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# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN TÜRKİYE

## Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document

25/08/2022



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ASDEP	Family Social Support Program
ÇHGM	General Directorate of Child Services
ÇOKİM	Child Protection First Response and Assessment Units
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FSS	Family and Social Services
İŞKUR	Turkish Employment Agency
KSGM	Directorate General on the Status of Women
KYK	Credit and Hostels Institution
MoFSS	Ministry of Family and Social Services
MoLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
OPA	Common Sharing Area
SED	Social and Economic Support Service
SGK	Social Security Institution
SHÇEK	Law on Social Services and Child Protection Institution
SHM	Social Service Centre
UCCL	Units for Combatting Child Labour
UN	United Nations
YÖK	Council of Higher Education



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document (CCISD) was prepared under the Technical Assistance for the Support for Children's Rights in Türkiye Project to offer essential recommendations to strengthen the inter-and intra-institutional coordination, communication and information sharing in the four focus areas of child rights and, thus, to contribute to the more effective implementation of child rights in Türkiye.

The preparation of this document was initiated in February 2022 by a working group formed by the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) with the technical assistance of the project. The parties of the working group, which included MoFSS General Directorate of Child Services (Çocuk Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü-ÇHGM), General Directorate on the Status of Women (Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü-KSGM), Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) and the technical assistance team comprised of academicians, members of CSOs and practitioners, continued their works for five months.

The activities first started with qualitative and quantitative studies. In addition to the literature review carried out through regular communication and consultations between the working group members, qualitative studies in the central organization and quantitative studies in the provincial organization were carried out.

As part of the quantitative study, a field study was conducted and it covered the implementation process of the services in order to identify the challenges faced, hindrances to the communication flow, and the bottlenecks regarding communication, coordination and information sharing. The said field study was addressed under the sections on the child protection system and child labour. Regarding the questionnaires sent to 3073 professionals in the provincial organization of MoFSS, the participation rate was 47% and for the questionnaires carried out with the personnel working in the 562 Units of Combatting Child Labour (UCCL) in the provincial organization of the MoLSS the participation was at 46%.

As for the qualitative study, in-depth interviews were carried out with 12 ÇHGM staff, and focus groups were held with 15 staff from the MoFSS and 6 personnel from the MoLSS Directorate General of Employment Policies.

The "Communication Processes Current Situation Analysis Report", which is the annex of this strategy document, was prepared as a result of the qualitative and quantitative studies.

The Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document prepared based on this report covers the current situation of communication, coordination and information sharing mechanisms within MoFSS and those with other institutions and the civil society, as well as offers recommendations for improvement. In addition, it discusses the coordination, cooperation and communication mechanisms within the MoLSS, with other institutions and organizations and civil society, especially in the field of combatting child labour, and offers recommendations for improvement.

In order to address analytically the communication and processes between various actors such as institutions and individuals who have a role within the child protection system, the Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document developed comprehensive recommendations for improvement using a conceptual framework with the aim of implementing child rights at the highest level. This framework is referred as the "3C Model" in the literature.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Within the scope of the Technical Assistance for the Support for Children's Rights in Türkiye Project, the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) address the rights of the child in four focus areas. These are (i) child protection and child care services, (ii) prevention and combatting child labour, (iii) identification, referral, and psychosocial support of children in vulnerable situations, and (iv) prevention of early marriages.

Through the Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document developed, it is aimed to build capacity for the improvement of inter-and intra-institutional coordination for the services of MoFSS and MoLSS related to the four focus areas of child rights. In addition, it is aimed to increase cooperation and communication between public institutions, social partners and civil society organizations (CSOs) in these focus areas.

This document, prepared for this purpose, clearly defines how a consistent, systematic and well-planned communication, coordination and information sharing system can be established between the staff working in the central and provincial organizations of MoFSS and MoLSS, and between the central organization, the external stakeholders and the media. It also offers concrete recommendations for their development. These identifications and concrete recommendations were prepared during the March-July 2022 period within the scope of a four-month intensive work program.

During this four-month period, the working group consisting of academicians and practitioners was formed and quantitative and qualitative studies were carried out as detailed in the project terms of reference<sup>1</sup>. Based on the findings of this study, communication, cooperation and coordination mechanisms between public institutions and organizations, especially MoFSS and MoLSS, regarding the four focus areas of child rights were examined and the hindrances to the functioning of these mechanisms in the current situation were identified. Following this examination, concrete solutions for the improvement of each three mechanisms were offered based on the quantitative and qualitative findings.

In short, the Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document is expected to contribute to the full enjoyment of all rights and freedoms by children in Türkiye without discrimination through the improved communication, coordination and information sharing mechanisms in internal operations of MoFSS and MoLSS, and in the policy development or implementation with public institutions, organizations, CSOs and the media,.

<sup>1</sup> The findings of the aforementioned study were reported in the "Developing the Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document - Current Situation Analysis Report" and it is referred to as "Current Situation Analysis" in this document.



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This document was outlined in three main sections. The brief description of the design of the qualitative and quantitative field studies is followed by three subtitles: communication, coordination and information sharing. Under each subtitle, bottlenecks identified in the legislation and practice are discussed and remedies are offered. Afterwards, in the concluding chapter of the document, possible action points aimed at enhancing the communication, coordination and collaboration between MoFSS, MoLSS, other public institutions, CSOs and the media were summarised.

This document also has an operational nature. The document was designed as a summary document to be used as a reference by the actors within the child protection system related to the issues of communication, coordination and information sharing and at any time when faced with challenges. Accordingly, the first section of the document contains an Evaluation of the Child Protection System in the Context of the Rights of the Child. This evaluation is presented together with data and findings gathered from the Current Situation Analysis study conducted within the scope of the project. Following the subtitles of coordination, collaboration and communication, the document continues with the description of challenges faced in each subsection along with concrete solutions offered and concludes with a short section summarising the recommendations.

Everyone who works directly or indirectly with children and their families has a responsibility of ensuring their welfare, well-being and safety. While one individual cannot have a full picture about the needs and challenges, but all those working at different levels and in different positions for the welfare and protection of children, those who come into contact with them have their roles, competencies and responsibilities to take actions if needed and should be accountable for the decisions and actions taken.

In order to ensure effective and efficient communication, cooperation and coordination, it is essential that all of those working with families and children know how to comply with the professional standards, protocols to safeguard the rights of the children.

Besides providing regular supervision to support the work and providing feedback to all working with children and families, regular monitoring, data gathering, evaluation of the data, the procedures and outcomes, and measurement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies and practices should be implemented. These measures can provide proper information for policy and decision makers, also support the work by providing feedback for all those working in different services and institutions, and help to improve the quality of the activities. Children and family members should also be heard as they can also provide feedback on their satisfaction and experiences. In this context, this document has the potential to provide guidance.



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CCISD will function as a vital first step for the following stages where the recommendations offered in the document are further elaborated, planned, designed and implemented with the participation of key actors within the child protection field.

## **Evaluation of Child Protection Services Within the Context of the Rights of the Child, Based on the Current Situation Analysis**

Looking at the historical progression of child rights in Türkiye, the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) stands out as an important step. In line with this advancement, the most important legal basis for protecting the rights of the child is the UNCRC and the Child Protection Law No: 5395. This law governs the practices and procedures aimed at protecting the children's rights to life, develop and participation. The basic rights of the child are the right to life, right to name and to acquire a nationality, right to know his/her parents and to be looked after by them, right to live within the family with his/her parents, to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to access information and material from various sources aimed at the promotion of his/her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health, right to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly. The protection of these rights should be the fundamental principle in the child protection system. This section will focus on how the rights of children at risk or in protection are addressed within the framework of the core principles of child rights based on the findings collected in the current situation analysis carried out under Activity 1.1 Developing Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document of the project Technical Assistance for the Support for Children's Rights in Türkiye. These principles are non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life survival and development and participation.

### **Non-discrimination principle**

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The Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states the obligation to recognize the child without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. As per this obligation, the rights of the child to name and nationality, and the rights of children with unknown parentage to identity and nationality are protected by the MoFSS. Due diligence is exercised for registering the children with known parents to prevent the loss of parentage. Furthermore, 72.1% of the participants from the MoFSS provincial organization stated that the ethnic, cultural and other characteristics of the child are taken into account when planning care services for children. In the data, while 15.3% of participants were undecided, 21.6% of participants reported that insufficient attention was paid to these characteristics. This proportion can be considered quite high



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when evaluated in the context of child rights. In other words, it is seen that there is a risk of not considering the ethnic, cultural and other unique characteristics of one out of every 5 children who will be taken under protection and utilize care services. In order to eliminate this risk a child protective system attuned to the ethnic, cultural and other unique characteristics should be supported. In addition to in-service training that increases the sensitivity of the staff working in institutions and organizations providing services, particularly to children who migrated to our country with their parents or unaccompanied from Syria, it is beneficial to establish an effective mechanism to monitor this process.

## The best interests of the child

Children being cared by their parents is one of the crucial requirements of the best interests of the child. In order to support this, the MoFSS has developed services to support the children in need of protection within the family without taking them into care. If the families can look after their children with the social and economic support provided to them, the care of the child within the family is preferred rather than opting for care services. In cases where this cannot be achieved, efforts, then, shift to improving and promoting family-oriented services such as foster care and adoption. However, since the number of foster parents is not sufficient in the current system, the number of children in care services is still higher than that of children cared for by foster parents. Therefore, the development and promotion of a professional foster care model that will expand the foster care service and provide care for children with special needs (for example, children with a history of substance abuse, perpetrators or victims of a crime, or children with disabilities) are considered among the important needs. For this reason, it is necessary to take more initiatives for the improvement of the foster care system.

