provision of social services for the citizen, which is always the ultimate objective of our interventions;

- At the same time decision makers have access to a whole wealth of data that they can use to monitor the program and identify areas where they need to intervene and support, plan services that meet the beneficiaries' needs;
- Taking the discussion on the case management systems through an example, I would like you to meet Flora. She is a 38-year-old single mother, pregnant with her fourth child. Right now, Flora is not working, and she just left her abusive husband, who was the only breadwinner in the house. Flora does not have any income and is not able to take care of herself and her family and she needs support. There are many different models in which case management is implemented around the world, but for the sake of this example, let's imagine that Flora lives in a country where there exists a cash transfer linked to a case management component, what we call indirect case management. Flora goes either online or to her local municipality, depending on how the system is organized, and applies for the cash transfer. Generally, there is a central government agency that would determine whether she is eligible or not and would determine the amount of money that she's eligible to receive. The data from Flora's application, after she's been deemed eligible, is then sent to a local case management information system that operates at the local level. This is the type of software that social workers use every day when they go to work. You can imagine that social workers who live in Flora's municipality see a list of cases of families that have been deemed eligible to receive the cash transfer and with a simple click on the information system they can send an SMS to call the family for an appointment. Flora receives an SMS one day that asks her to show up to her local municipality for the first meeting with the social workers. When Flora goes to the appointment, this is when the case management process starts to function. During the first meeting, the social worker will assess the needs of Flora's family but also the strengths upon which they can build together an intervention plan. The first assessment shows that Flora's case might be slightly more complex than the normal cases they see, so they decide to perform a more in-depth assessment that, for example, looks at the vulnerabilities of each of the children and it might call also for the convening of a multi-disciplinary team of experts to look at Flora's case. After the assessment is completed, social workers work together with Flora to design an intervention plan. Let's see what support Flora receives in addition to the cash transfer. First, Flora commits to send her kids to school regularly and, in exchange for that, social workers activate some support measures such as an educator, who will come to the house once a week to help with the kids. Social workers also help Flora to apply for subsidized meals at school. After Flora signs her intervention plan and parts ways with the social worker, they agree to meet again in a month to review together how things are going. This is the monitoring phase of the case management process;
- You may be thinking that what I have just presented sounds very nice, but you might be asking yourself does this always work like this? In practice, it doesn't

always work so smoothly. In practice, especially in the first phase of implementing a case management program, introducing case management in a country at scale is an investment that might require several years to see results;

- So, why is everybody interested in case management and why are so many countries moving in that direction? The answer is simple, because it is a worthwhile investment;
- At Case Compass, we developed a guide to support governments in thinking through their case management set up. The guide provides a collection of case studies representing different models of case management that are delivered around the world. The guide provides a list of challenges that the countries had in introducing these information systems, how they were able to overcome them, and a detailed description of each information system so that decisionmakers can get a sense of what it takes to get there.
- The second component of the toolkit is a visualization tool of a fully functioning prototype that is made to showcase different modules and functionalities of case management information systems;
- In advising governments on these topics in recent years, we have gathered some lessons from experience. One is the importance of human centred design of case management and validation with users. Case management information systems help social workers as long as they're user friendly and they help them to save time. If the case management comes from the top and has not been validated with social workers, it might lead to the opposite effects;
- Another important element is interoperability between different databases that exist in the country. In practice, interoperability means that when the social worker is facing the client, they won't have to ask them questions that they already know, because they see their information on their screen;
- These information systems should match the way that social workers are used to work in their daily job, but it will still require them to change slightly the way they work to improve efficiency. You need a budget and a strategy for help desk and training of the social workers to do this;
- Even the most user friendly and well-designed case management information system will not substitute the need to strengthen the capacity of social services at the local level. The case management is about the human interaction between social workers and clients. An efficient case management information system can help social workers in this interaction but cannot substitute that interaction, so strengthening of capacity and hiring of social workers is very important; and
- For case management referrals to other services, especially for the more complex cases, it is very important that local coordination and protocols are in place between the different agencies that provide these services at the local level, otherwise the information system by itself is not going to resolve that problem. For more information visit www.case-compass.org.

SESSION 5: PANEL DISCUSSION ON NEXT STEPS IN STRENGTHENING FINANCING AND PROVISION OF KEY SERVICES



Panelists analyzed the recommendations shared during the breakaway sessions on strengthening key services in Moldova and commented on next steps in addressing them, considering current reform priorities and initiatives.

Participants in the panel discussion:

Liliana GROSU

Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee
on Social Protection, Health and Family

Marcel SPATARI, Expert in social assistance reforms,
former Minister of Labor and Social Protection

Viorica DUMBRAVEANU

National Consultant, UNICEF Moldova, former Minister
of Labor and Social Protection

Daniela MAMALIGA

Director, Partnerships for Every Child

Marcela DILION-STRECHIE

Program Manager, Keystone Moldova

Liliana ROTARU

Director, CCF Moldova

Ion CRUDU

Head of Glodeni Social Work Territorial Structure



Key messages from the panel discussion:

- The social protection system in Moldova is currently 95% cash and 5% care. We need to develop the service component for families with children, but also for the elderly, for people with disabilities and others;
- To address the current challenges, we must digitalize the system, and ensure predictable funding flows; performance indicators, management mechanisms, and we should design monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure uniform provision of social services;
- We also have to realize that just as the public budget has a deficit, so the social protection system has a social deficit, and this social deficit has to be estimated and resourced. The fact that we faced major crises in the last two years means that we continue to have many people who need social protection and support;
- We need to be able to use indicators, other than the rate of poverty from the national statistics office, to determine who needs social assistance and services. And for us to be able to do that, we need to mobilise everyone in this room, to develop new monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and to work as a team;
- Cooperation and the experience that we have as a country are key to the next steps forward. We were able to achieve the results that we have today only by cooperating. Cooperation between civil society organisations, cooperation with the Government, cooperation with the Parliament, cooperation at the community level from top down to bottom up. We succeed only when we worked as a team;
- Emphasis on prevention is another key point. We focused on transitioning children out of residential institutions and creating a stable family environment for them as a first step. In time, we understand that we need to shift our attention to prevention, strengthening the family, and working on parental education. We need to build parental skills as early as possible;
- We should budget for support programs for families in addition to cash assistance, which is currently provided as part of the family support service;
- It is important that we strengthen the network of services to support families and children with disabilities at the community level. We need a network of services at the community level to prevent separation of children with disabilities from their families and to support children returning home from institutions;

- We should improve implementation of existing legislation and strengthen existing services. A specific example of strengthening existing services are the home visits carried out by health specialists for all children up to three years old. These home visits are mandatory according to the legislation and may have an important role in strengthening parenting skills, attachment to the child, and identifying the first warning signs of neglect and abuse. They could also identify early signs of development delays and refer families and children to needed services. Unfortunately, the implementation of the home visits program is not equally effective across Moldova and is one of the examples where we have a good program that needs to be properly implemented;
- We should invest in a robust continuous training system for Moldova's social services workforce and ensure the well-being of our social workers through the design of a well-functioning, structured supervision mechanism;
- We should think about services beyond the basic package of services, especially services that were developed and are functioning well in communities across Moldova. We should think about accreditation and proper oversight of these services;
- Another aspect to discuss is related to the social services contracting and the need to develop proper mechanisms for accreditation of private service providers and efficient public procurements;
- As we advance with the social assistance reform initiative, we should ensure continuity and strengthen the territorial gatekeeping committees. These committees have an important role in preventing separation of children and advancing the deinstitutionalization efforts;
- Another key element is to ensure that our costing and budgeting mechanisms for social services are directly linked with their minimum quality standards. Costing based on standards will ensure that we have the resources to enforce these standards;
- We should consider the continuity of services, both as related to the combination of services that a family may need and as related to children who transition out of the care system and into adulthood; and
- The social assistance reform initiative to finance child protection and care services from the national budget is positive and expected to address numerous challenges in financing services from the local budgets.

SESSION 6/PART 1: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CARE REFORM PRESENTED BY THE EU ACCESSION

Speakers discussed Moldova's preparation for EU accession, including addressing recent recommendations for child protection and care reforms and accessing opportunities and support that the European Union may offer for care reform.

"By creating and developing social services, we, the state institutions, will invest in human capital, in healthy families, in healthy children, who will grow up and develop in families, and who will then promote the Republic of Moldova even internationally."

Vasile Cușca,
Ministry of Labor
and Social Protection of the
Republic of Moldova



Vasile CUSCA

State Secretary, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection

Mr. Cusca presented on the care reform-related preparations for EU accession, Moldova's progress to date and next steps. Key messages in the presentation included:

- Relevant recommendations from the EU-Moldova Association Agenda focus on advancing the deinstitutionalization of children remaining in institutions, developing alternative care services, preventing separation and supporting reintegration of children into family-based care, approval of a National Child Protection Program, ensuring protection of children left behind due to migration; preventing child delinquency and tackling the problem of street children through social protection mechanisms, preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against children, including neglect, abuse, exploitation, and child labor; and

- The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection is taking action to address all recommendations in the EU-Moldova Association Agenda through the National Child Protection Program, approved in June 2022 and which includes specific objectives and actions to address each recommendations in the EU Accession Agenda, including a specific objective on care reform, an objective on violence against children, and numerous policy development actions to support workforce development, case management, and service improvements.



