

Changing THE WAY WE careSM

International Annual Conference

CHILD PROTECTION AND CARE REFORM IN THE CONTEXT OF MOLDOVA – EU ASSOCIATION AGENDA

2024 Theme: Ending the placement of young
children in institutional care – from policy to action



CONFERENCE REPORT

Changing The Way We CareSM (CTWWC) is implemented by Catholic Relief Services and Maestral International, along with other global, national and local partners working together to change the way we care for children around the world. Our principal global partners are the Better Care Network and Faith to Action. CTWWC is funded in part by a Global Development Alliance of USAID and the GHR Foundation.

Need to know more? Contact Changing the Way We Care at, info@ctwwc.org or visit changingthewaywecare.org.

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CONFERENCE REPORT

The second annual International Conference on child protection and care reform in the context of Moldova – EU Association Agenda, hosted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, with technical assistance from CCF Moldova and Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC) Moldova, took place on March 21, 2024. The theme for the 2024 conference focused on ending the placement of young children in institutional care.

This year's conference involved the participation of over 140 representatives and decision makers from the national and local government, civil society, academic institutions, international experts and organizations working on child protection and care reform. Participants in the conference discussed the steps that Moldova needs to take to prevent separation and end institutionalization of young children.

Senior representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Health reconfirmed, during the conference, Moldova's commitment to achieving **Zero Children in Institutions** and emphasized the importance of intersectoral collaboration to achieve this goal.

"I think we need to focus on three key areas. First, case management – this will foster greater transparency and accountability within the Ministry, agencies and service providers, in terms of both prevention and institutionalization. Secondly, investment. It is crucial that we secure the necessary investments, despite our complex financial situation. Finally, we need to assist our colleagues in developing their professional skills. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection is committed to doing things 'by the book,' especially when it comes to children – we simply have no other option." **Alexei BUZU**, Minister of Labor and Social Protection.

"Implementing changes in this field demands significant effort, intersectoral coordination, collaboration and inclusive leadership. In the education sector, we have centralized the system. I am confident that this centralization will enhance the effectiveness of psycho-pedagogical services. Another crucial aspect is to ensure funding for preschool education." **Dan PERCIUN**, Minister of Education and Research.

"Based on the analysis of 28,000 observation sheets filled out by our primary health care colleagues in 2023, we have found that approximately 10% of children give us cause for concern. Of this 10%, over half are related to child health or specific health risks. Our goals and targets for health system activities need to be solid and swift. We have three primary goals for the health system: the development and implementation of regulations that would enable these activities and actions, the training of health personnel to ensure high-quality services, and the strengthening of infrastructure, including primary medicine." **Ion PRISACARU**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Health.

Esteemed guests **Dr. Charles A. NELSON**, from Harvard University, **Dr. Charles ZEANAH** from Tulane University and **Dr. Nathan FOX**, from the University of Maryland, who are the coordinators of the research team for the Bucharest Early Intervention Project (BEIP), showcased the findings of their longitudinal study at the conference. Their study examined the negative effects of institutionalization and the positive influence of family-based care on children who have experienced the trauma of early family separation. These experts emphasized that early intervention and stable placements in family-based care contribute to rapid recovery for these children.

Presentations can be accessed on the [Better Care Network](#).

Diana CHEIANU-ANDREI, the Research Program Director at Sociopolis Consultancy, shared the findings of a national qualitative research study conducted in Moldova from August to September 2023. The study focused on the challenges of creating a sustainable mechanism for preventing the placement of children aged 0-6 years into residential institutions and explored ways to overcome existing barriers.

"Understanding the Potential for a Moratorium on Placing Children Aged 0-6 in Institutional Care" can be accessed on the [Better Care Network](#).

Prior to the conference, CTWWC and partners, led by **Parascovia MUNTEANU**, national expert, developed a draft road map with detailed and timebound steps to end the placement of children ages 0-6 in residential care. Conference organizers shared the full draft road map and a short summary with participants ahead of the conference, inviting them to provide feedback and input during an interactive workshop at the conference.

Intersectoral collaboration, particularly between the health, education and child protection sectors and local public authorities, is fundamental to effective reform of the child protection system in Moldova. The participatory workshops of the conference demonstrate this need for collaboration and resulted in a revised roadmap to be further adapted and, ultimately, implemented by the Government of Moldova. The changes and revisions in the revised road map reflect the important contributions and perspectives of the conference participants, which will ultimately support the collective impact of the road map.

The revised draft road map can be accessed on the [Better Care Network](#).

CTWWC and CCF Moldova submitted the revised road map to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection for further review and discussion. Implementation of the road map will require close coordination between the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Research and Local Public Authorities.


CONFERENCE MATERIALS

All conference materials, including the **conference brochure**, selected **presentations** and **videos**, revised draft **road map**, and **related research** can be accessed on the [Better Care Network](#).

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The Hazards of Raising Children in Institutions and the Benefits of Raising Children in Families: Introduction to the *Bucharest Early Intervention Project*



Charles **NELSON** III Professor of Pediatrics and Neuroscience, Professor of Education Harvard University
Richard David Scott Chair in Pediatric Developmental Medicine Research Boston Children's Hospital



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Psychiatric problems and competence following severe early deprivation: Early and subsequent experiences that promote well-being

Dr. Charles **ZEANAH**, Mary Peters Sellars-Polchow Chair of Psychiatry, Professor of Psychiatry & Pediatrics, Executive Director Infant Institute, Tulane University School of Medicine



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Brain, Cognitive, Emotional Reactivity, Attention and Stress Outcomes in BEIP

Nathan A. **FOX** Distinguished University Professor
University of Maryland, College Park



CONFERENCE MEDIA

The conference was featured in the following media outlets and websites:

[Conference Press Release](#)

[Suntparinte.md](#)

[YamNews](#)

[Ministry of Labor and Social Protection](#)

[Ministry of Education and Culture](#)

[Facebook: Changing the Way We Care Moldova](#)

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