The safety of the child constitutes the basis of the best interests of the child. Children being safe warrants the protection of the child. In order to ensure the best interests of the child, children should be protected. The right to protection ensures the protection of the child against all forms of neglect, abuse and exploitation. These rights are primarily addressed in Articles 19, 32, 34 and 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensure the protection of the child from armed conflicts, child labour, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, drug abuse and challenges caused by being a refugee. At this point, the current child protection system can be referred to as a well-organized and well-functioning system in terms of identifying the protection needs of the child. However, this system seems to work more effectively after the entry of the child into the protection system. The child protection system should function more effectively by safeguarding the child before they become victims of neglect and abuse. Therefore, the need to develop an inter-institutional and multidisciplinary preventive and protective child protection system that includes protective and preventive services comes to the fore. The responsibility regarding this issue does not only rely on the Ministry of Family and Social Services, and a system that facilitates the active role of the stakeholder institutions such as





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the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, local governments and CSOs needs to be developed.

The need for developing protective and preventive services is also prominent for issues in relation to child labour. According to the current situation analysis, 72.7% of the personnel working in the Units of Combatting Child Labour (UCCL) think that the number of working children is much higher than that reported to the unit. In other words, the identification mechanism functions more through evaluations of the applications and notices rather than field monitoring. Although the Family Social Support Program (ASDEP) established in the provinces for this purpose is being implemented, there are cases where some of the personnel working under this program do not go to field visits due to the lack of personnel in the institutions, but rather they work as professionals in the Social Service Centers (SHM). As a matter of fact, 27% of the personnel participating in the situation analysis and working in the field of child protection in the provinces are Family Social Support Program personnel.

The protection of a large group of children can be made possible through the establishment of protective and preventive services. Monitoring is one of the most important pillars of protective and preventive work. In the current situation analysis, 77.4% think that psycho-social support is provided to families of the children who were taken into protection and benefited from care services and, then, were reunited with their families. This proportion could be considered as an indicator pointing to the challenges in the systematic provision of long-term monitoring activities for this high-risk group of children. Considering the current workload of the staff working in the provincial organization, it is considered that it would not be easy to carry out robust monitoring. In order to carry out sound monitoring, child monitoring units could be established within the social services centres. The sole responsibility of these staff to be appointed in these centres could be aftercare monitoring and the monitoring of children receiving economic support. After the identification of service standards for child follow-up and monitoring, the number of children requiring follow-up for each professional is determined, and, accordingly, sufficient number of staff is employed in the centres. Thus, it will be possible to respond rapidly to the challenges arising during the monitoring stage.

## Principle of Life, Survival and Development

In Article 6 of UNCRC states that every child has the inherent right to life and States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child. The child's right to life set forth the fulfilment of the basic needs of the child, such as living and having decent living standards, medical care, nutrition, and shelter. The fundamental rights provided to children for living conditions define and strengthen the child's existence as a free individual. Regarding the right to life, it can be stated that in the current child protection system, efforts are made to ensure that children benefit from appropriate shelter, health and education services. In addition to providing a suitable living space for children, it is possible for children to benefit from education and health services through inter-



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institutional cooperation and coordination. In addition, MoLSS and the Ministry of National Education carry out joint works in order to prevent child workers or children at risk of child labour from leaving education early.

However, it can be seen that children in need of protection sometimes encounter challenges in benefiting from the health and education measures ruled by the courts. Out of the staff from the MoFSS provincial organization participating in the current situation analysis carried out under Özne Çocuk: Technical Assistance for the Support for Children's Rights in Türkiye, 57% of them stated that the health measures were executed in a timely manner and 54.1% stated that they provided effective results. Even though it might seem a positive outcome that this proportion is made up of more than half of the participants, it can be concluded that there are difficulties in almost half of the health measures. When the same situation is considered in terms of education measures, the proportion of personnel stating that the education measures are executed on time is 53.6%, and those who think that the education measures are effective is 46.7%. Therefore, it is possible to infer that there is a risk of children missing the chance to benefit from education opportunities at an early age, especially for children in need of protection.

The right to development, on the other hand, includes the right to education, the right to play and rest, to freedom of religion, conscience and thought, which are necessary for the self-actualization of the child at the highest level. The lack of timely and effective implementation of the education and health measures ruled by the courts for children in need of protection also negatively affects the right to development of children. The MoFSS and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) carry out cooperative works regarding sportive and social activities to support the physical, mental and social development of children under protection. While the right to development of children who are taken into protection and placed in residential care or foster care or in the process of adoption are better protected, there is a risk for children who are supported by a measure within the family not being able to benefit from education and health services to the extent they deserve.

The child protection system should be inclusive of all children. The rigour and monitoring mechanism in the process of meeting the developmental needs of children under protection and benefiting from a care service should also be provided for children supported within their families. It should be considered to create a model of Child and Youth Centres that provide daytime services, especially for children living in economically disadvantaged regions in order to enable children supported by socio-economic support within the family to participate in art, sports and educational activities for the development of other social skills in addition to their education. Through these centres, children will be protected from harmful social environments, as well as use their out-of-school leisure time to develop different skills.

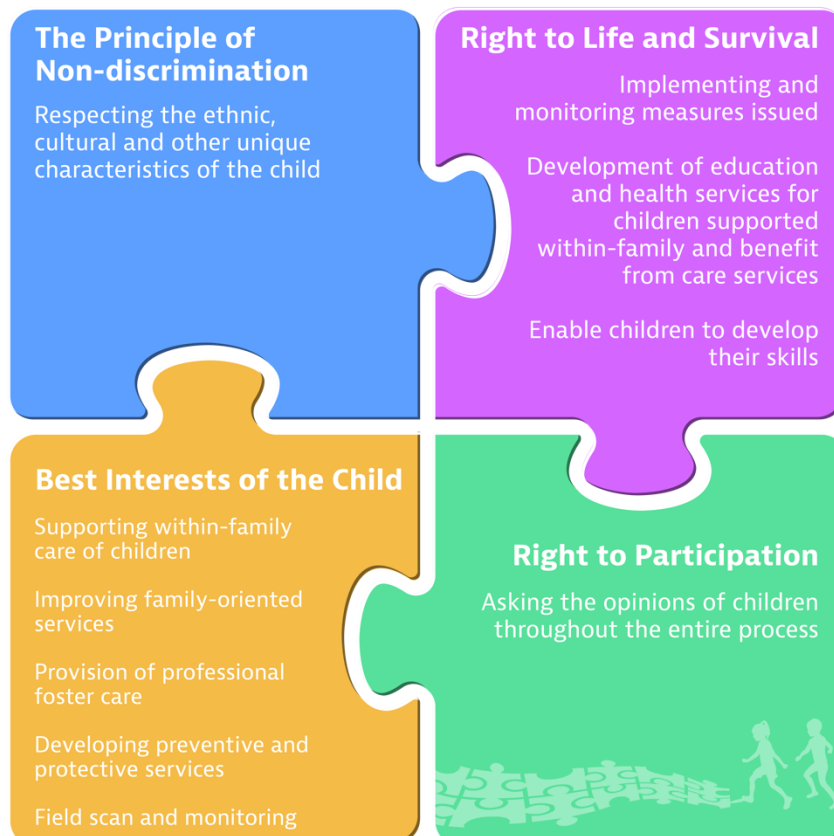


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## The Right to Participation

The right to participation ensures that children take an active role within the family and society. As per the Articles 12 and 15 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the rights include the right to express their views and participate in decisions on all matters affecting them, to form associations, and to peaceful assembly. According to the current situation analysis, the percentage of being able to offer options to children and families regarding care services is 72.3%. The proportion of asking children's opinions when changing the institutions or service models where they stay is 61.9%. At this point, looking at these proportions it can be stated that the child's opinion is strived to be sought while making important decisions about the child's own life. In addition, as the beneficiaries the proportion of thinking that children's opinions are asked while planning services for children is 72.1%. This rate is quite high and can be considered an indicator of an effort to include children as decision-makers in service operation processes.

**FIGURE 1: Measures to be taken for the protection of the rights of the child**





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## 2. METHOD

The method for the Current Situation Analysis Report, which forms the basis of this Communication and Coordination and Information Sharing Document and was prepared as the first step of this document, is comprised of two stages. In the first stage of the study, the situation in the legislation in force regarding Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing was evaluated. Document analysis method was used for this stage. The current legislation analysis was covered under the titles of Child Protection System and Child Labour.

In the second stage of the study, a field study covering the implementation process of the service was conducted in order to identify the challenges faced in practice in terms of Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing, the challenges experienced in the communication flow and the bottlenecks that hinder communication. The field study was also addressed under the headings of Child Protection System and Child Labour. Field studies were conducted both with MoFSS regarding the child protection system and with MoLSS regarding child labour. A mixed method design comprised of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed.

In the study, it was deemed appropriate to use a quantitative method for the provincial organization of the MoFSS regarding the Child Protection System and it was aimed to collect data through the questionnaires designed. Data were collected from a total of 1740 participants. Here, especially the communication processes of the provincial organization in its relations with both the General Directorate and other public institutions and organizations were attempted to be revealed. In order to identify the internal communication processes of MoFSS ÇHGM, 12 people were interviewed using in-depth interview method and focus group discussions were preferred to be carried out with 15 participants in order to identify communication processes between ÇHGM and other general directorates.

In the study, for the provincial organization of the MoLSS, it was aimed to collect data through a quantitative study using questionnaires designed. Questionnaires were completed by 260 respondents. The particular aim was to reveal the communication processes between the provincial organization and the MoLSS. Focus group interviews with 6 participants were preferred in order to identify the internal communication processes of the Employment Policies Department of the General Directorate of Labour within the MoLSS.