Ally DUNHILL

Director of Policy, Advocacy and Communications at EuroChild, also on behalf of the European Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to Community-Based Care

Ms. Dunhill presented on the the European Child Guarantee, the EU funds Checklist to promote independent living and deinstitutionalization, and the toolkit on the use of EU funds, sharing the following key messages:

- The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee is a new comprehensive EU policy framework to ensure the protection of rights of all children, and secure access to basic services for vulnerable children;
- European Child Guarantee aims to break the cycle of disadvantage across generations. Disadvantage and exclusion at an early age have an impact on children's ability to succeed later. It means they are more likely to drop out of school and have fewer chances to find decent jobs later;
- According to the Child Guarantee, member states should guarantee access to the following services: free early childhood education and care; free education

and school-based activities, including at least one healthy meal each school day; and free healthcare. Member states should provide effective access for children in need of healthy nutrition and adequate housing;

- The European Council Recommendation on establishing a European Child Guarantee constitutes a unique opportunity for meeting the needs of the estimated 760,000 children in alternative care in EU countries until 2030, for monitoring progress and outcomes of policy implementation, and for closing identified data gaps;
- Thanks to the linkage to the European Social Fund plus and national funding, this can become a reality. As demonstrated by the analysis of the 20 National Action Plans (NAPs), there is already a commitment by 16 EU Member States within the European Child Guarantee to improve the lives of children prior to, during, and after they are placed in alternative care. It is hoped that other countries will follow suit; and
- The European Expert Group (EEG) on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care is a coalition advocating to replace institutionalization with family- and community-based support. It has 12 members including the European Disability Forum, Inclusion Europe, UNICEF, and Eurochild. The EEG provides expertise on the transition from institutionalization to family- and community-based support and focuses on how EU funding, law, and policy should be used to facilitate the transition. The EEG created a range of resources that are publicly available and recommended for use in care reform processes - <https://deinstitutionalisation.com/eeg-publications/>.

Ms. Dunhill shared the following key recommendations in line with the EU Child Guarantee and Moldova's candidate status:

- Invest in reforming the child protection system and deinstitutionalization;
- Provide free school meals for primary & secondary students;
- Meaningfully include children with migrant backgrounds, not only within the school environment but in the community, supporting their families in this process; and
- Ensure quality standards for child welfare professionals and mental health professionals.

SESSION 6/PART 2: LEARNINGS ON WHAT INVESTMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR FAMILY STRENGTHENING AND PREVENTION OF FAMILY SEPARATION

**Roman ZHUKOVSKYI and
Marijana JASAREVIC**
World Bank Social Protection Specialists

Mr. Zhukovskyi and Ms. Jasarevic presented on learnings regarding the importance of social protection to enable care reform, role of case management in ensuring effective social protection, and defining disability and needs, functional disability assessments, and graduating from social protection services. Selected key messages on the impact of investments in social protection included:

- Investments in social protection build human capital, can have life-saving effects from utero, and prevent suicides. There is strong evidence of a positive impact on health, nutrition, cognitive and socio-emotional skills;
- Investments in social protection reduce violence and improve psychological wellbeing. Evidence from Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, and Mali shows that cash transfers can reduce intimate partner violence within households, decrease depression among women, and bolster self-confidence; and
- Research shows that each \$1 USD invested in quality early childhood programs can yield returns between \$4 USD and \$16 USD.

"Investments in social protection build human capital, can have life-saving effects from utero, and prevent suicides. There is strong evidence of a positive impact on health, nutrition, cognitive and socio-emotional skills"

Roman Zhukovskyi
World Bank



*Research shows that
each **\$1 invested** in
quality early childhood
programs can yield
returns between
\$4 and \$16.*

Marijana Jasarevic
World Bank
Europe and Central Asia region





Stefania ILINCA

Advisor on Long-term Care, World Health Organization

Ms. Ilinca presented on the importance of nurturing family care, especially for younger children, and the need to ensure that early childhood intervention and disability services are accessible at the community level to enable early intervention, nurturing family care, and wellbeing of children with disability. Key messages of the presentation included:

- Care encompasses all activities undertaken by others to ensure those who cannot fulfill such activities independently maintain a standard of living and of functioning that allows them to reach their full potential, to fulfill their human rights, and to maintain human dignity;
- Care is most often provided by women to children during the development process or to individuals of all ages who due to illness, disability, or other conditions face limitations in daily activities;
- The foundations for lifelong health, well-being, and productivity are built in pregnancy and the first three years after birth. Healthy development is essential for building and maintaining health and well-being throughout the life course. All non-communicable diseases (NCDs) with a high burden of disability have risk factors found in early childhood;
- Early childhood is where the problem begins and where health issues need to begin to be addressed.
- Children need nurturing care. Nurturing care provides the conditions that promote health, nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregiving, and opportunities for early learning;

- To thrive and function in the community, persons with disability (of all ages) need timely and comprehensive access to support services across the health and social protection systems. This implies that all general health and social services are disability-inclusive but also the development of targeted services;
- At the same time, persons with disability rely on targeted interventions to facilitate access to other crucial services like education, labor market, transportation, housing, design of public spaces, and others;
- BUT most care is and will continue to be provided by informal caregivers, families, and social networks. Therefore, facilitating people with disability to live in the community requires investment in supporting the development, maintenance, and protection of informal care resources;
- While it is well recognized that strong community-based care is a precondition for the full participation of persons with disability and of older people, global experiences in the last decades have revealed that deinstitutionalization efforts are constrained not only by gaps in availability and accessibility of services, but also by: fragmentation, lack of diversity in types of services and supports, low quality (acceptability, lack of person-centeredness), insufficiently trained human resources (low professionalization, limited access to continuous training and up-skilling), and lack of support for families and informal caregivers;
- Prevention is always the best-buy option;
- Intervening early (especially during the first years of life) and investing in rehabilitation can help reduce the need for care and support across the lifespan;
- Deinstitutionalization is more costly and resource intensive than preventing institutionalization in the first place;
- Enormous societal level costs are incurred from failing to offer all individuals the opportunity to flourish. The direct costs to health and care systems represent a small share of total societal costs. The vast majority of costs accrue indirectly through productivity losses for persons with disability and their caregivers, limited potential for economic growth and development through inefficient allocation of resources and failure to optimize human capital;
- The costs of service provision pale in comparison to the cost of inaction!
- Caring for children or adults with disabling conditions is demanding, especially when infrastructure and support are inadequate;
- Caregivers often experience negative physical and mental health effects, especially if their caring responsibilities are intensive or frequent;
- Caregivers can find it impossible to reconcile work with care responsibilities, which often places them in precarious economic positions;
- Caregiving can be isolating, especially when caregivers face stigma and have little respite from caring responsibilities;

Ms. Ilinca shared the following key levers for policy intervention

- Invest in families and communities, work in partnership with them to build the conditions that can prevent institutionalization at all ages!
- Increase the prominence of disability-inclusiveness of mainstream services in the health and social policy agenda. This is increasingly the case for healthy ageing agendas but remains under-prioritized in child and adolescent health policies;
- Invest for sustainability. Develop capacity to intervene early and pro-actively in the least intensive (and costly) care settings, taking into account shifting demographic and morbidity patterns; and
- Prioritizing coordination and shared accountability across relevant sectors and across public and private actors, including pooling resources, aligning goals and processes, and prioritizing outcome-focused innovation and investment are essential for the development of integrated, person-centered community-based resources.



"There is a will in Moldova to transform your childcare system, to make lives better for your children. And I think there can be no greater compliment to a nation than that their society cares and cares about those who are most vulnerable."

Vivien Thomson,
Social Work Scotland

Vivien THOMSON
Children and Families Policy and Practice Lead, Social Work Scotland

Ms. Thomson presented on the role of the social services workforce and importance of investing in the social service workforce to enable care reform. Ms. Thomson shared lessons learned and good practices from Scotland's Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) policy framework and practice. The presentation included the following key messages:

- Scotland began its improvement journey in 1968 with a groundbreaking piece of legislation which brought together many disparate social services into social work departments. Some of these services were delivered by the local government and some were delivered by the NGOs. The social work departments were based within the local government structure; of particular significance is that no matter what the need for children, whether it was a care need or whether it was an offending need, everything was dealt with within the same local government structure. This approach was grounded in the recognition that children may display the impact of trauma in their lives in different ways, but at the core remains trauma experienced by the child;
- In 1995, Scotland introduced the concept of the child in need. A child in need is a child who has any kind of need. It might be a need for protection. It might be a need because they were exhibiting offending behavior. It might be a need because of disability or some other cognitive issue that was there, but if they were a child in need, they had a right to have an assessment and a right to have those needs met;

