

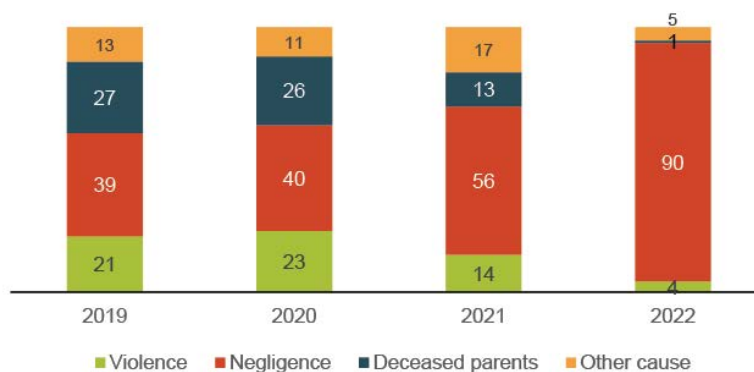
Good Practices in Data Use: Transforming the lives of Vulnerable Children in Chişinău, Moldova

Background

With support from the Data for Impact (D4I) project, the Directorate-General for the Protection of Children's Rights (DGPDC) conducted an annual review of the child protection landscape in Chişinău, the capital city of the Republic of Moldova, revealing the harsh realities faced by its children. Data from 2022 paint a bleak picture, with 1,874 children identified as being at risk—an alarming 3.8-fold increase from the previous year and a staggering 4.2-fold increase from 2019.

Further analysis revealed a particularly vulnerable demographic: children ages 7-15, predominantly residing in urban areas, emerged as the most-at-risk, with over half of them being female. Root causes such as neglect, violence, and inadequate parental care (see Figure 1), compounded by impoverished living conditions, underscored the urgent need for intervention and support.

Figure 1: Share of children at risk, by risk factors, 2019-2022 (%)



Addressing the Challenges in Partnership with Civil Society and the Donor Community

In response to the troubling findings, the Chişinău DGPDC implemented a comprehensive system for regularly documenting incidents of violence, neglect, exploitation, and trafficking of children. Through collaborative efforts, it has entered into partnership agreements with civil society organizations and donors, aiming to enhance support and assistance for children lacking parental care, as well as those from vulnerable families. Working closely with various stakeholders, the DGPDC organized regular capacity strengthening activities for approximately 500 specialists in child rights protection, along with parental skills development sessions for around 1,700 parents and other caregivers. These efforts were designed to bolster child safety measures and prevent instances of abuse.



Data analysis training, November 2022, source: DGPDC Chişinău

With support from the Moldovan Continuous Training Institute, activities have been implemented to strengthen parental skills among 807 parents through 12 specialized programs, encompassing childcare, issue management, and behavioral risks.



To ensure systematic access to specialized psychosocial assistance services for at-risk children, the DGPDC has established 11 new social services, such as day care centres and mother and baby units. It also expanded and consolidated nine existing services including foster care, support for families with children at risk, personal assistance for children with disabilities, day care centres, specialized services for children living in street situations, sheltered housing, and community social assistance services.

Transforming Lives through Improved Social Services

The social services offered by the DGPDC played a pivotal role in creating an environment conducive to emotional well-being and facilitating early detection of behavioral changes and signs of mental distress. By identifying at-risk children and providing them and their families with tailored social services, the aim was to assist them in navigating challenges and reduce their likelihood of developing mental health issues later in life.

Social services played a crucial role not only in shaping the character and well-being of children but also in reshaping parental attitudes and values through training activities. In the long run, these efforts are poised to influence broader societal values and attitudes, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive community for all.

Strengthening Support Systems for Tracking Delivery and Quality of Social Services

In its quest for positive change, the Chişinău DGPDC initiated proactive measures to enhance its support systems for tracking service delivery and ensuring the quality of social services for children and families. One such initiative involved the implementation of a robust municipal registry system. This system was meticulously designed to streamline the management of cases involving children and families in need. By centralizing data and tracking progress over time, the registry facilitates more efficient and effective intervention strategies. It serves as a comprehensive tool, enabling professionals to monitor each case's trajectory to ensure that the necessary support reaches those who need it most.

Reflections

Children in Chişinău facing adversity find hope within their communities, comprised of government, civil society, and external support. Driven by the data, collaborative actions to protect them from violence, neglect, and insufficient parental care can yield tangible results. As families receive the necessary support and communities unite behind their most vulnerable members, the promise of a brighter future for all grows.

Material based on the application submitted by the DGPDC Chişinău to the national contest “Data Gala,” organized as part of the Share Fair of Good Practices in Data Use conducted by D4I in partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Chişinău, December 8, 2023 (prize awarded for third place). **Authors:** D4I Moldova

For more information

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