Quantitative data was collected using Google Forms. For the qualitative data, semi-structured interview guidelines were used and face-to-face interviews were conducted. The quantitative data collected were transferred to the SPSS 25 program. The number and percentage distributions of the data were classified. MAXQDA analysis program was used for the analysis of in-depth interviews. The



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analysis of focus group discussions was carried out via transcribed texts on the questions asked on the main topics and emerging themes were reported.

## Conceptual Framework: Coordination, Cooperation and Information Sharing (3C Model)

The theoretical framework referred to as "3C Model" (Coordination, Collaboration, Communication Model)<sup>2</sup> in the literature is efficient in order to address analytically the relationships and operations between various actors, institutions and individuals who play a role in the child protection system in order to exercise the rights of the child at the highest level in Türkiye. With the detailed investigation of the concepts of coordination, collaboration and communication ("koordinasyon", "iş birliği" and "iletişim" in Turkish) which are the three main components of this model, that is used to examine the child protection system in terms of relations between actors, the structure followed in this report will also be introduced.

**Coordination:** Coordination is comprised of interconnected actors working in harmony with a specific purpose towards a common goal and the regulation of this process. *Order* is the fundamental concept of coordination since the harmonized work of the actors is possible through a defined and regulated order.

Coordination particularly in the child protection system occurs through the amalgamation of the job description of the actors within the system, their positions relative to each other, or how they identify with one another, and of the legislation regulating these duties and relations.

**Collaboration:** Collaboration refers to the collaborative and joint work of actors to produce specific outputs. *Labour* is at the root of collaboration.

Collaboration in the child protection system enables us to gain an analytical perspective on the work that actors within the system do together. It provides an answer to the question "Which institutions or persons act together with which other institutions or persons and how?".

**Communication:** In its narrowest sense, communication means the mutual exchange of information and messages; in the context of institutional and organizational communication, it is understood as the communication tools and methods that institutions or organizations use for their aims. Even

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<sup>2</sup> The Coordination, Cooperation and Communication Model has been discussed in the literature of various disciplines such as organizational communication, governance, project management, and software development and has been modelled with different titles. This model was chosen because it allows for the independent evaluation of these three extremely similar concepts and, thus, enables the opportunity for an evaluation based on relationships and processes.



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though the core of communication varies according to the interpretation, it can be defined as a message or reciprocity portrayed through a reciprocal verb.

Communication in the child protection system means, in its narrowest sense, the channels and methods enabling the exchange of information necessary for the functioning of the system between the actors within the system.

A closer look at the child protection system in Türkiye through the lens of coordination, collaboration and communication reveals that coordination offers perspectives or sub-domains on the roles of actors within the system and how they relate to each other; collaboration offers perspectives on what actors within this coordination structure do and how they work together; and communication is rendered concrete through perspectives or sub-domains on the communication-related activities that facilitate the joint efforts of actors within this structure.

The following three sub-sections of the report focus on coordination, collaboration and communication, the assessments in these three areas, the problems experienced and the solution suggestions are listed.



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### 3. COORDINATION

According to the study findings, the method of which has been described above, the coordination process (current situation) of the studies aimed at child protection system and child labour, hindrances to the process and recommendations related to these hindrances are as follows:

#### Current Situation in Coordination: Actors, legislation, process

In the child protection system, the coordination task is carried out by the MoFSS. Although the responsibility for coordination related to the measures is entrusted to the Ministry of Justice in Article 45 of the Child Protection Law, the responsibility for coordination is entrusted to the MoFSS in Article 19 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Protective and Supportive Measures Made Pursuant to the Child Protection Law. The actors involved in this coordination process and the relevant legislation on this subject are presented in the annexed Table 2.

ÇHGM carries out this coordination within the MoFSS. Since ÇHGM is the main responsible for the implementations, it liaises intensively with the relevant actors in the coordination process. The communication points in this will be discussed under the communication section.

Regarding the safeguarding of the child, identification of children in need of protection and the action taken and works to be done after the identification the main duty relies on the provincial organization under the coordination of ÇHGM.

#### Coordination within MoFSS

At ÇHGM, the task of coordination is carried out by different departments. The coordination tasks of these departments regarding their services can be seen in Figure 2.



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**Figure 2: Service Areas of the Departments of ÇHGM**



As can be seen here, child homes, child homes complexes, which are care services, are carried out (coordinated) under different Department of Care Services, ÇOKİM, which is the primary institution for care services, is under the Department of Quality and Service Planning; and mobile child services, which are important actors in identifying children and monitoring, are carried out (coordinated) under the Department of Orphan and Daytime Services. However, the units of provincial organizations providing these services are not so clearly divided. For instance, the staff of first admission units is usually comprised of the staff of Child Homes Complexes or Child Homes. Again, the duties of mobile teams are performed by the personnel responsible for different tasks at the same time in the FSS Provincial Directorate or Social Service Centres. Furthermore, there is also no legislation regulating the operation of mobile teams. In this context, as the personnel in the provinces carry out more than one service at the same time or carry out intertwined tasks, they can receive different instructions from different departments at the same time.





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## Central-provincial organization coordination

Child Protection Provincial/District Coordination Boards are the most important actors in the child protection system at the provincial level. As per Articles 19, 20 and 21 of the "Regulation on the Implementation of the Protective and Supportive Measure Decisions Made Pursuant to the Child Protection Law" prepared on the basis of Article 47 of the Child Protection Law No. 5395, "The Directive on the Working, Procedures and Principles of the Centre, Provincial and District Coordination Boards Established to Fulfil the Protective and Supportive Measures According to the Child Protection Law" has been issued and these boards have been established. Central Coordination meets two times a year, every six months, under the chairmanship of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, and Provincial Coordination convenes six times a year, every two months, under the chairmanship of the relevant Deputy Governor. Provincial/District Coordination Secretariat Officer is assigned from among the Social Workers working in the Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services. The purpose of these boards is to carry out technical works on monitoring, planning and implementation of child protection services, and to ensure that child protection services are carried out in coordination at the provincial level. Within the framework of this coordination, protective and preventive services mainly occur as described in Figure 3.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Second 100-Day Action Plan of the Presidency, Units of Combatting Child Labour (UCCL) have been established within the 81 Provincial Directorates of Labour and Employment Agency by the MoLSS Directorate General of Labour, which is the coordinating unit in the field of child labour. The UCCLs perform their duties in 81 provinces under the coordination of the Provincial Directorate of Labour and Employment Agency including also the staff from the Provincial Directorate of Social Security and Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services. These units work towards increasing the effectiveness of the activities in the field of combatting child labour and improving the practicality and monitoring of the central-level policies at the local level.

Within the scope of activities for the children of seasonal agricultural worker families, the Ministry of National Education circular numbered 2016/5 on "Access to Education of the Children of Seasonal Agricultural Workers and Children of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Families" is implemented in order to ensure the continuation of the children of seasonal agricultural workers who go to other provinces and their access to education. In addition to the aforementioned circular, the circular numbered 2017/6 on "Seasonal Agricultural Workers", which aims to solve the challenges experienced by the workers and their families who go to other provinces as seasonal agricultural workers, is implemented under the coordination of the MoLSS General Directorate of Labour. With the said circular, the measures to be ruled at the provincial level are declared by the governorships and all these measures are executed under the supervision and control of the governors. Furthermore, as per the circular, seasonal agricultural workers bureaus, which will be presided by the deputy governor to be appointed, were established in the provinces, and an institution representative from the bureau was determined as the



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coordinator. Each governorship can prepare an annual action plan, and resources are allocated to the provinces within the scope of the budgeting of the MoLSS.

**Figure 3: Coordination of Protective, Preventive Services**

Regarding coordination, joint work should also be carried out at the Ministry level. Ministry of Family and Social Services is once again the Ministry responsible for the coordination of duties and

**CHILD PROTECTION PROVINCIAL/DISTRICT COORDINATION BOARDS  
(Secretariat carried out by the Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services)**



procedures of central organizations. The issues collaborated will be discussed under "Collaboration" section.

MoLSS undertakes coordination for combatting child labour. The responsibilities of the institutions working in this field are determined in accordance with national and international legislation. According to Article 71 of Labour Law No. 4857, it is prohibited to employ children under the age of 15. However, children who have reached the age of 14 and have completed compulsory primary education can be employed in light jobs that are suitable for their physical, mental, social and moral development and that will not hinder their school attendance for those who continue their education. These jobs are determined by the "Regulation on the Procedures and Principles of Employment of



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Child and Young Workers" pursuant to Article 71 in order to specify the principles of work of child and young workers without jeopardizing their health and safety, physical, mental, moral and social development or education and to prevent their economic exploitation.

Regarding child labour, activities are carried out under the supervision of MoLSS by following international standards for establishing coordination and developing policies. The General Directorate of Labour was identified as responsible institution for the formation of the legal basis. Accordingly, the National Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023) and its annexed Action Plan prepared by the MoLSS with the contribution of all relevant parties, with the aim of eliminating child labour, especially the worst forms such as heavy and dangerous jobs on the streets, in small and medium-sized enterprises, and paid mobile and seasonal agricultural work, other than family work in agriculture are being implemented. The Action Plan includes measures distributed in line with the duties and responsibilities of institutions and organizations. They include issues such as eliminating poverty, which is the main reason for children entering work life, increasing the quality and accessibility of education, and developing social awareness and sensitivity. The Action Plan includes activities such as awareness raising for children and their families, vocational training, and directing to public services, and works are carried out within this scope. In other words, the coordination in the combat against child labour belongs to the MoLSS as the sole institution. In this context, works are carried out in collaboration with the relevant institutions under the coordination of the MoLSS in line with its field of duty and responsibilities. Furthermore, MoFSS also takes an active role in identification works. In addition to identification works, the combat against child labour is being carried out through field studies and awareness-raising activities.

