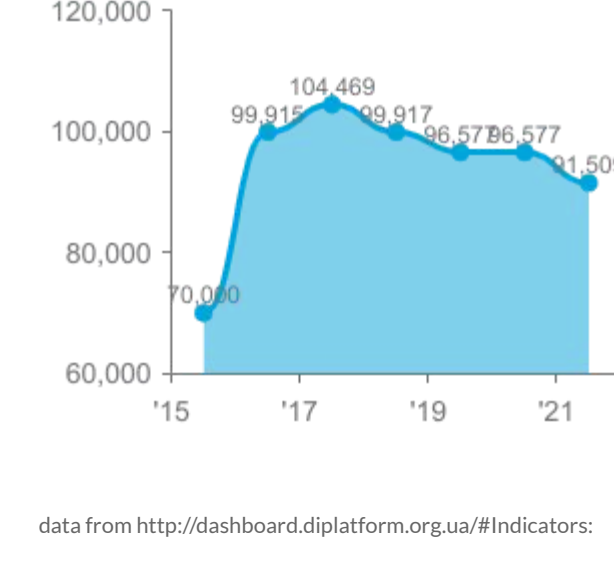


Country Fact sheet 2021

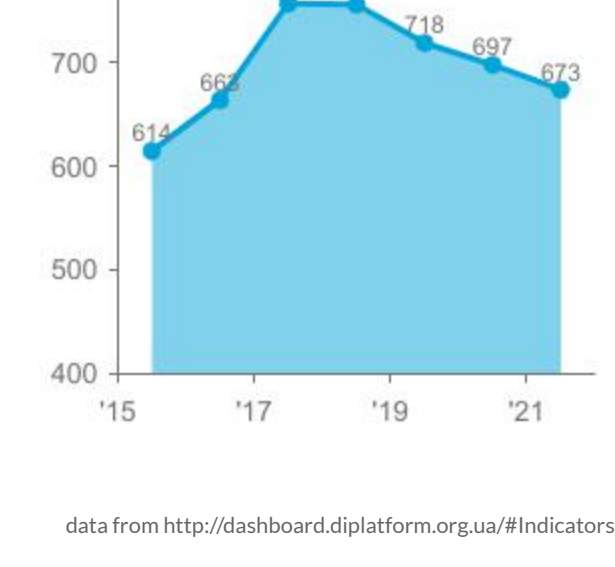
Ukraine



Despite political commitments, Ukraine remains one of the countries in Europe with the highest rate of child institutionalisation, with an estimated 100,000 children living in various forms of institutions including baby homes for children 0-4 years old. In June 2021, the Ukrainian Government adopted the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On amendments to the National Strategy for Reforming the System of Institutional Care and Upbringing of Children for 2017-2026".



data from <http://dashboard.diplatform.org.ua/#Indicators>:



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The recent proposed changes to the existing deinstitutionalisation strategy could reverse progress, postpone the ban on the placement of children 0-3 year olds in baby homes to 2024, and remove children with disabilities from the reforms entirely.



About 1.3% of all children in Ukraine are living in approximately 700 institutions nationwide

Effect of the pandemic on children in Ukraine



In the early days of the pandemic in 2020 around 42,000 children were returned home urgently from 435 residential institutions (boarding schools of general education). This was done without any form of planning, family assessment, provision of localised services, case management or case by case review.

The pandemic has significantly exacerbated the situation of families that had already been in need and required support services.



In 2020, there were more than 96,577 children in institutions. There were 11,306 children with disabilities (which is 11.7% of the total number of children in institutions).

data from <http://medstat.gov.ua/ukr/MMXX.html>

There are only 4,408 foster families in Ukraine. Currently there are no programmes for the preparation of candidates for foster parents of children with disabilities. Out of 14,510 children who grow up in foster care and family type children's homes, only 520 are children with disabilities.



Baby homes

There are 35 baby homes and 35 specialised baby homes both under the Ministry of health, housing 2,373 infants in baby homes, of which 506 have a confirmed disability. 58% of children placed in baby homes at maternal request stay there much longer than the six months prescribed by law.

