Strengthening collection, management and use of quality routine data for the provision of child protection and care in Armenia

Background and purpose

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) works in countries around the world to improve the lives of the world's most vulnerable children, in keeping with the three objectives established in the U.S. government strategy for Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA). Those objectives are to build strong beginnings, put family first, and protect children from violence (https://www.childreninadversity.gov).

In support of country priorities and in line with APCCA objectives, USAID-funded activities advance partner countries on their journey to self-reliance by helping governments build and strengthen their capacities to support, manage, and finance child protection and care systems, using the best available data for decision making and employing research, implementation science, and programmatic learning to design evidence-based policies, programs, and practices.

The USAID-funded Data for Impact (D4I) project builds on and reinforces U.S. government support for priority countries to realize the power of data as actionable evidence to improve policies, programs, and outcomes. It also builds on the USAID-funded MEASURE Evaluation project's assessment of care system reform, recommendations to address priority needs, development of indicators, analysis of information systems, and provision of training and mentoring activities. Read background information on the MEASURE Evaluation work that informs D4I's approach in Armenia.

Goal and Approach

The overall goal of the D4I project in Armenia is to support the Government of Armenia. Agencies involved are the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MOESCS), and the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MOTAI). The goal is to strengthen collection, management, and use of quality routine data to support effective case management, thus improving the provision of child protection and care.

This support should yield improved processes, information systems, and coordination of staff and resources for monitoring country progress on care reform and the provision of child protection and social work services. The activity will use a learning-centered approach to generate evidence, build skills and practices, ensure data quality, promote a data use culture, and prioritize the sharing of ideas and experience among stakeholders.

Project Implementation

D4I envisions support for this activity over a three-year period. However, progress in the first year will serve as foundation for further project work. In the first year of this activity (August 2020–August 2021), D4I anticipates two main areas of work:

1) Establish systems to collect data, monitor, and report the situation of children in residential and family-based alternative care or for children who may be at risk of violence, abuse or neglect.
2) Strengthen individual and institutional capacity to generate and use evidence to support effective case management.

D4I will promote collaboration in data exchange and data use among MOLSA, MOESCS, and MTAI. In addition, D4I will facilitate access to data on children whose safety and wellbeing may require monitoring or

response available for community social workers and case managers. , this data may include data on children who have been deinstitutionalized and returned to their families, and other relevant data.

D4I will work through an in-country expert consultant to provide ongoing support to government partners and stakeholders. The U.S.-based D4I team will also make visits to Armenia, if feasible, to provide technical support as needed and to advance and oversee implementation and provide ongoing mentoring to government partners and stakeholders. Other experts will be deployed as needed. Depending on the COVID-19 situation in Armenia, the ongoing support may be provided virtually.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the first year of the activity in Armenia, the following outcomes are expected:

- Agreement on a road map for establishing a fully functional and comprehensive data collection system for child case management, accompanied by key indicators to monitor implementation of the roadmap, including assessment of interoperability of information systems that collect and report data on children in adversity
- Strengthened country skills in collecting, analyzing, and using high-quality data to inform the planning and implementation of child protection and care reform at the national and subnational levels and effectively address the needs of children in adversity
- Established processes for regular communication and sustainable intersectoral collaboration among stakeholders to draw on collective experience and expertise for the highest-quality results for children