Basic human, social and cultural rights are exercised by public institutions, including municipalities. In the provinces receiving migration, employers are also trained, and a two-way combatting system is established. In the legislation related to the children in the seasonal agricultural cycle, 'school' and 'education' have been emphasized on several occasions, and various institutions, especially MoNE, have been tasked with keeping children in education while removing them from labour.

## Challenges Concerning Coordination

In the findings obtained as a result of the comprehensive study conducted with the actors in the child protection system in Türkiye, the following challenges to the coordination have been identified:

### Difficulties in job descriptions and the provision of services

The occasional contradictory statements in the legislation on which task is entrusted to which institution leads to uncertainty in the job descriptions. For example, while Article 45 of the Child



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Protection Law declares that the coordination of the institutions will be provided by the Ministry of Justice in the implementation of the measures stated in this law, Article 19 of the Regulation on the Implementation of Protective and Supportive Measures Made Pursuant to the Child Protection Law states that the central-level coordination of protective and preventive measures will be provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Services.

It is evaluated that the term Social Work Officer stated in the Law should be re-evaluated. The concept of social work is the name of a profession. Since the definition of social work officer contains other diverse professional groups, there is confusion about job descriptions.

There are no clear task flows in the operational processes of the services provided by MoFSS ÇHGM, and implementations are generally carried out in line with the main tasks specified in the legislation. In fact, looking at the general functioning, although there are no written workflow processes, some personnel have created a workflow process suitable for them. However, since this workflow is not a standard, it leads to an environment enabling different implementations to vary from person to person. The non-standardization of the implementation leads to the use of different practices in similar situations. The lack of standardized workflow charts for each practice leads to the risk of people interpreting the legislation and to varying operation. In order to eliminate this issue, it is necessary to establish workflow charts for each practice and ensure the standardized implementation of the services by preventing subjective interpretations.

Issues that are not covered in the primary legislation are carried out by circulars or instructions sent by the MoFSS to the provinces. This leads to uncertainties on different issues during the implementation process or the emergence of different implementations on the same subject. For example, due to the fact that the regulation on adoption has not yet been issued, and the lack of any documentation addressing the establishment and functioning of mobile teams, certain challenges and difficulties ensue. For this reason, priority should be given to the identification of the gaps in the legislation and the swift preparation of regulations and directives, especially regarding the new services put into practice.

The workflow for services for children who were subjected to early and forced marriage is unclear. Early marriage should be considered in terms of child abuse and neglect, and emphasis should be placed on increasing protective and preventive services.

As there are no clear workflow procedures for service provision, the transfer of the service to the new personnel during the employee replacement is also one of the important problem areas.



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The fact that the personnel in the provinces simultaneously deal with the issues related to different general directorates while performing their work may lead to receiving different instructions from different general directorates from time to time.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the nature of the field, the responsibilities in the sub-branches of child labour are distributed among different institutions. For example, regarding combatting child labour in seasonal agriculture, while İŞKUR, Ministry of Interior General Directorate of Security and Gendarmerie General Command and many public institutions are assigned duties under the coordination of the General Directorate of Labour of the MoLSS, in industry, the Directorate of Guidance and Inspection of the MoLSS and the Social Security Institution (SSI) have greater roles. This may lead to different approaches in different branches of child labour.

### **Lack of and need for supervision**

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Since there is no formal supervision system in the MoFSS, at the macro level, and in the ÇHGM, at the micro level, newly recruited staff have to learn the job with the support from their colleagues. Here, it is possible to talk about a voluntary supervision process. However, in cases where this voluntary-based supervision cannot be achieved, the new recruit attempts to learn the job by examining the files on previous works.

Especially, the fact that the additional course-based or contracted personnel who work temporarily in the provincial organization take part in the child protection services and the frequent place and task changes of these personnel increase the need for supervision.

Another important issue regarding supervision is related to the personnel working in the central organization providing supervision to the professionals working in the provinces. This not only increases the workload of staff working in the provincial organizations but also leads the work to continue during the private time of the personnel and outside of working hours, as it requires them to be accessible at any time.

<sup>3</sup> For example, when a child with a disability will be provided residential care, different instructions can be given from the Directorate General of Child Services and Directorate General Services for Persons with Disability and Elderly. Likewise, the instructions of the General Directorate of Child Services and the General Directorate on the Status of Women may conflict regarding the services to be provided to a pregnant child.



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## Human resources

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The fact that the personnel working in the provincial organization has to fulfil many tasks simultaneously<sup>4</sup> negatively affects the quality of the work done. This may cause disagreements about coordination.

Apart from the personnel working in the provincial organizations as per the Civil Servants Law No. 657, the frequent job termination of the ASDEP officers and the personnel who work in return for additional courses and the frequently transferred personnel between units are important obstacles to the skill development of the personnel in this field. In the current situation analysis, according to the examination of the work status of the participants working in the provincial organizations of MoFSS, 52.5% of the personnel are civil servants working as per the Civil Servants Law No. 657, 27% work in the Family Social Support Program (ASDEP), 5.6% are workers and 10.4% of them work in return for additional lessons fee. It was seen that 4.4% of the participants had other statuses. Despite different statuses, the nature of the job expected from the staff is the same. That said, the stability of the contracted personnel and additional course-based personnel differs particularly from the personnel working as per the Civil Servants Law No. 657. The frequent staff mobility and, thus, the re-learning of implementation by the new recruits leads to hindrances in service provision. During this process, there are difficulties in ensuring the coordination of which implementation will be carried out with whom, how and in what way due to the lack of experience of the personnel. The most important qualities of the personnel when working with children in need of protection, which is a group of children in very sensitive and vulnerable situations, is to have sufficient knowledge, along with experience and skills. The regular staff mobility mentioned above decreases the opportunity to gain experiences.

## Lack of or insufficient capacity

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During the process of taking to children into protection, the process of determining the institution and service capacity for the care service necessary and suitable for the child is the most difficult phase. One of the main reasons why this stage is difficult is that the establishment capacities are not at a sufficient level to meet the needs. Therefore, in cases where emergency care service provision is necessary for to the child, difficulties may arise in determining the appropriate service model and placing the child in a suitable placement.

A significant part of the staff does not receive any specialized training on working with children in need of protection before starting to work in this field.

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<sup>4</sup> A professional working in the Social Service Centre (SSC) can also be assigned to the mobile team while still doing the work of his/her unit in the central organization. In addition, in SSCs where the number of personnel is insufficient, a professional can work in more than one independent unit.



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A significant part of the expert staff working in the field of child protection does not receive any in-service training on the work processes of the services before starting to work in this field.

The knowledge and skills of the personnel working in Units for Combatting Child Labour (UCCL) on the rights of the child is not sufficient. Furthermore, staff working in the field of child labour cannot adequately inform children about the process.

## Recommendations for improving coordination

- The norms in the legislation should be updated to identify the authorities and responsibilities of current ministries, institutions, organizations, directorates and departments.
- Clear specification of the assignments to distinguish the duties and responsibilities of personnel who are grouped under one roof as a social worker, but who have different education and specializations (graduates of social work, psychology, child development, psychological counselling and guidance, teaching, sociology, family and consumer sciences, special education teaching departments) is needed.
- It is evaluated that the workflow processes related to the duties and responsibilities of all institutions and organizations involved in the Child Protection System should be clarified to prevent ambiguity. For this, works defining the workflow should be carried out under the leadership of institutions and organizations that are essential in the child protection system, especially MoFSS and ÇHGM, with the contribution of different institutions and actors in the sector. Then, activities aimed at the adoption of these clarified workflows by the stakeholders in the sector should be realised.
- Establishing an official professional supervision system both in the central organization of the ministry and in the provincial organizations is considered to be fruitful. Relatedly, practices such as the mobilization of the professional staff who has worked in different units in the field of child welfare for a certain period of time, who have undergone in-service training and who want to become supervisors voluntarily as supervisors, especially in the provincial organization, and displaying sensitivity to ensuring stability during the transfer of the personnel could facilitate standardized service provision and setting a focal person supporting the personnel in the provinces in difficult situations of implementation.
- Efforts should be made to minimize staff turnover to ensure that both central and provincial staff develop skills and gain experience in child protection. Maximum effort is required to ensure that these changes take place in line with the overall human resources policy of the institutions. For this reason, selecting personnel who will work in the child protection system mainly from permanent staff and lessening staff mobility, except for mandatory situations, should be adopted as personnel policy.



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- It is thought that in planning new services or making amendments to the existing services, the active participation of the provincial organizations in the decision-making processes should be supported as the primary body carrying out services. The basic needs in the provincial organizations are better known by the staff working there. In addition, the characteristics of the local socio-cultural structures are also well known by the personnel working locally. Therefore, asking the opinions of the provincial organizations at the service planning stage will contribute to the effective and efficient use of resources.
- Considering that child welfare and the psychosocial needs of vulnerable children, especially those in need of protection, are higher than those of other children, it is thought that systematic and continuous training on child welfare should be provided to staff.
- In-service training should be prepared on issues such as the rights of the child, child welfare and the best interests of the child, and the training should be provided systematically to the personnel working in the field.
- The personnel who will work on child rights and child labour in the Units for Combatting Child Labour should be improved with in-service trainings on "child labour and child welfare" for the proper functioning of policies to be developed in preventing child labour.