Research by Hope and Homes found in 5 baby homes:

1. Specific features of physical and mental development observed in many children in the baby homes can be related to a disadvantaging environment of the institutional care facility and separation from parents.
2. Despite a large number of nursing staff who claimed during the survey that they provided health care, children do not receive adequate services or care, including adequate nutrition, health, and development screening, medical supervision, and timely corrective measures.
3. Existing policies on the nutrition of children in baby homes do not meet the needs of children, specifically, if there are diseases that increase those needs.
4. Baby homes depend on outdated standards and/or lack of regulatory and legal mechanisms for organising medical and mental support for children.
5. Over 80% of the total funding for institutions goes to staff remuneration and only around 10% to child nutrition, clothing, and treatment.

Data taken from: Behind the mask of Care, USAID and Hope and Homes for Children, 2020, available at:

<https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Report%20on%20baby%20homes%20assessment.pdf>



Latest developments

Positive

1. The new Law of Ukraine "On Social Services" as of 17.01.2019 №2671 was adopted (into force since 01.01.2020). The Law defines the need to develop the services in communities, and the list of basic social services to be provided. As well the Law is aimed to introduce a market of social services and engage CSOs in their providing.
1. The Ministry of Social Policy has announced the importance of the development of family-based care forms. The Ministry has emphasised that the priority of the Government's Action Plan is to ensure the upbringing of each child in families or in conditions as close as possible to family ones.
1. The Ministry of Health Care has declared the intentions on the closure of the baby homes, operating in the actual format. The baby homes should be closed as institutional care facilities and, if needed, be transformed into centres of medical rehabilitation and palliative care.

Negative

1. The financial resources for the reform are locked in the existing system. The system of institutions is expensive yet the most of the direct costs to meet the basic needs of a child account for only 15.1% of the funds allocated by the state to institutions.
1. The money does not follow the child, meaning that the statutory funding received by institutions is not transferred once the children are reintegrated into the community, leaving cash-strapped local authorities struggling to pay for the new services to support vulnerable families to stay together.
1. A permanent inter-ministerial coordination body, with adequate executive power, is lacking.
1. The development of family- and community-based care has been very limited. In other words, services to support families and children are not available. There are also limited family-based care alternatives.

We call on the government:

Recall the draft order amending the deinstitutionalisation strategy.

Establish a single national body for the implementation of the child protection and care reform, and ensure this body has adequate executive power, financial and human resources, and clear links to the various Ministries responsible for the implementation of the National Strategy.

Enforce the moratorium that will put an end to the placement of babies and very young children (0-3 years) in any type of institution. This should include a fixed date to stop the placement of children into institutions tied to a list of actions, measures and indicators for implementation.

We call on the European Union to:

Prioritise the child protection system reform and the implementation of the National Strategy of the Reforming of the System of Institutional Care and upbringing of children in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument during the 2021-2027 programming period.

Raise these issues in the 2021 review of the achievements of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement's objectives under Article 14 on 'The rule of law and respect for human rights, with a view to including an amendment on the reform system of the Ukrainian child care system in the Association Agreement.

Hope and Homes for Children Ukraine

4 Bahhovutivska St., office 57, Kyjiv 04107, Ukraine

www.hopeandhomes.org.ua

office@hopeandhomes.org.ua

<https://www.facebook.com/hhcukraine/>

[+380] 44 483 7783

Data disclaimer

The data sets on children in care, presented in this publication is provided by Hope and Homes for Children. The data is primarily sourced from official state sources. The situation with children in alternative care is dynamic, and changes may not necessarily be captured in present data set. All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the data presented herein compiled. However, Hope and Homes for Children provides this data as the guidance only and cannot guarantee its accuracy, timeliness or completeness. Nor can we be held responsible for its use.

Hope and Homes for Children - Head Office: East Cliffe, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 4LZ, UK

Tel: +40 262 227 419 office@hopeandhomes.org www.hopeandhomes.org

Hope and Homes for Children - EU liaison office: Mundo-j, Rue de l'Industrie 10, Brussels, 1000.

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