

## ➤➤ Annex I: Priority Country Overview

### ARMENIA

*Policy Context:* USAID named Armenia as a priority country in late 2015, and is now working with the Government of Armenia (GOAM) to eliminate the establishment of new residential institutions, eliminate the admission of new children to residential care institutions targeted for transformation or closure, and eliminate the transfer of deinstitutionalized children to other residential care facilities unless it is a last resort. The Government has committed to take required policy actions to ensure the newly established and/or expanded alternative community-based services are fully funded from its national budget. As a result, over the next several years, USAID's support will enable the Government of Armenia to incorporate alternative family- and community-based services into annual budget plans, to develop monitoring tools to oversee the process of transition for each target institution, and to establish systems of quality control to monitor child care services.

Armenia is a Tier 1 country according to the U.S. Department of State's 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report. While this is the highest ranking, Armenia continues to be a source and, to a lesser extent, destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex and labor trafficking. The sex and labor trafficking of Armenian women and children within the country is an increasing problem. Children staying in child care institutions remain highly vulnerable to trafficking.

*USG Collaborating Partners:* DOD, DOJ, DOS/INL, DOS/PAS, and Peace Corps

### CAMBODIA

*Policy Context:* In December 2015, a sub-decree on the Management of Residential Care Institutions (RCI) was launched, consolidating the government's oversight authority with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY). Now all RCIs are required to register with MoSVY and to comply with the government's Minimum Standards on Alternative Care. MoSVY plans to inspect each RCI every six months, and it has committed to a goal of reintegrating 30 percent of children from residential care institutions to families and communities in five provinces by the end of 2018.

In January 2016, the Cambodia National Council for Children (CNCC) launched a national plan to promote child development from 2016–2018. The plan promotes child protection and welfare in line with principles articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was ratified by the Royal Government of Cambodia in 1992. One of CNCC's main functions is to monitor Cambodia's implementation of the CRC. The Royal Government of Cambodia has initiated development of an Action Plan on Violence against Children. This coordinated national response results from the findings of the Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) administered by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Government, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and partners in 2013

(APCA Objective Three). Results were released in 2014, marking the first time Cambodia had national statistics on sexual, physical, and emotional violence against children.

The Royal Government of Cambodia does not process intercountry adoptions with other countries at this time. The Department of State continues its efforts to work with the Government of Cambodia in order to promote a smooth transition to processing intercountry adoptions under the Convention when intercountry adoptions resume in Cambodia.

*USG Collaborating Partners:* USAID, DOS, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DOL

## COLOMBIA

*Policy Context:* The Government of Colombia (GOC) has developed a multisectoral Early Childhood Development (ECD) strategy and implementation plan. In 2010, the GOC introduced the comprehensive ECD strategy *From Zero to Forever*. The national strategy, endorsed by all relevant sectors, seeks to ensure that every child in Colombia, particularly the most vulnerable, is guaranteed the constitutional right to free healthcare and education in the early childhood years. *From Zero to Forever* includes a set of national and district-level actions to promote intersectoral work to advance comprehensive early childhood interventions. The strategy focuses on comprehensive child development; promotes inter-governmental collaboration through a joint commission that brings together the Ministries of Culture, Education, and Health and Social Protection, as well as the Colombian Family Welfare Institute; and emphasizes approaches that address territorial and cultural differences.

*USG Collaborating Partners:* U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USAID, NIH, DOL, DOS

## MOLDOVA

*Policy Context:* Illustrating its steady commitment to advancing national reforms to promote child welfare, Moldova's Strategy on Child and Family Protection for 2014–2020, approved in 2013, aims to build the conditions necessary for raising and educating children in a family environment; prevent and eliminate child abuse, neglect and exploitation and promote non-violent practices in raising and educating children; and harmonize family life and professional responsibilities to ensure appropriate child development. To support programming to address the broad range of issues that affect children in Moldova, the government has also developed strategies on children with disabilities, children in conflict with the law, child trafficking, children and family issues, and children from minority groups.

Moldova has made impressive progress closing institutions and returning children to responsive family care. For example, institutionalization declined in Moldova from 17,000 in 1995 to 3,909 children in 2014. The number of residential care institutions also declined from 270 in the 1990s. Currently, 46.5 percent of Moldova's children live in single parent households, since many parents seek employment in other countries.

*USG Collaborating Partners:* USAID, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Peace Corps, DOS

## RWANDA

*Policy Context:* Recognizing the need for coordination and consistency in interventions for all children, including orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), in August 2011 the Government of Rwanda (GOR), through the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), approved the Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP), a comprehensive national document detailing Rwanda's vision and commitment to all children. The vision of the ICRP is to create an environment in which a child's development, survival, protection, welfare, and participation is ensured through a well-coordinated and multi-sectoral approach, a child's dignity and right to reach full potential is guaranteed, and GOR responsibilities to children are fulfilled. The GOR is actively transforming Rwanda's current alternative care model into one that prioritizes family-based care. The new system provides assistance to families at-risk of separation from their children and encourages communities to support through adoption or fostering — as opposed to institutional care, children living outside of families. In 2012, the GOR issued a Cabinet Brief, a Strategy for National Child Care Reform, with the goals of transforming the child care and protection system to one that is family-based and that encourages all Rwandans to take responsibility for vulnerable children.

There is also political will to reduce poverty and violence affecting children and promote early child development. The country's social protection program, Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme



(VUP), is robust and is benefitting from efforts to make social protection child-friendly.

*USG Collaborating Partners:* USAID, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DOL, PEPFAR, Peace Corps, DOS

## UGANDA

*Policy Context:* Uganda's National Development Plan (NDPII) prioritizes human development — encompassing health, education, child protection, and social protection — as one of its key outcome areas. To advance the national plan and underscore government commitment to the well-being of children, the Office of the Prime Minister, with support from USAID, convened a national-level State of the Ugandan Child Forum in October 2015. To prepare for this forum, the U.S. Government commissioned a national level study, “The State of the Ugandan Child: An Analytical Overview,” to collect data and evidence from all sectors about the state of the child in Uganda. USAID also supported development of the National Action Plan for Child Well-Being, an effort carried out through the efforts of Civil Society, U.S. Government Agencies, Donors and other international organizations focused on children's issues. The National Action Plan contains priority activities, measurable actions, indicators, and targets across the human development sphere. The forum brought together over 740 participants over two days to catalyze country and external commitment and action to address agreed-upon critical needs in education, health, child protection, and child development, particularly for female children.

Five regional level Forums brought together over 2,200 participants and garnered local input and commitment to the goals as well as country wide endorsement of the action plan.

*USG Collaborating Partners:* USAID, DOS, NIH, PEPFAR, Peace Corps, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DOL

**Page 22 photo:** Young girls participate in festivities to commemorate International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers on February 12. Thousands of Colombians have stepped forward to oppose the recruitment of children, teenagers, and youth by illegal armed groups through the “Right to Dream” campaign.