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## 4. COLLABORATION

As stated in the previous sections of the Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Strategy Document, collaboration refers to actors in a system working together in order to produce specific outputs. In the context of the child protection system, collaboration is about what and how the institutions or individuals in the field act together with other institutions or individuals.

According to the theoretical framework and the findings of the study mentioned in the methods section, the collaboration process for the works carried out in the child protection system and child labour, the challenges faced in this process, and recommendations related to these problems are as follows.

### Current Situation in Collaboration: Actors, legislation, process

#### Collaboration between ÇHGM and Ministries/institutions

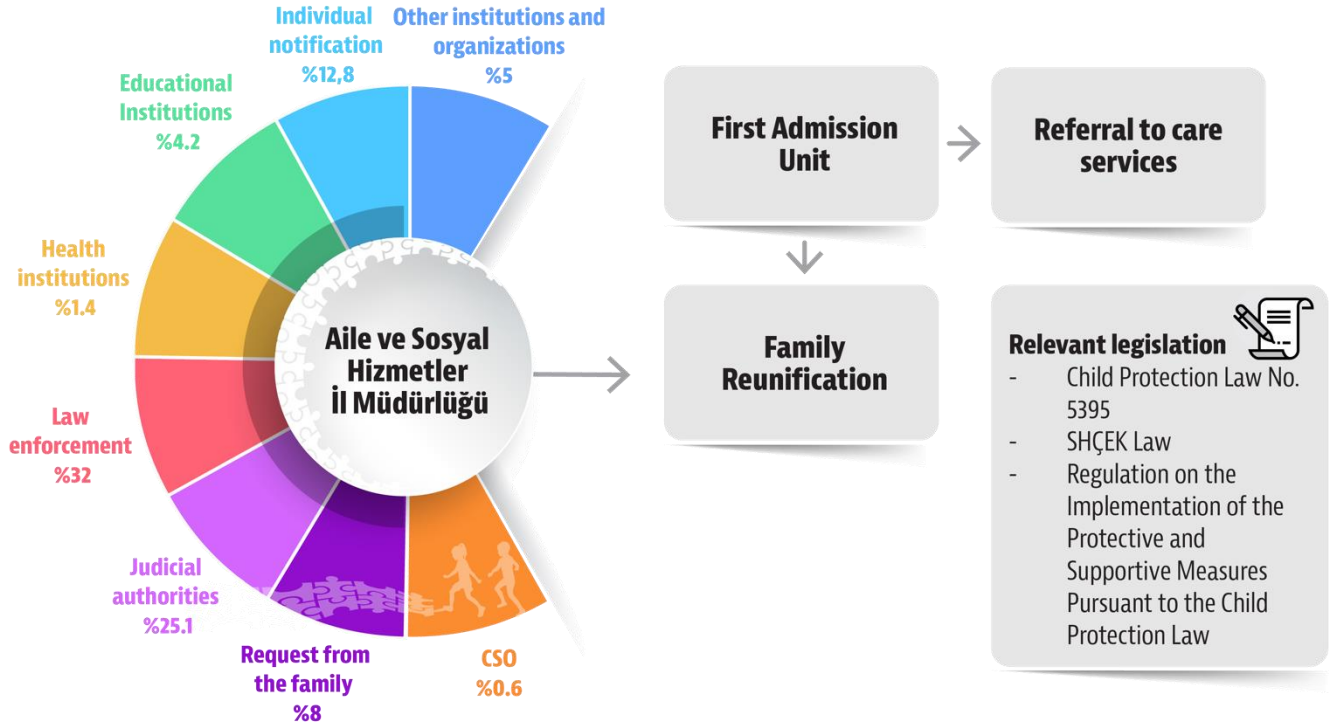
Child Protection Law No. 5395 states that the measures ruled for children should be executed through inter-institutional collaboration. In fact, other institutions have duties, especially for the process of the protection of the child starting from identification to referral to the MoFSS. Collaboration is also established for the duties and procedures of other institutions related to this process. The way children enter the system reflects the importance and intensity of this collaboration (Figure 4).



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Figure 4: Entry of the Child into the Protection System

## ENTRY OF THE CHILD INTO THE SYSTEM



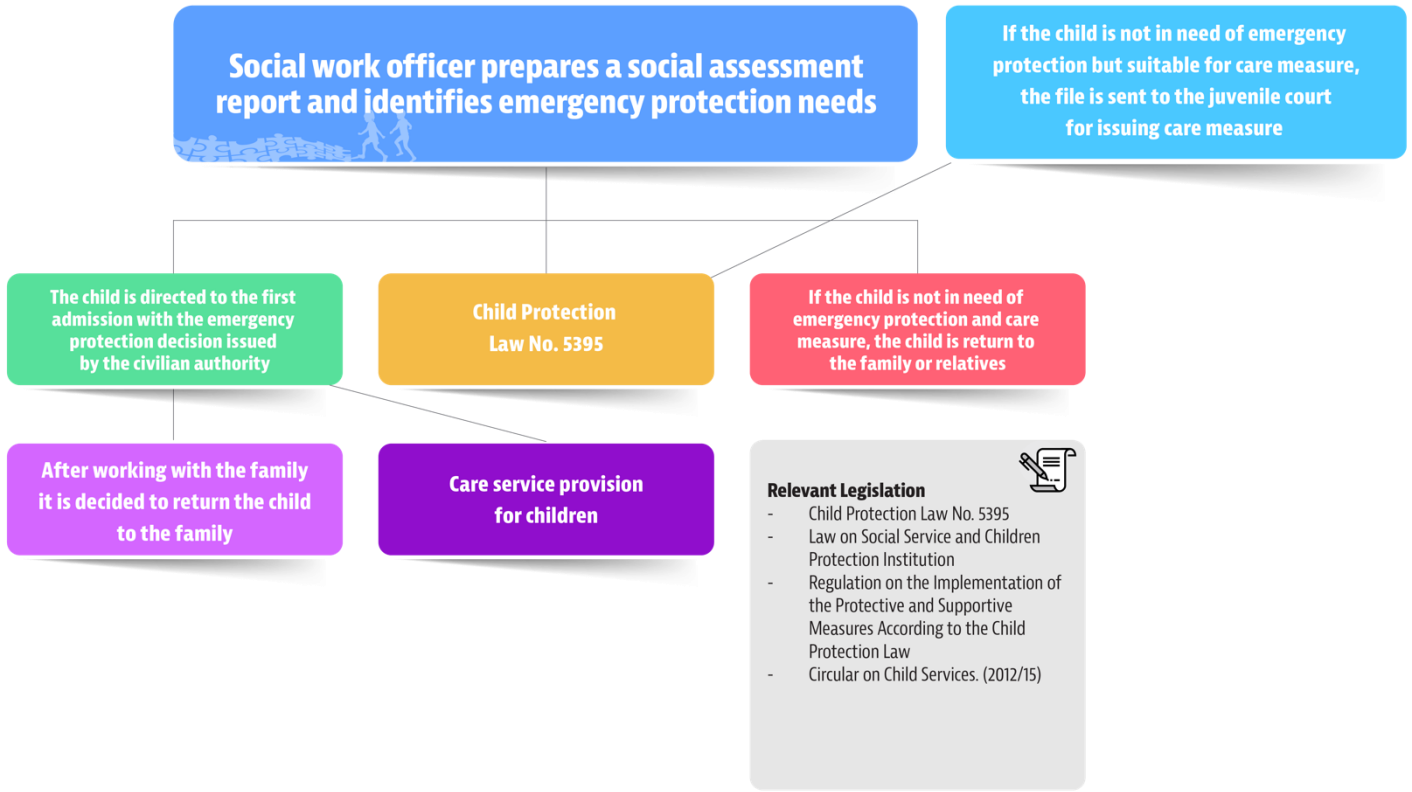
During this process, many different institutions and organizations at the provincial level are obliged to collaborate. However, collaboration is not only limited to this process. It is also necessary to collaborate with different institutions and organizations during the use of care services by children or within-family support process. In the process of protecting the child, services are performed in collaboration with the governorship and courts (Child-Family-Law of First Instance). This process is presented in Figure 4.



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Figure 5: FIRST RESPONSE FOR THE CHILD ENTERING THE PROTECTION SYSTEM