- What followed next was a plethora of research and evidence that showed that Scotland needed to do much more. That research led to the current policy, which is known as Getting it Right for Every Child, often abbreviated to GIRFEC. GIRFEC is based on evidence and was put into practice across all local authorities within Scotland and then placed into legislation. This sequence is important because a country may legislate for many things. But if you do not pay attention to implementation and how that works in practice, then a good intent may fail;
- The core messages within GIRFEC are: meet need early, support families to be able to care for their own children, and working together. GIRFEC model is also built on a tiered approach, starting with universal services supporting children and families as much as they possibly can. Where that is not sufficient, there's a need for targeted services and for some children there will be a need for specialist services. But if we get our universal services right, if we are working across disciplines and across services, then the number of children who require targeted or specialist services should be fairly low. Crucial importance is working together, working across disciplines, and across agencies;
- The Scottish practice model is further based on the well-being indicators, developed based on research and evidence. We want children to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included. And if those well-being needs are met, they will grow up healthy. Where these indicators are not met, our job is to look at what they need, at the strengths and the not so strong factors that will indicate what intervention needs to be given;
- Over time, the biggest impact of the new practice model was the development of the shared responsibility concept and the understanding that it is everybody's job, not just the teachers, not just the social workers, not just the health or the mental health professionals to make sure that a child is alright;
- The current Scottish care reform agenda is called The Promise. It is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is a promise that has been made by the people of Scotland and by the Scottish Government to our children. And that promise is that they will grow up loved, safe, and respected. The Promise is a 10-year program and is the output of an extensive three-year review of the Scottish care system, which identified the human and the economic cost of not getting care right. Importantly, the review was based on discussions with 5,000 young people who were in the care system or who had previous experience of the care system. You can read about the review on The Promise website <https://thepromise.scot/>;
- Social workers are the glue that holds that multi-agency team that I spoke about together. Each child, regardless of their range of needs, will have one plan. So one child, one plan. And there might be many professionals involved in what needs to happen to meet that child's needs, but there will be a lead professional and quite often, that lead professional is the social worker, so they have that coordination role. This doesn't mean that social workers do everything. In fact, often they only do small parts of it, but they will have that coordination role with the other disciplines and because everybody has signed up to GIRFEC, whether it's a teacher or a health visitor or a drugs worker or whoever else might be around that table, they are all signed up to working in that particular way. And that is a strength within our current system;
- Social workers in Scotland are a registered profession, we cannot practice if we are not registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. A social worker needs to hold a four-year degree or the equivalent and operates to a professional code

of practice. We have around 3,000 social workers within children's services and most work within our local government structure. Social workers are supported by a large number of paraprofessionals, social work assistance, family support workers, early years workers and people who work with young people who are offending. So there is a large number of people who are part of the social services workforce but might not be an actual social worker;

- Social workers in Scotland have a core key function in our public protection agenda, not only with children, also with adults at risk or with high risk offenders and adults. We are responsible for the identification, the assessment, and the protection of people who are at risk of abuse or neglect or who are vulnerable for other reasons. We have what we call the minimum intervention principle, and that means that you do not intervene if you do not need to intervene. And if you do have to intervene then you use the lowest level of statutory intervention that you can, to achieve the desired outcome and that's very important; and
- As a way of conclusion, I often say that social workers are only interested when there is a problem, and that can be a lonely place to be. But it is such an important place to be. It's important that somebody is there when people are down and when people are vulnerable. In Scotland, social workers have quite an odd position. They can challenge the system. They will, on one hand, be advocating for the needs and the rights of the children that they are working with. But they're also an agent of the state in terms of protection. And that seems odd, but it works. And I think sometimes that tension is what makes some of it work.

PANEL DISCUSSION ON FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LINKAGES WITH CARE REFORM IN MOLDOVA AND IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE DONOR AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS' PERSPECTIVE

Donor and development partners' representatives commented on the recommendations and action steps emerging from the conference and their impact on assistance and funding priorities.



Mathew WATSON

Senior Technical Advisor, Representative of the Center for DDI/Inclusive Development Hub's Children in Adversity Team at USAID Washington

Q: *You have been engaged in Moldova for several years and have been able to see the progress made in care reform. What will you takeaway from this*

conference and share with other countries in which Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) is engaged? What are you most excited about?

Key takeaways:

- Moldova has been doing a lot of really good work over the past 15–20 years. In 1995, there were 17,000 children in residential care in Moldova. Those key stakeholders in NGOs that have really led forward on these efforts and have been champions for children as well as the iterations of the Government of Moldova, brought it down to 685, which is remarkable. So when you ask me what am I taking from here, that's what I'm taking from here;
- We work with 15 countries around the world, always working around early childhood development, care reform, the prevention and response on violence against children. And when we're talking to the Government of Kenya, and to the Government of Colombia, and they're saying: '...there's too many children, there's so much to do...we don't have enough resources', I use Moldova as an example. I use Moldova as that inspiration, and it's that collective approach. I think, the environment of working together on a common cause has been, an example for other countries where we work around the world. And so that is one of the things I'm really going to take with me every time I come here; and
- It is not easy to do, but when I come to Moldova and I see what's happening with this many people coming together around the common solution and I see the determination to get past all of the hurdles and the challenges and I see the innovation and the cooperation, that is what excites me and I am so happy to be part of this journey and I cannot wait to see what comes next. USAID, in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation, and GHR Foundation, have funded much of the work of Changing the Way We Care and we are just really proud to be backers of this work carried out in partnership with the Government of Moldova and all of you here in this room. And we are in the rest of the journey with you. So let's take it across the finish line.



Roman ZHUKOVSKIY
World Bank Social Protection Specialist

Q: Are there specific recommendations that you found particularly relevant to the World Bank's engagement in Moldova. Given the World Bank's particular interest in and growing expertise in cash plus care, could you share any specific insight or suggestions as to how Moldova might embrace this approach moving forward?

Key takeaways:

- The work that you do to strengthen the care for children and to ensure that it is easier for families in need and children at risk to remain in family care and grow up into healthy and productive adults is enormously important. Every country should be very concerned with how to do this right;
- We make the case that case management should look at the family in its entirety and the difficulties that a family encounters and try to match it with the government resources;
- When needed services are lacking, there is a need to create additional support. We are discussing whether this support should be in the form of a basic or minimum package of services and how we can expand the number of tools that we use to help these families;
- Our proposition is to help Moldova benefit from the experience we collect from different countries. We would like to support the Government of Moldova's efforts in developing this approach, where we don't talk about a family that has a problem, but we change the narrative and talk about what can we do to support a family reach the highest potential attainable for the family or for a particular child. And I think that we should talk about case management from this perspective; and

- Last but not least. I think that Moldova is in a better situation than many countries. Overall in the region, we have people who are dedicated, smart, well educated, passionate about what they do. And this is a very good foundation for us to work with. And I'm sure that together we will be able to cross the finish line.



Simon SPRINGETT **United Nations Resident Coordinator**

Q: *Given the United Nations significant presence in Moldova in both the humanitarian and development spheres, what are ways in which you see care reform or social assistance reform being a nexus for both sectors, are there particular initiatives the UN is supporting, where linkages could be made with care reform?*

Key takeaways:

- I am very proud to co-chair the sectoral Council on Social Protection and Labor with Minister Buzu. This shows the United Nations commitment to supporting social protection reform and the belief that we have on the impact that it can make on a nation. Since the outset of the war in Ukraine, the United Nations, with all of our partners in support of government, have been intentional that all of our interventions in support of refugees also support local families, local communities, and have a very intentional focus on strengthening both local and national systems;
- As a social protection community in Moldova, we are fortunate in that we have a strong ecosystem of organizations, local public authorities, social workers, and NGOs, with strong technical competencies and mandates, and the commitment to see things through;

- Moldova also has a strong historical trajectory of change and progress in how care is approached and delivered with recognized sustainability. Moldova also has the political will to leave no one behind and to tackle the tough problems within the social protection sphere;
- We should truly take advantage of this context in several ways: We need to redouble our efforts to improve coordination and the complementarity in the programming that's done both by national institutions, UN agencies, banks, NGOs, and donor organizations. Not only in this sector, but truly across all sectors of the social assistance reform agenda;
- This requires additional investments from every single partner and from every single one of us in this room. To coordinate well requires significant investments in human resources and staff time. It requires us to be systematic in what we do, and all of us need to be engaged. Improving coordination doesn't mean attending a conference. Improving coordination means actually actively participating in coordination and making things better; and
- Going back to the title of this conference. The EU accession process. And how can we take best advantage of this and particularly all of the tools that are provided to us through many of the EU directives. If Moldova enters the negotiation process by the end of the year, this will open significantly more tools and opportunities, and I hope that we can work together as one to support the Government of Moldova to achieve these ambitions.



Flore ROSSI

Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Moldova

Q: The themes of disability and violence against children are two of the main risks or vulnerabilities that the proposed minimum social service package for family care aims to address, given that these are two critical priorities for the UN broadly and UNICEF specifically, what suggestions do you have for how to ensure these two issues can remain at the forefront of care reform efforts, especially as it relates to the prevention of family separation?

