



# OPENING DOORS FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

WWW.OPENDINGDOORS.EU

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES. ENDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE.

## UKRAINE



## 2018 COUNTRY FACT SHEET

With over 100,000 children confined to institutions across Ukraine, development of a well-functioning child protection system and deinstitutionalisation (DI) reform have been the pressing issues. In 2017, the Government of Ukraine took a significant step to change the situation for children by adopting the National Strategy on Reform of Institutional Care System for 2017-2026 and Action Plan for its realization in the first stage (2017-2018). Other positive developments include adoption of regulations on the provision of social services in the community, work of the small group homes and allocation of public funds for inclusive education. However, many more actions need to be taken to ensure effective implementation of the rights of children without parental care in Ukraine.

There is alarming evidence that the child protection system in Ukraine is failing to provide children with adequate care<sup>1</sup>. As of 1 September 2017, a total of 104,000 children were dispersed throughout Ukraine's 759 institutions, with some of them accommodating 300-400 children per setting. Out of this total, 38 baby homes held 2,755 children between 0 and 3 years old<sup>2</sup>. More than 90% of those children have parents who are not deprived of parental rights but due to such reasons as poverty, social vulnerability of families, lack of services or inclusive education in the community, they have to spend years in institutions, in contradiction to international standards<sup>3</sup>.

There is a lack of commitment to pursue with sustainable child protection reform at the local level. Institutions continue to get public funding and resort to expanding the categories of children to avoid closure. Due to conservative and inflexible budgetary regulations, reallocation of existing resources for deinstitutionalisation or further development of community-based services are not possible either. The lack of intersectoral coordination leads to chaotic and ineffective implementation of child protection policies. For example, while the Ministry of Social Policy promotes the development of family-based >>

<sup>1</sup> Disability Rights International, No Way Home. The Exploitation and Abuse of Children in Ukraine's Orphanages (2015) <https://www.driadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/No-Way-Home-final.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> 'Monitoring analysis of functioning of institutional care facilities' PWP presentation of Presidential Commissioner on children rights (2018) [https://www.president.gov.ua/storage/i-files-storage/00/19/29/17d0ed24dde1279b11273e405d0ed\\_1455184778.pdf](https://www.president.gov.ua/storage/i-files-storage/00/19/29/17d0ed24dde1279b11273e405d0ed_1455184778.pdf); Statistical publication, State Statistical Service of Ukraine (2018) 'Social protection of population of Ukraine'

<sup>3</sup> Hope and Homes for Children, The Illusion of Protection: An Analytical Report Based on the Findings of a Comprehensive Study of the Child Protection System in Ukraine (2015) <http://www.openingdoors.eu/the-illusion-of-protection-national-audit-of-the-child-protection-system-in-ukraine/>

## KEY RECOMMENDATION TO THE EU



**TAKE ACTION TO INCLUDE CHILD PROTECTION REFORM, WITH A FOCUS ON THE TRANSITION FROM INSTITUTIONAL TO FAMILY-BASED CARE, AS A PRIORITY FOR ITS FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE, COHERENTLY WITH THE PROVISIONS INCLUDED IN OTHER EU FUNDING INSTRUMENTS SUCH AS THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND AND THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

>> care, the Ministry of Education and Science continues to develop institutional care for children. Due to unclear division of powers between local, regional and central authorities, the decision-making mechanisms regarding child protection issues are declarative and formal.

Over the past year, the number of children in family-based care almost hasn't changed due to the combination of factors, including the deterioration of socio-economic situation and the military aggression of Russia in the east of Ukraine with over 238,000 children becoming internally displaced<sup>4</sup>. At the beginning of 2018, there were 13,689 children in foster care and 51,101 children in kinship care, which makes institutional care still prevailing for children without parental care in Ukraine. Furthermore, due to the lack of capacity and the reduction in the number of social workers, as well as inadequate training of

potential foster carers and their insufficient support after the child's placement, the number of children who returned back to institutions from family-based care have increased. At the same time, there is an eight-fold increase in the number of children successfully re-integrated in the birth families: from 83 in 2016 to 694 by the end of 2017.

The development of community-based services for children and families is largely sporadic due to the lack of funding, lack of legal framework, lack of quality standards or low capacity of the service providers. Where services exist, they are mostly provided by the non-governmental and civil society organisations and are severely under-resourced, especially in rural, remote or deprived areas where needs are the highest.

There is no mandatory requirement for DI reform as a condition of Ukraine's accession to the EU in the Association Agreement between Ukraine and EU. Following the agreement, the EU and Ukraine have committed "to enhance cooperation in the field of Justice, Freedom and Security with the aim of reinforcing the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms"<sup>5</sup>. The National Human Rights Strategy of Ukraine, approved on 25 August 2015, has prioritised the protection of the rights of the child at the centre of the systems reform<sup>6</sup>. In November 2018, the European Parliament has called for "more concerted efforts to implement Ukraine's Human Rights Strategy"<sup>7</sup>.

## KEY RECOMMENDATION TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT



**TAKE ACTION TO ENSURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORATORIUM TO END THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF THREE IN INSTITUTIONS DURING THE SECOND STAGE (2019-2024) OF THE NATIONAL REFORM OF INSTITUTIONAL CARE SYSTEM FOR 2017-2026**

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, Social Protection of Internally Displaced Persons <https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/15904.html>

<sup>5</sup> Association Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part, OJ L 161, 29.5.2014 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A22014A0529%2801%29>, article 1(2)(e)

<sup>6</sup> Decree of the president of Ukraine # 501/2015 On Approval of the National Human Rights Strategy of Ukraine, Translated by UN OHCHR in Ukraine <https://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/source/NAP/Ukraine-National-Action-Plan-on-Human-Rights.pdf>, page 14

<sup>7</sup> European Parliament Report on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine (2017/2283(INI)) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A8-2018-0369&language=EN> [accessed 14 January 2019], para 38



**hope and homes  
for children**  
Ukraine

## OPENING DOORS NATIONAL COORDINATOR IN UKRAINE

HHC Ukraine aims to reform the state childcare system through piloting models and developing legislation in partnership with authorities and NGO's. In 1998 they developed family type homes and introduced work on the prevention of child abandonment in Ukraine. Now they are focused deinstitutionalisation which includes the closure of institutions and the creation of a wide range of supportive and preventive services for families and children. To find out more visit [www.openingdoors.org.ua](http://www.openingdoors.org.ua)

## NATIONAL PARTNERS

All-Ukrainian civil organisation 'Magnolia', All-Ukrainian Charity Fund "Child Well-Being Fund Ukraine", Caritas Ukraine, Charitable Foundation 'Bethany Social Services', Charitable Fund 'Blagomay', Charitable Organisation 'Rodyna', Council of Europe in Ukraine, East Europe Foundation, Educational and Culture Center 'Master-class', Foundation 'Development of Ukraine', GURT Resource Center, HealthRight International Ukraine, International Charitable Fund 'Center for Philanthropy and Fundraising', La Strada Ukraine, League of Social Workers of Ukraine, Lviv Municipal Rehabilitation Centre 'Dzherelo', Partnership for Every Child, Project ONE HOPE, SOS Children's Villages Ukraine, 'Toshkin Dom' Charity Organization, Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation (USSF), UNICEF Ukraine

The Opening Doors for Europe's Children campaign supports national efforts to develop child protection systems that strengthen families and ensure high-quality family and community-based alternative care for children, by leveraging EU funding and policy and building capacity in civil society.

It is a partnership between 5 international organisations and civil society across 16 European countries. For more information go to [www.openingdoors.eu](http://www.openingdoors.eu)