## FIRST RESPONSE FOR THE CHILD ENTERING THE PROTECTION SYSTEM



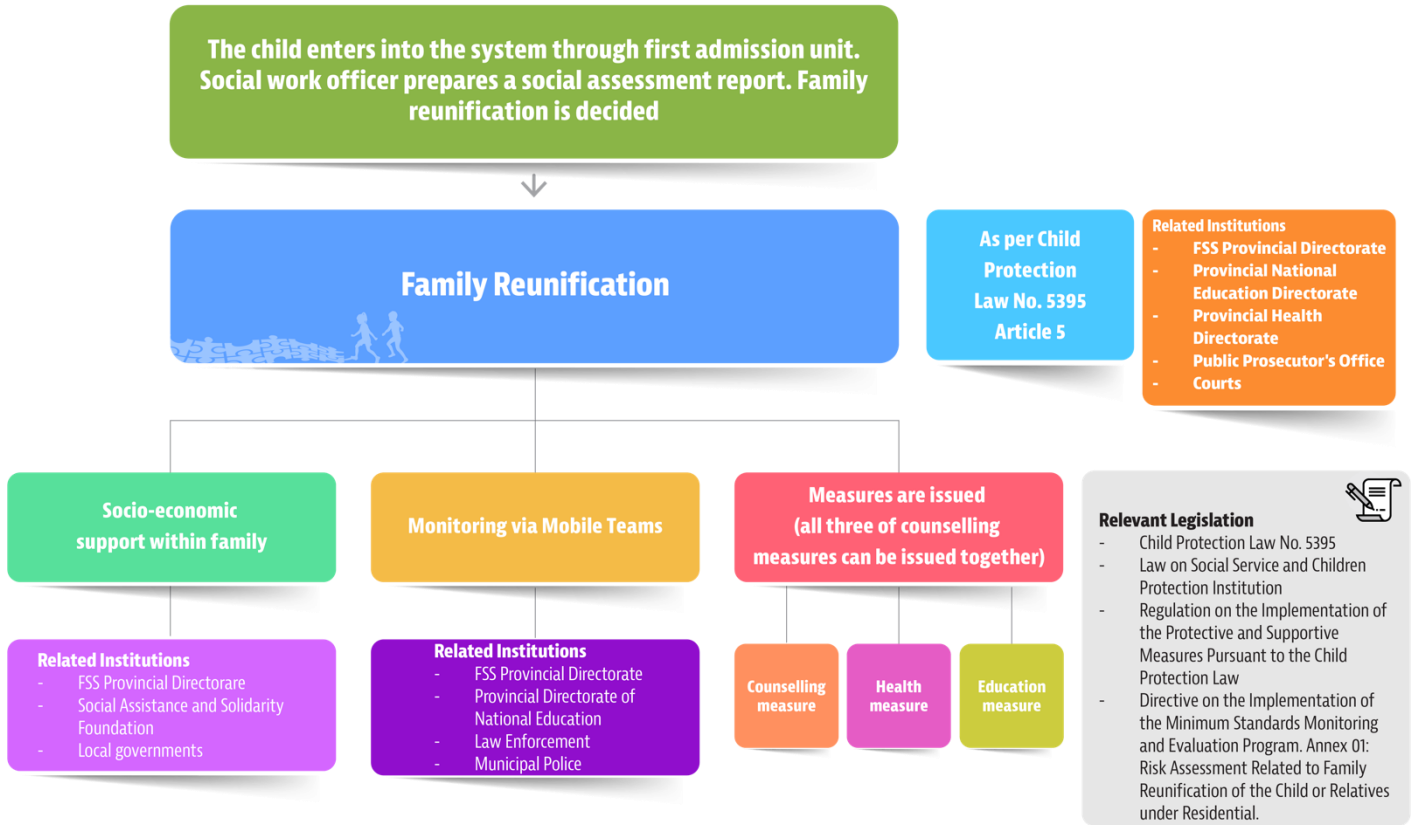
For children decided to be supported within-family, collaboration with other institutions and organizations is necessary. These collaboration processes are shown in Figure 6.



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**FIGURE 6: SERVICE PROVISION SUPPORT WITHIN FAMILY**

## SERVICE PROVISION SUPPORT WITHIN FAMILY



Among other ministries, MoFSS collaborates most intensively with the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior. In addition, other collaborated institutions and organizations include the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Higher Education, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Directorate of Religious Affairs. The most important issues that the MoFSS collaborates with other ministries were summarized in the table below. In addition, the “National Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023)” is implemented under the coordination of the MoLSS in order to eliminate child labour, especially its worst forms. The General Directorate of Labour of the MoLSS performs tasks related to establishing cooperation and coordination between the relevant institutions/organizations and the implementation of the National Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023).



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**Table 1: Areas of Collaboration of MoFSS with other Ministries**

COLLABORATED MINISTRY	AREAS OF COLLABORATION
<b>Ministry of National Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobile teams</li> <li>School enrolment of children staying in residential care- Success and attendance of children</li> <li>Education and counselling measures</li> <li>Inclusion of foster care-related issues in the education curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>The Ministry Of Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint projects</li> <li>Training requests</li> <li>Health needs of children -treatment processes</li> <li>Health measures</li> <li>Children's health appointments</li> <li>Pricing of health reports of foster families</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Interior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work and coordination of law enforcement</li> <li>Training of security and gendarmerie personnel</li> <li>Assignment of police and municipal police in mobile teams</li> <li>Procedures of unaccompanied children</li> <li>Registration procedures of children in the process of adoption</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal dimension of adoption service</li> <li>International adoption</li> <li>Parents who are in prison and want to see their children</li> <li>Judicial proceedings,</li> <li>Children in conflict with the law or in prison</li> <li>Children dragged into crime or victims of crime</li> </ul>
<b>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International adoption</li> <li>Representing MoFSS in international works on child-related issues</li> </ul>

## Collaboration processes between ÇHGM and provincial organizations

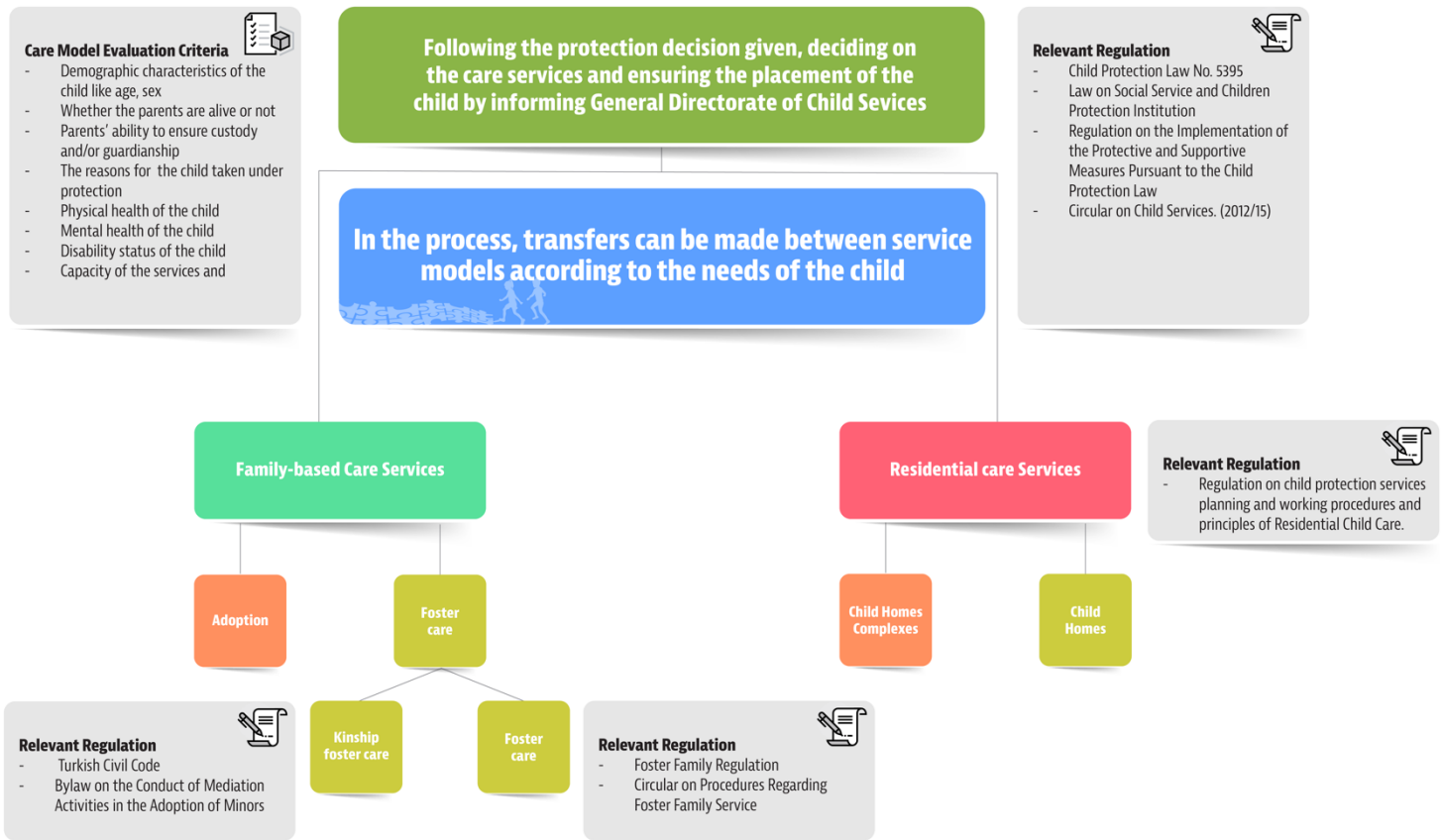
The General Directorate of Child Services (ÇHGM) works in collaboration with the provincial organization. This is because all coordination of the implementations in the field is carried out by the central organization. ÇHGM and the provincial organization work in coordination with each other, especially in the provision of care services for children taken into protection. After deciding on the care service that will meet the child's needs, ÇHGM and the provincial organization constantly work in collaboration with the child in the provision of residential or family-based care services or the transfer of the child between institutions. This process is presented in Figure 6.



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Figure 7: PROVISION OF CARE SERVICES

## PROVISION OF CARE SERVICES



Regarding combatting child labour, the General Directorate of Labour of the MoLSS performs tasks related to establishing cooperation and coordination between the relevant institutions/organizations and the implementation of the National Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023). Inter-institutional collaboration for combatting child labour is as follows: Important emphasis in the legislation on the employment of child and young workers stating that the work done should not hinder school attendance of the child. This renders the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) one of the main actors in this process. MoNE and international organizations are working together on educational activities. With regard to employment, adult family members of children who (are forced to) work are included in employment programs through İŞKUR, thus trying to combat economic deprivation, which is an important cause of child labour. In addition, the MoYS ensures the development of youth and children in terms of cultural and social activities. Moreover, owing to employment-oriented activities, individuals with developed basic skills have a better chance of finding a job. In terms of health, General Health Insurance is provided to people without social security coverage. In addition, municipalities also support working children, in parallel with the activities of the MoYS.