Key takeaways:

- Care reform efforts have to reach the most vulnerable children and their caregivers, and they should stay at the heart of our investment;
- Before talking about funding and investment, let me take a few step back. We know that the most vulnerable children are children at risk of violence as well as children with disabilities;
- According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, at the end of 2022 there were more than 13,000 children at risk and the majority of them are subject to neglect, abuse, and violence. When we look at the total number of offenses against children, it's not changing significantly in the last two years and the number of registered offenses on gender-based violence affecting adolescent girls is increasing. When we look at the situation of children with disabilities, we know they remain a vulnerable and socially excluded group. If we want to address the multiform of drivers of violence against children and also prevent family separation, we should also invest in caregivers, mainly women;

- We need to look at the intersection and links between violence against children and violence against women by analysing shared risk factors, norms within families, and intergenerational transmission, as well as to include more gender focus analysis around deinstitutionalization and prevention of family separation;
- Boys, girls, adolescent women, victims of violence and those at risk, including children with disabilities, have to remain at the heart of any care, social reform. UNICEF is committed to invest to address the needs of this population;
- UNICEF stood by the government to support care reform since the beginning and we continue to stand by this commitment. Last year, UNICEF invested more than \$60 million USD directly to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and Chisinau Municipality to strengthen child protection system, including for Ukrainian children and women; and
- We have the opportunity to do the final push to invest in the child protection system in Moldova, but it's not easy. Child protection and gender-based violence programs are chronically underfunded, so we need all of us to ensure visibility of the needs of children and women and to ensure their protection and that the child protection, gender-based violence costs and services are included in education and health systems as well.



CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE AND NEXT STEPS FORWARD

This first International Conference on Financing of Family Strengthening and Child Protection Services in the Context of Moldova's European Union Association Agenda held in Chisinau from 20–21 June 2023 has been a focused discussion between central and local government, non-governmental, private and academic sectors, international experts and organizations, on ensuring adequate public financing for strengthening families and protecting children, and meeting the challenges associated.

Participants and organizers of the conference have acknowledged the indisputable evidence that institutional care has negative consequences for both individual children, families, and for society at large, and that international conventions, to which Moldova is party, national policy, and European Union recommendations, foresee the importance of family strengthening and family care with residential care only as a last resort option.

In considering financing for better care of children, conference speakers presented *Investing in Family Care for Moldova's Future* report, which suggests the minimum package of services for family and child protection represents a cost per child 14.3 times less expensive than residential care and 19.7 times less expensive than the cost of providing services for children with disabilities within residential care; and that the cost-effectiveness of the package indicates a sound investment with high returns, savings to both individuals and government, and increased lifetime earnings, access to adequate services, increased life expectancy, improved health, and reduction in poverty.

Translating the important discussions coming out of the conference and acknowledging that the Government of Moldova holds primary responsibility for the protection of children and strengthening of families, conference participants, speakers, and partners shared the following key recommendations and takeaways:

- There is compelling evidence that residential care has negative consequences for children, families, and society in general;
- Funding services for children and families is an investment in increasing Moldova's human capital;
- National policy and European Union recommendations under the Association Agenda prioritize family care and the importance of strengthening families, with residential care always being the last option;
- There is a need for a basic package of social services guaranteed and finance from the state (national) budget;
- A basic package of services must include support services for families, sufficient alternative family care services for all children who need these services, especially young children and children with disabilities;
- Investments in the basic package of services are cost efficient, with a high return and would bring enormous savings for the state, as well as ensure increased lifetime income, access to adequate services, increased life expectancy, improved health, and poverty reduction;

- It is important to redirect funds from residential institutions to ensuring a minimum package of services and, in particular, to family-based care, in line with national policy and EU recommendations;
- A moratorium on the institutionalization of children under 6 years old should be implemented.

Civil society and development partners have also shared their commitment to come alongside the Government of Moldova in support of the recommendations and actions resulting from the conference, including:

- Collaborate as partners, coordinate and leverage resource in order to best support the priorities of the Government of Moldova;
- Assist in the development, piloting, monitoring, and implementation of strategies and approaches to deinstitutionalize children, model alternative family-based care, and prevent violence against children aligned to the National Program for Child Protection 2022–2026 (launched last year) and its accompanying action plan;
- Assist in creating and resourcing systems for documentation and monitoring of children at risk of family separation and placed in / exiting from alternative care;
- Develop capacity of local authorities, the social service workforce, civil society, and communities through various programs and interventions aligned to the Government of Moldova strategies and programs;
- Document and disseminate good practices and support scaling of the social services included in the minimum package, such that the uptake reaches more and more geographies, communities, families and children; and
- Lend their ongoing expertise, technical assistance and capacities towards the aims of better care of children in Moldova and strengthening of Moldovan families.











CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY 1 – June 20, 2023	
8:30–09:00	<i>Welcome coffee and registration of participants</i>
9:00–10:00	<p>Opening remarks</p> <p>Moderator: Dan PERCIUN, Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Igor GROSU, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova • Kent D. Logsdon, United States Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova • Inguna DOBRAJA, World Bank Country Manager for Moldova • Ilija TALEV, Deputy Representative UNICEF Moldova • Anne SMITH, Chief of Party, Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC) • Video message from people with lived experience
10:00–10:45	<p>Session 1: Setting the stage</p> <p>Moderator: Ludmila UNGUREANU, Chief of Party, CTWWC Moldova</p> <p>Overview: Presentations on the main concepts driving the conference</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philip GOLDMAN, President of Maestral International and Member of the CTWWC Governing Board <i>Public Expenditure and Children's Care</i> • Alexei BUZU, Minister of Labor and Social Protection <i>Social assistance reform agenda and the anticipated impact on children's care</i>
10:45–11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15–12:45	<p>Session 2: Analysis of progress to date and challenges in achieving performance objectives and meeting minimum quality standards of the key services designed to support families and enable family-based care for children without adequate parental care</p> <p>Moderators: Beth BRADFORD, Technical Director, CTWWC Natalia SEMENIUC, Project coordinator, Partnerships for Every Child</p> <p>Overview: Breakout group discussions organized around the following key services –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family support service 2. Family-based alternative care 3. Personal assistance for children with disabilities 4. Mobile services 5. Respite services <p>Facilitated discussions will focus on the following questions: To what extent do key services achieve their performance objectives and meet their minimum quality standards? What are the main gaps and obstacles, including financing gaps, in achieving performance objectives and minimum quality standards of key services? What are the specific recommendations (policy and others) to address the identified gaps and challenges? What are the costs for implementing the proposed recommendations?</p>

	<p>Additional group and technical discussions will be organized around:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Perspectives of the lived experience International perspectives on strategic questions of Moldova's Social Assistance Reform Agenda – quality management in social assistance International perspectives on strategic questions of Moldova's Social Assistance Reform Agenda – achieving value for money in social assistance <p>Group moderators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Irina SPIVACENCO, Ala NOSATII Ana PALII, Livia MARGINEAN Marcela DILION, with support from Natalia SEMENIUC Liliana SIMCOV, Virgiliu HANGAN Oxana ISAC, Ecaterina GOLOVATII Liliana ȚIBREA, Mihaela CIORBA Parascovia MUNTEANU Group of experts on social assistance reform
12:45–13:45	Lunch break
13:45–14:30	<p>Session 2 (continued): Analysis of progress to date and challenges in achieving performance objectives and meeting minimum quality standards of the key services designed to support families and enable family-based care for children without adequate parental care</p> <p>Moderators: Beth BRADFORD, Natalia SEMENIUC</p> <p>Overview: Presentation of the breakout groups' conclusions, including identified next steps, recommendations, and costs for addressing existing gaps.</p>
14:30–15:15	<p>Session 3: Making an investment case for better care</p> <p>Moderator: Igor CHISCA, Head of the Child Protection Directorate, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection</p> <p>Overview: Expert presentations on investment case for family care, including a brief overview of the global evidence on how family strengthening yields economic and social returns when embedded in social policy, a brief description of current and projected financing flows and levels relevant to Moldova's care reform, an estimation of investment and recurrent costs for services needed to care for children at risk of residential care, comparison of those costs to the costs of residential care in Moldova and an outline of possible domestic and external financing sources for the needed investments.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flore ROSSI and Artiom SICI, UNICEF Moldova <i>Family-type Care vs Residential Care Costs: An analysis of the recent developments in government expenditure and the costs per child in family-type care and residential care</i> Daniela MAMALIGA, Director, Partnerships for Every Child <i>Findings and recommendations from financial assessments of residential institutions</i> Constantin GUDIMA, CTWWC public finance advisor <i>Presentation of the draft investment case for family care</i>

15:15 – 16:00	<p>Session 4: The role of child-centered cash plus care in the context of care reform – international evidence of impact</p> <p>Moderator: Francesca STUER, Senior Advisor, Maestral International</p> <p>Overview: There is increasing recognition by social protection experts around the world that cash alone is not sufficient to address the spectrum of vulnerabilities that children and families face. While cash assistance can alleviate stressors on a household, it cannot address psycho-social needs, the needs of children with disabilities, violence and abuse in the household, and other risks. A number of recent studies show you get a bigger payoff by combining cash transfers with care services than you do from either cash or care alone. The approach is called ‘cash plus care’ and it is becoming a centerpiece of World Bank and UNICEF programming globally.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roger PEARSON, Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Social Protection • Francesco CENEDESE, Economist, World Bank Social Protection and Jobs practice, Europe and Central Asia region
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
16:30–18:00	<p>Session 5: Panel discussion on the recommendations and next steps for strengthening financing and provision of key services designed to support families and enable family-based care for children without adequate parental care</p> <p>Moderators: Traian TURCANU, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Moldova Viorelia MOLDOVAN-BATRINAC, National Child Protection Program Coordinator, CTWWC</p> <p>Overview: Panelists analyze the challenges and recommendations shared during the breakout sessions and comment on next steps in addressing them, considering current reform priorities and initiatives.</p> <p>Participants in the panel discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liliana GROSU, Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family • Marcel SPATARI, Lead expert, Social Assistance Reform Initiative • Viorica DUMBRAVEANU, National Consultant, UNICEF Moldova • Daniela MAMALIGA, Director, P4EC • Marcela DILION-STRECHIE, Program Manager, Keystone Moldova • Liliana ROTARU, Director, CCF Moldova • Ion CRUDU, Head of Glodeni Social Work Territorial Structure
18:00–20:00	Networking Fourchette