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## Challenges Concerning Collaboration

Here, the most important challenge in terms of collaboration of MoFSS with other public institutions and organizations is that these institutions do not sufficiently fulfil their part in the field of child welfare and all workload is laid on the MoFSS. However, in determining the child's need for protection, the first contact with the child is made by the law enforcement forces. Children<sup>5</sup> who do not need to be separated from their families prior to the adequate assessment of the child's situation may also be brought to the first admission units. In the current situation analysis conducted an opinion that the issue regarding the implementation of the measures is not handled as seriously as MoFSS, particularly, by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health emerged. In addition, the risk of insufficient diligence about the health and education needs of the children in residential care is also an important problem area. One of the other most frequently encountered challenges observed in the collaboration with other public institutions and organizations is the lack of timely and appropriate response to the requests of the ministry regarding the expertise areas of other ministries.

The most important challenge in terms of collaboration on child labour is that the Units for Combatting Child Labour (UCCL) are not sufficiently recognized by other institutions and organizations. In the current situation analysis, only 8% of the personnel working at UCCLs clearly stated that their units are known by public institutions and organizations. Since these units are not well known, other institutions and organizations do not report this issue to the UCCLs when they detect a working child. In the data collected from the MoFSS provincial organization, it was found that almost half of the personnel of even this ministry was not aware of the UCCLs.

In the current situation analysis, it has been frequently stated that the relevant institutions and organizations are inadequate in reporting information about working or employed children to UCCLs. The relevant institutions and organizations do not convey the information of children to these units adequately. In the current situation analysis, the inadequacy in this field was expressed for the Provincial Directorate of Health (48.5%), Provincial Directorate of National Education (45.4%), municipality police (45%), police units (39.2%), Provincial Directorate of Social Security (32.3%), Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services (25%), respectively. Failure to provide this information causes the existing statistical data to be unhealthy. Furthermore, insufficient or incomplete statistical data on child labour could pose a risk in the preparation and implementation of macro policies to prevent child labour and may cause working children to be overlooked and abused.

<sup>5</sup> For example, cases of referral of children directly to the First Admission Units by law enforcement without adequately examining the situation of the child abused by someone outside the family and evaluating the alternative of reuniting the child with the family due to the assumption in some places that MoFSS is the only responsible institution for child abuse. Hence, the necessity of employing social workers in police units, especially in juvenile branches, in order to evaluate these situations arises.



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Another problem area in terms of collaboration is the insufficient collaboration between public institutions and non-governmental organizations. Although non-governmental organizations are described as important actors in the field within the scope of the study, it is understood that these organizations make a very limited contribution compared to the potential role they could play in the child protection system. The reasons are the limited experiences and competencies of public institutions in working and cooperating with civil society, the lower number of non-governmental organizations in the field of child protection compared to other areas, the lack of resources and the inadequate communication between actors in the field of child protection.

## Recommendations for increasing cooperation

- Establishing and ensuring that the boards and structures facilitating collaboration, such as coordination boards at the local level in the provinces, also function among the central organizations.
- Establishing and implementing detailed workflow procedures regarding the operation of inter-agency collaborations; carrying out these processes with the active participation of relevant institutions.
- Developing methods prompting managers in other public institutions and organizations to recall their responsibilities in order to encourage them to understand the importance of inter-institutional collaboration and to encourage them to establish collaboration mechanisms (e.g. offering incentives, positive results are made visible and appreciated, organizing workshops)
- Organizing regular and periodic in-service trainings specific to the area in order to increase the capacity of personnel working in the field of child protection in other public institutions and organizations.
- Increasing the exchange of experience and good practice examples between different institutions in the public sector.
- In order to transform the perception of child's work in society, the combat against child labour should be carried out in unison in all areas.
- Creating areas to increase communication and collaboration between managers and personnel in public institutions and officials of non-governmental organizations, in order to increase collaboration between public institutions and non-governmental organizations in the field of child protection (*see the box below*).





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**Recommendation:**

**Workshop aimed at increasing collaboration/enabling space for collaboration: Contribution of Civil Society to the Child Protection System**

On the first day of a workshop themed "Civil Society Participation in the Child Protection System", which will last for two days, the representatives of public institutions could be informed on why the participation of civil society is necessary and important, and on the second day, the technical staff from public institutions can work with the representatives of non-governmental organizations as a group, exchange experiences and listen to each other, and create relationships by getting to know each other. It is known that such structured capacity-building efforts implemented by various United Nations entities through the Behavior and Social Change Communication approach increase the likelihood of collaboration for both the public and civil society. Through various measurement and evaluation tools used before, during, and after the event, it would be possible to identify and monitor the change in participants.



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## 5. COMMUNICATION

One of the elements required for the coordination and collaboration between the actors within the child protection system discussed in the previous sections to provide the desired results, that is, for the implementation of child rights at the highest level, is excellent communication. Because a system in which communication-related contents, channels, methods and principles are constructed in line with the field of child protection is more likely to provide the predicted positive outcomes.

Communication, in the simplest terms, means the reciprocal sharing of information and messages. In the case of institutions, communication refers to the means and methods of communication that institutions or organizations use for their aims. Communication in the child protection system is the channels and methods enabling the exchange of information necessary for the functioning of the system between the actors within the system. Beyond supporting cooperation and coordination, communication can also be understood as having a direct impact on the implementation of targeted changes in the field of child protection at individual, institutional and social level, and this approach, known as the Social and Behaviour Change Communication, was discussed in detail in the recommendations section.

Prior to that, the current situation, and challenges in communication in the child protection system in Türkiye followed by recommendations were presented.

### Current Situation in Communication: Actors, issues, channels

The communicative practices examined within the scope of the study can be grouped under two headings: ÇHGM's internal communication at the highest level (executive-staff, personnel-personnel) and external communication (with other institutions, civil society).

The actors and subjects or contents present in the internal communication of the General Directorate of Child Services (ÇHGM) were summarized in the table below.

**Table 2: Table on the Process and Issues of Internal Communication of ÇHGM**



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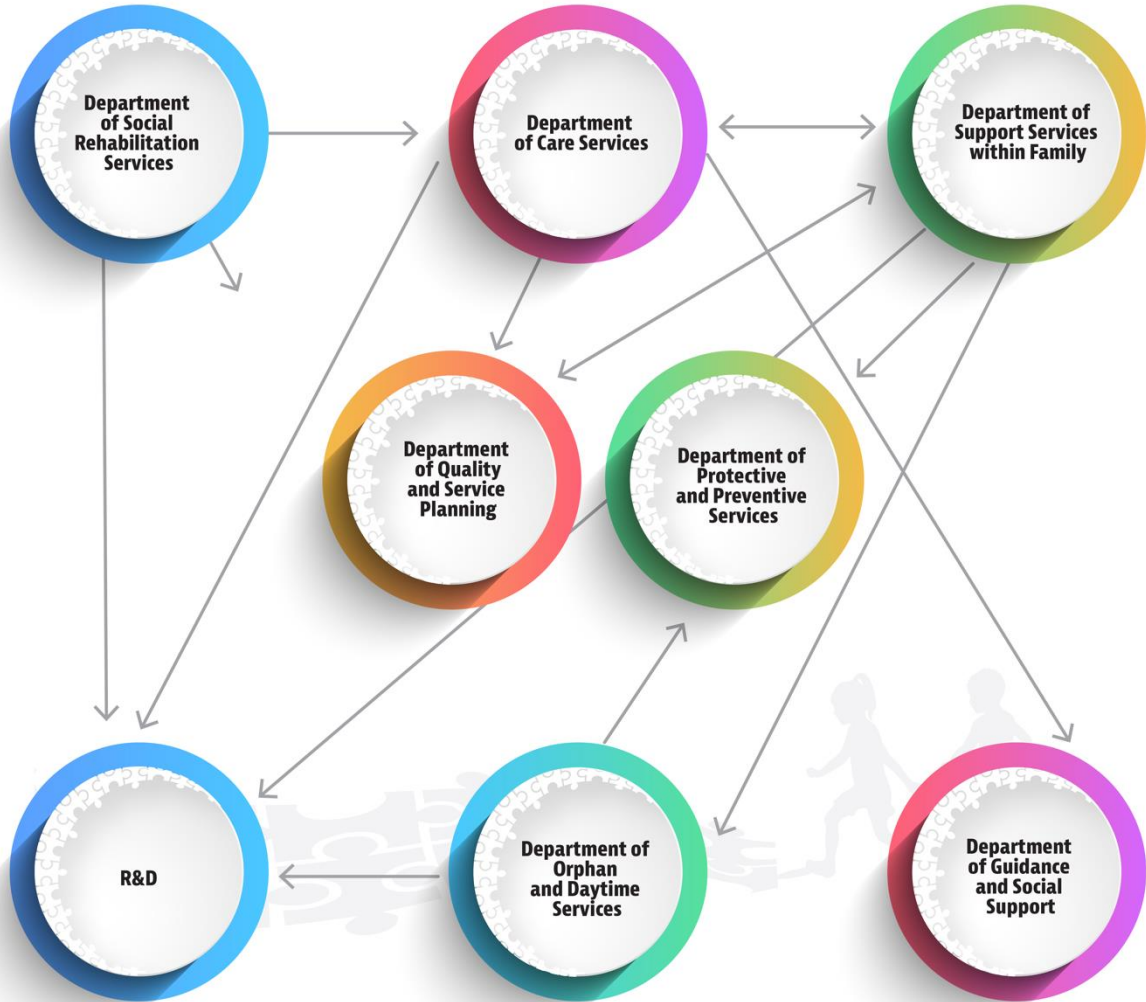
ÇHGM UNIT	COLLABORATED UNITS	COMMUNICATION TOPICS
Department of Social Rehabilitation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Care Services</li> <li>Department of Research Development and Project</li> <li>Department of Quality and Service Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issues related to the transfers between ÇODEM and other residential care services up until the Regulation on the Planning of Child Protection Services and Working Procedures and Principles of Residential Child Care Services dated 6 September 2022</li> <li>Research and project development activities</li> </ul>
Department of Support Services within Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Care Services</li> <li>Department of Quality and Service Planning</li> <li>Department of Research Development and Project</li> <li>Department of Protective and Preventive Services</li> <li>Department of Orphan and Daytime Services</li> <li>Department of Social Rehabilitation Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family-oriented service provision for children ages 0-6</li> <li>Foreign national children</li> <li>Foster care and adoption services</li> <li>SED services</li> </ul>
Department of Orphan and Daytime Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Protective and Preventive Services</li> <li>Department of Research Development and Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field work for combatting drug use</li> </ul>
Department of Care Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Support Services within Family</li> <li>Department of Quality and Service Planning</li> <li>Press and Public Relations Unit</li> <li>Department of Research Development and Project</li> <li>Department of Guidance and Social Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster care and adoption services</li> <li>Issues related to first admission units</li> <li>Alo 183 Hotline applications</li> <li>Communicating inspection reports</li> <li>Child homes protocols</li> <li>Research requests</li> <li>After care services</li> <li>Social activities</li> </ul>
Department of Children's Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Research Development and Project</li> </ul>	
Department of Quality and Service Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Care Services</li> <li>Department of Social Rehabilitation Services</li> <li>Department of Support Services within Family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning of care services</li> <li>Planning of care services</li> <li>Foster care, adoption and SED services</li> </ul>