Day 2– June 21, 2023

9:00–11:00

Session 6: Opportunities for care reform presented by the European Union Accession and implications for investments in care reform

Moderators: **Mathew WATSON**, Senior Technical Advisor,
Center for DDI/Inclusive Development Hub's Children
in Adversity Team at USAID
Francesca Stuer, Senior Advisor, Maestral International

Opportunities for care reform presented by the EU Accession

- **Vasile CUȘCA**, State Secretary, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
Care reform-related preparations for EU accession: progress to date and next steps
- **Ally DUNHILL**, Director of Policy, Advocacy and Communications at EuroChild, also on behalf of the European Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to Community-Based Care
EU accession-aligned instruments in support of care reform
 - The European Child Guarantee: its purpose, 5 focus areas, importance of family strengthening and prevention of family separation
 - The EU funds Checklist to promote independent living and deinstitutionalization
 - Toolkit on the use of EU funds

Learnings on what investments are essential for family strengthening and prevention of family separation

- **Roman ZHUKOVSKIY**, World Bank Social Protection Specialist
Social protection and care reform: Learning regarding the importance of social protection to enable care reform (i.e., strengthen families, prevent child-family separation and enable families to take care of their children, including children with disabilities) role of case management in ensuring effective social protection
- **Marijana JASAREVIC**, World Bank Social Protection Specialist
Social protection and care reform: defining disability and needs, functional disability assessments and graduating from social protection

- **Stefania ILINCA**, Advisor on Long-term Care, World Health Organization
Importance of nurturing family care, especially for younger children, and the need to ensure early childhood intervention and disability services are accessible at community level to enable early intervention, nurturing family care and well-being of children with disability
- **Vivien THOMSON**, Children and Families Policy and Practice Lead, Social Work Scotland
Care reform: the role of the social services workforce and importance of investing in the social service workforce to enable Care Reform and effective CASH PLUS CARE: good practice and lessons learned

Discussion and Q&A

11:00–11:30

Coffee break

11:30–12:15	<p>Fostering intentional linkages with Care Reform in Moldova—identifying opportunities from the donor and development partners’ perspective</p> <p>Moderator: Kelley BUNKERS, Maestral International/CTWWC</p> <p>Overview: Donor and development partners’ representatives will comment on the recommendations and action steps emerging from the conference and their impact on assistance and funding priorities.</p>
12:15–12:45	<p>Conclusions of the conference and next steps forward</p> <p>Overview: the session will summarize the learning gained during this conference, the emerging research questions, and the action points for follow up. The session will close with a summary of the agreed-upon actions to take the recommendations forward for strengthened public financing for better care.</p>
12:45–13:30	<i>Coffee break</i>

PLENARY SPEAKERS



Igor GROSU, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

Speaker of the Parliament of Republic of Moldova, Legislature XI. During his career, activated as Deputy Minister of Education. He also has been for many years an expert in international projects implemented by UNDP and World Bank. Igor Grosu is also one of the founders of several NGOs: Amnesty International Moldova, National NGO Assistance Center of Moldova "CONTACT", the Pro-Democracy Association, the National Youth Council of Moldova and the Centre for Analysis and Evaluation of Reforms. He has a BA in history. Since 2019, when became a Member of the Parliament, Mr. Grosu drafted over 100 project bills.



Dan PERCIUN, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

Mr. Perciun is the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Protection, Healthcare and Family. During his career, Mr Perciun served in the Ministry of Education as the Head of the e-Transformation and Information Department. He also has been a consultant for international management consulting companies and organizations including UNICEF. Since being elected as a Member of the Parliament in 2019, Mr. Perciun has drafted over 100 pieces of legislation. Mr. Perciun studied in the United Kingdom and has a BA in Political Science, Psychology and Sociology from Cambridge University.



Kent D. LOGSDON, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova

Ambassador Logsdon is the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova and is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He most recently served as the Chief of Staff to the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment and prior to that was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Energy Resources. He was also the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, Germany, serving as Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. from January 2017 to May 2018. He holds a Master's Degree in International Relations from the University of Virginia and a Bachelor's Degree in Government from the University of Notre Dame.



Inguna DOBRAJA, World Bank

Ms. Dobraja is the World Bank's Country Manager for Moldova. Ms. Dobraja has been working in the World Bank for more than 25 years. She has professional experience in the managerial, operational, and corporate areas of the institution encompassing: country office, program and portfolio management, extensive operational work, including World Bank's financial and knowledge products, as well as specific social protection technical expertise.

Prior to joining the Bank, from 1990 to 1993, Ms. Dobraja served as Director of the International Economic Relations Department at the Ministry of Welfare in Latvia. She holds a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Latvia and has the Executive Leadership Program diploma from the Harvard Business School.



Ilija TALEV, UNICEF Moldova

Mr. Talev is the Deputy Representative for UNICEF Moldova. Previously, Mr. Talev worked with UNICEF as a social policy specialist in his native North Macedonia, before moving to Belize as a Programme Coordinator, and New York as a Public Finance Specialist. He has supported the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Financing initiatives, particularly the work on increasing and improving public, private, and blended finance for achieving the SDGs. He has also worked on strengthening UNICEF programming in social protection for children including supporting decentralization and local governance delivery of services for children, and other good governance initiatives.



Anne SMITH, Changing the Way We Care

Ms. Smith is the Global Director for the Changing the Way We Care. She brings 25 years of strategic leadership of programs and initiatives aimed at strengthening vulnerable children, their families, and their communities to the position. As the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Deputy Regional Director for Southern Africa, Anne drove strategy and led all technical and programmatic assistance for 10 CRS country programs in the region aimed at building the resilience of vulnerable families and communities. Anne returned to CRS Headquarters in the summer of 2015 to lead global strategy for CRS' Overseas Operations Division, and to serve as the liaison for CRS' Board of Directors and its Overseas Operations Committee.

SPEAKERS



Alexei BUZU, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection

Mr. Buzu is the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of Moldova. Previously he has worked as the Director of the Partnership for Development Center. Mr. Buzu is a specialist in public policy management, offering support to several ministries in the process of designing, implementing, and assessing public sector policies. He has a vast consulting experience in organizations such as Crisis Management Initiative Finland, Global Gender Help Desk, Council of Europe, UN Women, Lakarmissionen Sweden and Light Foundation Romania, UNDP Moldova, UNICEF, Terres des Hommes, GIZ Moldova, and Soros Moldova. His expertise focuses on gender equality, youth policies and development at central and local levels, and social inclusion.



Francesco CENEDESE, World Bank

Mr. Cenedese is an Economist at the World Bank Social Protection and Jobs practice, working in the Europe and Central Asia region. Over the last few years, he has been working on operations supporting social assistance programs in European countries, including the implementation of the Guaranteed Minimum Income program in Italy. He is co-leading the Case Compass initiative, a toolkit to support interested countries improve case management services and develop case management information systems. Previously, Mr. Cenedese has worked on government relations between the World Bank and Southern European countries.



Ion CRUDU, Social Assistance and Family Protection Department, Glodeni

Mr. Crudu is the Head of the Social Assistance and Family Protection Department in Glodeni. He is an experienced professional in the field of social work and has been actively involved in attracting investments for the development of social services. He has an extensive experience in implementing, monitoring and evaluating services at local level. Since the early days of the war in Ukraine, he has been actively involved in the management of the refugee crisis, by creating two Temporary Refugee Placement Centres. He is also involved in strengthening the civil society sector in Glodeni district, for a better participation in the decision-making process in the localities of Glodeni district.



Vasile CUȘCA, State Secretary, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection

Mr. Cușca is a State Secretary at the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova. His previous roles within the Ministry were Chief of Policy Department for Protection of Rights of People with Disabilities, Chief of Department for Social Protection of People with Disabilities, Social Assistance Services Department, and Social Assistance Reform Department. Mr. Cușca has a Bachelor's Diploma in Social Assistance and a Master's Diploma in Human Rights.



Viorica DUMBRĂVEANU, UNICEF Moldova

Ms. Dumbrăveanu is a national consultant in child protection, at UNICEF Moldova. She has over 20 years of experience in the social protection system, and 18 years in the field of child protection. She has contributed to the development of the social protection system and in particular of the policy, legal, and institutional framework in the field of family protection and children's rights, social assistance for low-income families, and preventing and combating violence against children. As a consultant at UNICEF, she was involved in responding to the refugee crisis by strengthening the child protection system, including social services for children and families.



Dr. Ally DUNHILL, EuroChild

Dr. Dunhill is the Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Communications at Eurochild, a civil society organization based in Brussels. She is responsible for providing strategic leadership and oversight to Eurochild's policy, advocacy, and communications activities and oversees Eurochild's influence on public policy by coordinating advocacy towards the EU institutions. Dr. Dunhill has worked across education and social care organizations globally for over 30 years, advocating for and with children, young people, and their families to bring about key changes in policy, legislation and practice that will have a lasting impact on their lived experiences.



Philip GOLDMAN, Maestral International

Mr. Goldman is the Founder and President of Maestral International, a team of leading global experts supporting the development, strengthening, and coordination of child protection and social welfare systems that meet the needs of children in adversity. He has spearheaded Maestral's public finance work, which has included national and sub-national costings and budgetary exercises, capacity building, and the development of resources and tools. Since 2018, Mr. Goldman has been a member of the Lancet Commission on the Institutionalization and Deinstitutionalization of Children and is currently a member of the Global Reference Group for Children Affected by COVID-19 and Other Adversities.



Constantin GUDIMA, Ocnița District Council

Mr. Gudima is the Head of the Finance Department of the Ocnița District Council. He has over 25 years of professional experience in the field of public finance. Currently, he manages the work of the team of specialists of the Finance Department of the Ocnița District Council, which supports the elaboration, administration, and reporting of the budget of the Ocnița second level local public authority. In addition, he provides advice to local public authorities on issues related to the elaboration, administration, and reporting of the first level local budgets in Ocnița district.



Dr. Stefania ILINCA, World Health Organization

Dr. Ilinca is Technical Advisor on Long-term Care with the WHO European Office, a Senior Atlantic Fellow for Equity in Brain Health, and a Salzburg Global Seminar fellow. She has extensive experience working at the interface between policy and research, dividing her time between policy advice, technical support, applied research, and advocacy efforts. Her work focuses on innovation and service design in health and long-term care systems and discrimination and inequity in access to health and long-term care, with particular attention to strengthening care delivery for people with complex needs, supporting integrated care models, and improving access to needed care over the life course.



Marijana JASAREVIC, World Bank

Marijana Jasarevic is a Social Protection Specialist, with the Social Protection and Jobs practice group in the Europe and Central Asia region. In the past 13 years, she has been working on various topics, including social assistance, labor market, social services, disability assessment and early childhood education and care projects in Serbia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan and Greece.



Daniela MĂMĂLIĞĂ, Partnerships for Every Child

Ms. Mămăligă serves as the Director of Partnerships for Every Child and the President of the Alliance of NGOs active in child and family protection in Moldova. She has over 21 years of experience working in the civil society sector, providing technical assistance to the Central and Local Government of the Republic of Moldova in the development of child welfare policies and implementation of child care reform, including deinstitutionalization of children, development of alternative family-based social services, and inclusive education.



Roger PEARSON, Development Pathways Ltd

Mr. Pearson has worked for NGOs, UNICEF and the private sector in building social sector capacities in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. For the past twenty years, one of his areas of focus has been building cash-plus care capacities. Mr. Pearson was charged with facilitating the updating of UNICEF's global child protection policy with an eye toward strengthening the linkages between social worker support and cash transfer capacities. Recently, he has been involved in reviewing Uruguay's child protection response to the Covid lock-down, developing monitoring capacities for cash transfers and child protection in Kiribati, managing an independent review of the national cash transfer programs in Uganda, and supporting the monitoring of social protection in Ukraine.



Liliana ROTARU, CCF Moldova

Ms. Rotaru is the Director of CCF Moldova. She has over 20 years of experience working in the field on children's rights. CCF Moldova works together and represents the British charity Hope and Homes for Children. CCF Moldova supports the central and local authorities to reform the system to decrease the reliance on residential care and to increase the family strengthening, service provision, social innovation, workforce capacity building, and eradication of residential care in Moldova. Ms. Rotaru has a PhD in comparative literature from Bucharest University and is currently participating in a Master programme in Social Innovation and Management at Vienna University of Business and Economy.



Vivien THOMSON, Social Work Scotland

Ms. Thomson is the Policy and Practice Lead for Children and Families in Social Work Scotland, the leadership organization for social work in Scotland. Ms. Thomson served in local government social work as a practitioner and senior manager in Scotland for over 30 years, before joining Social Work Scotland in October 2020. Her management and practice experience ranges from early years to disability and alternative care, and front-line management to developmental and strategic roles. She has been involved in fostering and kinship policy initiatives, and cross-sector work.



Roman ZHUKOVSKYI, World Bank

Mr. Zhukovskiy is a Social Protection Specialist at The World Bank in Washington DC, working in the Europe and Central Asia region on designing and supporting the implementation of social protection programs. Previously, he represented Ukraine on the World Bank Board and held senior positions in the civil service.



Flore ROSSI, UNICEF

Ms. Rossi is a child protection and GBV specialist currently leading the Child Protection section in UNICEF Moldova country office. During the past ten years, she lived in different countries around the world, working on child protection and GBV including in Israel/Palestine, Liberia, Haiti, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Iraq. She also spent a year in New York working in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG/CAAC).

MODERATORS



Beth BRADFORD, Changing the Way We Care

Ms. Bradford is the Technical Director for Changing the Way We Care, a global initiative to promote family care for children. She has over thirty years of experience working across a range of contexts, including U.S. child welfare. Ms. Bradford has worked with governments and non-government actors, alike, with a focus on developing strong child protection and care systems. Her work centers around care reform, social work practice, holistic early childhood development, and family strengthening. As Technical Director to Changing the Way We Care, she proudly leads program implementation and learning across six countries, three regions and with global partners.



Kelley BUNKERS, Changing the Way We Care

Ms. Bunkers is a Senior Associate with Maestral and is currently serving as a Senior Technical Advisor for Changing the Way We Care. She has three decades of engaging in child care and protection. She has been involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of alternative care programming, research and advocacy in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Africa. She has worked for UNICEF, USAID, private foundations, national governments and international and local NGOs in support of safe and nurturing family-based care for children. She is a member of the Better Care Network Steering Committee and a board member of Faith to Action.



Igor CHIȘCĂ, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection

Mr. Chișcă is the Head of the Child Protection Directorate at the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. He is responsible for the development and implementation of legislation related to children's rights including issues related to adoption, family-type services, and preventing and combating abuse and violence against children. Under his leadership, the Directorate works to prevent institutionalization of children in residential institutions and to ensure that children and families in Moldova have access to quality social assistance services. The Directorate coordinates the implementation of child and family protection programs in partnership with central and local public administration, international bodies, and non-governmental organizations.



Mihaela CIORBĂ, Changing the Way We Care Moldova

Ms. Ciorbă is the Project Officer for Participation, Safeguarding and Accountability at CTWWC Moldova. Ms. Ciorbă has over nine years of professional experience in managing and implementing over 10 international donor-funded projects. She gained diverse experience by delivering projects in the fields of underserved SMEs & rural banking, finance, market research (studies and extensive surveys), financial inclusion and dual technical and vocational education. In her current role, she focuses on accountability, safeguarding, and supporting people with lived experience (PWLE) to participate meaningfully in decision-making related to care reform in Moldova.



Marcela DILION-STRECHIE, Keystone Moldova

Dr. Dilion-Strechie is a Program Manager at Keystone Moldova. For 14 years, Dr. Dilion-Strechie worked as a teacher at the Department of Sociology and Social Work of the State University of Moldova, moving from assistant lecturer to university lecturer. She provided consultancy for various international organizations including UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration and nongovernmental organizations active in the field of child and family rights protection, the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. Within the global initiative Changing the Way We Care, Dr. Dilion-Strechie coordinates the working group on human resources in the social assistance system.



Ecaterina GOLOVATÎI, Keystone Moldova

Ms. Golovatîi is a consultant at Keystone Moldova. She is also a social worker providing support to persons with disabilities and their families to defend their rights and to live a meaningful life in their communities. Her professional activities are dedicated to children and people with disabilities. During the last 20 years, Ms. Golovatîi worked as a consultant in disability rights protection, advocating for social inclusion, and better care for persons with disabilities. In 2021-2022, she conducted a study on monitoring and evaluation of financial resources allocated for personal assistance at the raion level.



Virgiliu HANGAN, Partnerships for Every Child

Mr. Hangan is the Social Evaluation and Family Reintegration Coordinator for Partnerships for Every Child, Moldova. He has over 12 years of experience in supporting national and local public authorities countrywide to develop and improve the local child protection systems. Mr. Hangan has been part of the national trainers' team recruited by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection that delivered a capacity-building program to the social welfare workforce across the country in case management, family support service, social workers' ethical code, population needs assessment mechanisms, grievance mechanism, and performance management standards for Territorial Social Assistance Structures.



Oxana ISAC, Keystone Moldova

Ms. Isac works as a Project Coordinator for Keystone Moldova, working with the Changing the Way We Care team on deinstitutionalization and family strengthening. Ms. Isac has over 30 years of professional experience in the social field, education, public health, child protection, and in empirical research of different fields of social life. Ms. Isac's current portfolio includes promoting safe and supportive family care for children who are deinstitutionalized from residential structures and children at risk of separation from their families, through strengthening families, reforming national childcare systems and changing engagements at national, regional, and global levels.



Livia MARGINEAN, CCF Moldova

Ms. Marginean is a Program Manager at CCF Moldova. She is a national expert in the accreditation of social services. Ms. Marginean has been working in the field of child protection and promotion of children's rights for over 18 years. She has extensive experience in program and project management, as well as in the training and consulting of specialists in this field. She is an active member of various working groups related to child deinstitutionalization, development of social services, revision of the Nomenclature of Social Services, improvement of the methodological framework for the organization and functioning of foster care services, and the implementation of the Initial and Continuous Training System.



Viorelia MOLDOVAN-BATRÎNAC, Changing the Way We Care Moldova

Dr. Moldovan-Batrînac is the National Child Protection Program Coordinator at Changing the Way We Care Moldova. She has over seventeen years of professional experience in public administration and advising the high-level Governance leaders in various policy issues. Her experience includes analysis and monitoring of public policy implementation, quality assurance of education program, accreditation, and qualification recognition. Ms. Moldovan-Batrînac provided technical expertise to various international projects financed by World Bank, EU, UNDP, and CMI. Her current work includes supporting strengthening the governance of child protection system through legal framework development, policy implementations, promotion of collective impact for improving the national system of family-based childcare.



Parascovia MUNTEANU, UNDP Moldova

Ms. Munteanu is currently contracted by UNDP as social assistance policy advisor to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. She has more than 15 years of experience in promoting social inclusion, deinstitutionalization, and children's rights. She was actively involved in the development of the National Program on Child Protection Program on deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities and legal framework for social services development. Dr. Munteanu is the author and co-author of several profile publications tackling issues about social inclusion, disability, inclusive education, human rights.



Alina NOSATÎI, CCF Moldova

Ms. Nosatii is program manager at CCF Moldova. She coordinates the deinstitutionalization program in the Northern region of the Republic of Moldova. This includes collaboration with local public authorities at all levels (central, counties and local) for the planning and implementation of measures to prevent the institutionalization of children and deinstitutionalization of children from the placement and rehabilitation center for young children in Balti municipality, development of foster families and support services, support in strengthening the capacity of specialists in the field of child protection and related fields. Ms. Nosatii has extensive experience in child protection, special education, and early child development.



Ana PALII, Partnerships for Every Child

Ms. Palii is an experienced consultant with over 25 years of experience in developing and implementing social welfare services including foster care and training of social work professionals in Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. She has been heavily involved in the development of national curricula and training program for community social workers, regulations and minimum quality standards for foster care, family support, gatekeeping, case management, and Inter-agency cooperation mechanism on primary prevention and child wellbeing. She has been part of the national consultants and trainers' team that provided capacity-building program to the social assistance workforce across the country.



Natalia SEMENIUC, Partnerships for Every Child

Ms. Semeniuc is a consultant in child participation for Partnerships for Every Child Moldova. She has a vast experience in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating services both on local and national levels. She was directly involved in supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in the settlement and management of the national training centre and the development and implementation of the national training curricula and programme for community social workers. In addition, she has assisted the local authorities in various regions of Moldova in the development of Local Social Welfare Strategies.



Liliana SIMCOV, Keystone Moldova

Ms. Simcov is a Project Coordinator for Keystone Moldova working on the deinstitutionalization component with the Changing the Way We Care initiative. Ms. Simcov, a psychologist by training, has been active for more than 25 years in the educational field. Initially, as a teacher in preschool and pre-university institutions, later – as a methodologist-coordinator for the “Step by Step” Educational Program. For 10 years, she coordinated projects related to the educational inclusion of children with SEN (Special Educational Needs), the development of the community school and coordinated the activity of the trainer's team within the Global Partnership for Education project.



Irina SPIVACENCO, Partnerships for Every Child Moldova

Ms. Spivacenco is a consultant in child care services development for Partnerships for Every Child in Moldova. She is a licensed “Mellow Parenting” programme trainer and has extensive experience in implementing social and educational support programs focused on parenting education and family strengthening. Her current work includes strengthening of the social protection system at national and local levels by ensuring the development and delivery of appropriate and sustainable support services and programmes aiming at providing children with a nurturing and resilient family environment.



Francesca STUER, Maestral International

Ms. Stuer is a Senior Associate at Maestral International. She has worked for more than twenty years in international social and health development. She has extensive experience in various aspects of care reform including family-based alternative care, positive parenting, and social service workforce strengthening. She has worked on child protection components of social protection cash transfer programs in Turkey and Ethiopia.



Liliana ȚIBREA, Changing the Way We Care Moldova

Ms. Țibrea is Child Protection Advisor for Changing the Way We Care Moldova. Ms. Tibrea, a social worker, has over 25 years of experience in social services in Romania and over five years of experience in training practitioners in the social field. She organized and coordinated professional activities for multi-disciplinary teams and actively participated in supporting the review process and creating the quality of social assistance services within the partnerships developed with local and central public authorities in Romania. As a member of the National College of Social Workers in Romania, she was responsible for the development of course curricula and/or methodology writing regarding social worker intervention.



Traian ȚURCANU, UNICEF Moldova

Mr. Țurcanu is a Child Protection Specialist at UNICEF Moldova since October 2019. He holds an LL.M. in Human rights law and has experience in working with the Moldovan Government, Council of Europe, and UNHCR.



Ludmila UNGUREANU, Changing the Way We Care Moldova

Ms. Ungureanu is the Director of Changing the Way We Care Moldova initiative. Ms. Ungureanu is a development policy professional with over 20 years of experience in organizational and program management with a focus on social protection and good governance programs. Prior to joining the CTWWC initiative, she managed child protection programs with Terre des hommes Moldova, decentralization policy reform programs with IREX, and civil society development programs with the American Bar Association/Central and Eastern Law Initiative.



Mathew WATSON, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Mr. Watson is a Senior Technical Advisor for the Center for DDI/Inclusive Development Hub's Children in Adversity Team at USAID. He has over thirty years of professional experience working with children, education, public health, and child protection. His current work includes supporting the development of new projects to end violence against children, providing technical support to implementing partners, overseeing USAID's Digital Strategy to Protect Children and Youth from Digital Harm, and supporting the implementation of the new Center for Children in Adversity Strategy: Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity.

ANNEX 3

List of invited participants

Central Public Authorities	
Igor GROSU	Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Dan PERCIUN	Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family
Radu MARIAN	Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economy, Budget and Finance
Reggina APOSTOLOVA	Deputy Chairman, Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Adrian BELÎ	Deputy Chairman, Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Vladimir ODNOSTALCO	Deputy Chairman, Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Maria PANCU	Member of Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Alla DAROVANNAIA	Member of Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Liliana GROSU	Member of Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Dorian ISTRATII	Member of Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Veaceslav NIGAI	Member of Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Ana OGLINDA	Member of Standing Committee Social Protection, Health and Family, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Petru BURDUJA	Deputy Chairman, Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Valentin MANIC	Deputy Chairman, Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Sergiu LAZARENCU	Member of Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Vadim FOTESCU	Member of Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Marina MOROZOVA	Member of Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Vasile ȘOIMARU	Member of Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Oleg REIDMAN	Member of Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Inga SIBOVA	Member of Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

Victor SPÎNU	Member of Standing Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Liliana NICOLAESCU-ONOFREI	Chairman, Standing Committee for Culture, Education, Research, Youth, Sport and Mass-Media, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Virgiliu PÂSLARIUC	Deputy Chairman, Standing Committee for Culture, Education, Research, Youth, Sport and Mass-Media, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Maria GONȚA	Deputy Chairman, Standing Committee for Culture, Education, Research, Youth, Sport and Mass-Media, The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Veaceslav NEGRUȚA	Economic adviser to President of the Republic of Moldova
Elena DRUȚĂ	Adviser to the President of the Republic of Moldova for diaspora
Alexei BUZU	Minister of Labor and Social Protection
Ala NEMERENCO	Minister of Health
Veronica MIHAILOV-MORARU	Minister of Justice
Ana REVENCO	Minister of Internal Affairs
Adriana CAZACU-ȚIGAIE	State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Research
Vasile CUȘCA	Secretary of State, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
Ion GUMENE	State Secretary, Ministry of Finance
Igor CHIȘCĂ	Head of Department for Protection of Children's Rights and Families with Children, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
Teodor VICOL	Head of the Department for Social Services, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
Aurelia PORUMBESCU	Department of Finances in Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Finance
Rodica SLUHINSCAIA	Department of Finances in Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Finance
Ceslav PANICO	Moldova People's Advocate (Ombudsman)
Maia BĂNĂRESCU	Moldova Ombudsman for Children's Rights
Virginia RUSNAC	Director of the Republican Psycho-Pedagogical Center
Diana DOROȘ	Head of department, National Commission Secretariat for Collective Consultation, State Chancellery
Natalia POSTICĂ	Deputy Head of Directorate

Local Public Authorities	
Zinaida BUNESCU	Head of Anenii Noi Social Work Territorial Structure
Cristina BOICU	Head of Anenii Noi Department of Finance
Irina MUNTEANU	Head of the Family- type Services, Anenii Noi Social Work Territorial Structure
Sergiu PREPELIȚA	Mobile Team Psychologist, Anenii Noi Social Work Territorial Structure
Mihail MARTÎNOV	Acting Head of Basarabeasca Social Work Territorial Structure
Daria SADOVEANU	Head of Briceni Social Work Territorial Structure
Alla LUPAȘCO	Head of Briceni Department of Finance
Oxana RADU	Head of Cahul Social Work Territorial Structure
Valentina SMEȘNOI	Deputy Head, Cahul Department of Finance
Sergiu BUTUC	Head of Cantemir Social Work Territorial Structure
Veaceslav COZMA	Head of Cantemir Department of Finance
Svetlana PATRAMAN	Deputy Head of Cantemir Social Work Territorial Structure
Elena RUSU	Head of Călărași Social Work Territorial Structure
Iurie BOBEICĂ	Head of Călărași Department of Finance
Eudochia GOLAN	Deputy Head of Căușeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Axenia PARA	Head of Căușeni Department of Finance
Aurelia MALAI	Child Rights Protection specialist, Căușeni
Valentina BULALALA	Personal assistant, Căușeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Mihai MOTROI	Head of Cimișlia Social Work Territorial Structure
Olesea RACILA	Head of Department of Finance, Cimișlia Social Work Territorial Structure
Alexandru PLĂMĂDEALĂ	Respiro Service Manager, Cimișlia Social Work Territorial Structure
Ludmila BRÎNZĂ	Head of Criuleni Social Work Territorial Structure
Olga SIMON	Head of Criuleni Department of Finance
Marcela RAPCEA	Manager of Psycho-Pedagogical Support Service , Criuleni Social Work Territorial Structure
Ruslana LICHII	Head of the Personal Assistance Service, Criuleni Social Work Territorial Structure
Maria CHIRILOV	Physiotherapist, Mobile Team, Criuleni Social Work Territorial Structure
Ala GUȚU	Head of Dondușeni Social Work Territorial Structure

Elena CATANA	Manager of Family Support Service, Dondușeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Adriana GROZAVU	Head of Drochia Social Work Territorial Structure
Eugen BOTNARI	Head of Dubăsari Social Work Territorial Structure
Lilia CAZAC	Head of Dubăsari Department of Finance
Valerian CIOBANU	Head of Edineț Social Work Territorial Structure
Stela BOTNARU	Head of Edineț Department of Finance
Ina TCACI	Head of Social Service Mobile Team, Edineț Social Work Territorial Structure
Janna COJOCARI	Head of Fălești Department of Finance
Liliana MALACHI	Deputy Head, Fălești Social Work Territorial Structure
Maria VACARCIUC	Director of the Multifunctional Centre, Nufărul Alb Glinjeni v., Fălești rayon
Aurica BURLACU	Head of Florești Social Work Territorial Structure
Svetlana GRÎU	Head of Florești Department of Finance
Alina CALDÎBA	Manager of Professional Parental Support Service, Florești Social Work Territorial Structure
Ludmila FRECAUȚAN	Head of Personal assistance service, Florești Social Work Territorial Structure
Ion CRUDU	Head of Glodeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Fevronia NICOLAEV	Head of Direcție Glodeni Department of Finance
Marina BOLOGAN	Manager of Professional Parental Support Service, Glodeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Cornelia CIUMAC	Family support service manager, Glodeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Corina POLINIUC	Head of Personal assistance service, Glodeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Tamara CĂLUGĂRU	Head of Hîncești Social Work Territorial Structure
Galina ERHAN	Head of Hîncești Department of Finance
Margarita TONU	Head of Ialoveni Social Work Territorial Structure
Mariana LUPASCU	Head of Department of Finance, Ialoveni Social Work Territorial Structure
Lidia CALMÂC	Head of Ialoveni Department of Finance
Sergiu POSTICĂ	Head of Leova Social Work Territorial Structure
Xenia AXENTE	Head of Nisporeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Vera LAZAR	Head of Nisporeni Department of Finance
Iurie RUSU	Head of Ocnița Social Work Territorial Structure

Constantin GUDIMA	Head of Ocnița Department of Finance
Marina SAREV	Manager of Professional Parental Support Service, Ocnița Social Work Territorial Structure
Sergiu LECA	Manager of Multifunctional Community Center “ Universul”, Piatra village, Orhei Rayon
Irina BÎLICI	Child Protection Consultant, Orhei Social Work Territorial Structure
Boris ARTIN	Head of Rezina Social Work Territorial Structure
Tamara STRATAN	Head of Department of Finance Rezina Social Work Territorial Structure
Mariana TUREA	Head of Rîșcani Social Work Territorial Structure
Maria ZAIȚ	Acting Head, Sîngerei Social Work Territorial Structure
Valeria CEBAN	Mobile Team Psychologist, Sîngerei Social Work Territorial Structure
Zoia CIUMAC	Head of Service, Soroca Social Work Territorial Structure
Anjela ANICI	Head of Soroca Department of Finance
Aliona PERECHIATCO	Deputy Head Soroca Social Work Territorial Structure
Valeria SCHIRLIU	Head of Department, Strășeni Department of Finance
Ciocan INGA	Deputy Head, Strășeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Tatiana VERLAN	Manager of Professional Parental Support Service, Strășeni Social Work Territorial Structure
Svetlana ROTUNDU	Head of Șoldănești Social Work Territorial Structure
Efimia Sfecălă	Deputy Head of Șoldănești Department of Finance
Cebotari Aurica	Head of Ștefan Vodă Social Work Territorial Structure
Ina CALIMAN	Head of Ștefan Vodă Department of Finance
Natalia BULAT	Manager of Professional Parental Support Service, Ștefan Vodă Social Work Territorial Structure
Galina FILIPOVA	Head of Taraclia Social Work Territorial Structure
Larisa PUKAL	Head of Taraclia Department of Finance
Angela SÎRBU	Head of Telenești Social Work Territorial Structure
Ludmila DARII	Head of Telenești Department of Finance
Olga BOTEZAT	Respiro Service Supervisor and Senior Adult and Disability Specialist, Telenești Social Work Territorial Structure
Mariana CERNOLEV	Manager of Respiro Service,- Shelter for Adults and elderly and disabled people in Verejeni village, Telenesti Rayon
Constantin POTLOG	Acting Head, Ungheni Social Work Territorial Structure

Tatiana STRUC	Head of Ungheni Department of Finance
Marina CROITORU	Head of Child Protection Department, Ungheni Social Work Territorial Structure
Nicoleta ENACHI	Head of Social Service Mobile Team, Ungheni Social Work Territorial Structure
Adriana FRASIN	Head of Personal Assistance Service, Ungheni Social Work Territorial Structure
Nicolae LEUCA	Manager of the St. Vasile cel Mare Placement Centre for Adults and Elderly People from Sculeni, Ungheni Rayon
Rodica HARIUC	Psychologist – St. Vasile cel Mare placement centre for adults and elderly people, Sculeni, Ungheni rayon
Anna BEZOBRAZOVA	Head of Department for Prevention of Child Separation from Family, Chişinău General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection
Angela ȚVETCOV	Chief Accountant, Early Childhood Care Centre, Chişinău
Eleonora ȘINCARENCO	Deputy Chief Doctor, Early Childhood Care Centre, Chişinău
Veronica MUNTEANU	Head of Bălți General Directorate of Social Assistance and Family Protection
Natalia TIGHINEANU	Head of Section for the Protection of Elderly, Adult and Disabled People, Bălți General Directorate of Social Assistance and Family Protection
Local civil society organizations	
Ludmila JALBĂ	NGO AOPPD Eternitate, Făleşti town
Natalia DEDIU	Parteneriatul – Aachen Moldova, Baimaclia, Cantemir
Anastasia RUSU	NGO Cimişlieni de pretutindeni, Cimişlia
Angela ABABEI	NGO Bella Getica, Şoldăneşti rayon
Nina COTOVANU	NGO Pasarea Albastră, Hânceşti rayon
Angela MOISEEVA	Director, AudiViz, Bălți
Pavel GHELETCI	Self-advocate
Olesea LUNGU	Self-advocate
Mariana MARAHOVSCHI	Self-advocate
Ecaterina ROTARI	Self-advocate

Diplomatic missions, international organizations, technical assistance projects

Kent D. LOGSDON	United States Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova
John RIORDAN	Acting Head of USAID Mission in Moldova
William TRIGG	Head of Democracy and Governance Office, USAID Moldova
Erin DOSS	Deputy Director of USAID Office of Democracy and Governance in Moldova
Mathew WATSON	Senior Technical Advisor, Center for DDI/Inclusive Development Hub's Children in Adversity Team at USAID
Severine CHEVREL	Senior Technical Advisor, Children in Adversity, USAID Washington
Diana CAZACU	Program Manager, USAID Moldova
Eduard PESENDORFER	EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova
Inguna DOBRAJA	World Bank Country Manager for Moldova
Roman ZHUKOVSKIY	World Bank Social Protection Specialist
Marijana JASAREVIC	World Bank Social Protection Specialist
Francesco CENEDESE	Social Protection Specialist, World Bank
Ilija TALEV	Deputy Representative UNICEF Moldova
Flore ROSSI	Head of Child Protection Unit, UNICEF Moldova
Viorica DUMBRĂVEANU	National Consultant, UNICEF Moldova
Traian ȚURCANU	Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Moldova
Simon SPRINGETT	The United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator
Dr. Miljana GRBIC	Representative and Head of WHO Country Office in the Republic of Moldova
Stefania ILINCA	Advisor on Long-term Care, World Health Organization (WHO)
Angelica RUSSU	Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe Office in Chișinău
Ally DUNHILL	Director of Policy, Advocacy and Communications at EuroChild
Vivien THOMSON	Children and Families Policy and Practice Lead, Social Work Scotland
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