Regarding the internal communication process of the General Directorate, the following chart shows which department initiated the workflow for which unit and engaged in mutual communication.



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Figure 8: ÇHGM Work Communication Network



The actors among which the ÇHGM conducts external communication activities include other collaborated ministries, CSOs and individuals forming civil society. Collaborations are established with these actors on a wide range of subjects, from the provision of services for child welfare to the procedures related to school enrolment, health measures, values education, and communication is established in this direction. Non-governmental organizations and civil society consisting of citizens are also among the external actors. Finally, ÇHGM also communicates directly with children.

The communication channels used by ÇHGM and General Directorate of Labour internally and externally can be grouped under two categories as mediated and non-mediated communication. One



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of the forms of non-mediated or direct communication is face-to-face communication. The most important channels of mediated internal communication were found to be the internal phone, e-mail addresses of the institution, and Belge.net, the information sharing system of the ministry. In addition, instant messaging applications such as personal mobile phones or WhatsApp, which operate through the internet services of commercial GSM operators, are also used for internal communication. It is seen that these "informal channels" are used especially when employees cannot reach each other on the internal phones in their offices or when it is necessary to accelerate the workflow related to the case. The table evaluating the internal communication channels is provided below

**Table 3: Table on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Internal Communication Channels**

Communication channels used	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Official letter (belge.net etc.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing an evidence-based communication</li> <li>Provable</li> <li>Used during working hours</li> <li>Higher probability of ensuring confidentiality and security of the information shared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing slow workflow</li> <li>Difficulty in determining the addressee who sent the letter</li> <li>Inadequate for communication in emergencies</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate e-mail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing an evidence-based communication</li> <li>Provable</li> <li>Used during working hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient storage space of MoFSS e-mail</li> <li>E-mail usage is not widespread within MoFSS</li> <li>E-mail can be overlooked</li> <li>Risk of failing to protect the privacy of shared data (accidentally sending it to someone else, multiple people at the same time, etc.)</li> <li>Inadequate for communication in emergencies</li> </ul>
<b>Personal e-mail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing an evidence-based communication</li> <li>Provable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not being a corporate e-mail</li> <li>E-mail usage is not widespread within MoFSS</li> <li>E-mail can be overlooked</li> <li>Risk of failing to protect the privacy of shared data (accidentally sending it to someone else, multiple people at the same time, etc.)</li> <li>Inadequate for communication in emergencies</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate landline phone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used during working hours</li> <li>Suitable for corporate communication</li> <li>Offering quick and easy communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to communicate if the person called is not available</li> <li>Creating workload when accessible to everyone, including beneficiaries from outside MoFSS</li> </ul>



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Communication channels used	Advantages	Disadvantages
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to provide evidence-based communication (difficult to prove)</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Mobile Phone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering quick and easy communication</li> <li>Suitable communication method for some emergency cases</li> <li>Can be used after working hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used after working hours</li> <li>Failure to provide evidence-based communication (difficult to prove)</li> </ul>
<b>WhatsApp, BiP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering quick and easy communication</li> <li>Suitable communication method for some emergency cases</li> <li>Can be used after working hours</li> <li>Easy document, picture, etc. exchange</li> <li>Easy and fast communication with multiple people at the same time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used after working hours</li> <li>Creating a continuous workload (Message notifications from people and groups at every hour, etc.)</li> <li>High risk of failing to protect the privacy of shared data (accidentally sending it to someone else, multiple people at the same time, etc.)</li> <li>Difficulty in taking confidentiality and security measures</li> </ul>
<b>Face to face</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expedites the process</li> <li>Suitable communication method for some emergency cases</li> <li>Can be used after working hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used after working hours</li> <li>Failure to provide evidence-based communication (difficult to prove)</li> <li>Not easy to use always (time spent meeting face to face, etc.)</li> </ul>

Considering the external communication channels used by ÇHGM, in addition to telephone and face-to-face meetings that provide direct communication with various actors in collaboration, official correspondence is mostly used for the collaboration with ministries. ÇHGM does not have a direct communication channel for contacting CSOs or other public institutions. Instead, they use general channels such as telephone or e-mails. The communication channels of the Department of Employment Policies of the General Directorate of Labour operating in the field of child labour include official letters, e-mail, WhatsApp, one-to-one communication and the Common Sharing Area (OPA) internal system.

## Communication Challenges



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## Internal Communication Challenges

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One of the communication challenges that arise in internal communication is the lack of sufficient information flow between the general directorates other than collaboration, and as a result, there is lack of information about the works carried out in the other units of the ministry. Although the units collaborate under the same structure, it is seen that the flow of information within the institution is inadequate. Another communication challenge detected is that the executives are not easily accessible at the General Directorate level.

In order for better collaboration between the actors, various communication channels must both be available, functional and the personnel must be competent to use them. These communication channels range from internal case monitoring system, meeting-conference rooms, inter-unit meetings to official correspondence.

Personal mobile phone-based messaging applications, which operate via GPS operators are referred to as informal internal communication channels, are frequently used; they pose various risks ranging from the security of user data to the sensitivities of the child protection area.

## Communication difficulties outside the institution

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As explained in the previous section, CSOs are reported to be important stakeholders, but adequate collaboration cannot be reached with these institutions. It is understood that one of the reasons for this is that the issue is not addressed strategically in terms of communication. For example, at times when the CSOs in question are contacted, it is discovered that the contact information is not up-to-date.

It is seen that the processes in which the actors within the child protection system, including the ÇHGM, communicate directly with the children, which should be at the centre of the child protection system, do not nurture sensitivities related to communication. For example, there is no system for children who want to reach the general directorate. The actors within the system do not make sufficient use of Child-friendly Communication Principles either. In addition, considering strengthening the communication of the actors in the child protection system with children, it is noteworthy that tools and methods such as the National Children's Forum, Children's Rights Provincial Children's Committees, and the Child Advisory Board could not be used as effectively.

It is observed that actors and individuals working in the child protection system lack various communication skills (e.g. interpersonal communication skills, strategic communication and planning competencies, intercultural communication) that they need in order to fulfil their responsibilities.



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## Recommendation for Communication

- Developing communication channels between heads of departments and the personnel to ensure coordination and cooperation between departments within the General Directorate, specifically for ÇHGM. In this context, formal methods (such as work-oriented, output-oriented meetings between departments) that can provide the opportunity for interpersonal communication, and informal methods (such as meetings to share experiences and create networks) can be used. In order to achieve the highest level of internal communication, it is beneficial to expand both formal and informal communication means in line with the preferences of the personnel.
- If deemed necessary, steps could be taken to establish communication channels (such as encouraging e-mails directly to the directors) to make the directors within the general directorate more accessible and encourage two-way mutual communication between the directors and the staff (subordinate-chief). In this way, while the accessibility to managers will increase, robust communication between personnel will be encouraged.
- Particularly for ÇHGM, an inter-institutional communication unit should be established to strengthen internal communication and information flow between departments and to increase corporate belonging. Thus, content such as activities carried out by internal actors in the field of child protection and positive outputs would be shared regularly with relevant actors, especially ministry personnel. In addition, by encouraging the personnel of the institution to produce their own content on similar themes, both the institutional belonging will be increased and another channel will be activated for experience sharing.
- As discussed in the cooperation section, the communicative procedures of inter-agency collaboration should be defined in detail and it should be ensured that the parties act in accordance with these communicative procedures.
- Efforts to facilitate the accessibility of institutions by civil society should be carried out. By establishing a common digital platform that convenes CSOs operating in the field with public stakeholders, direct contact opportunities could be provided. An actively functioning and regularly updated CSO information system and communication network could be established. Before these, as stated in the cooperation section, it would be beneficial to establish communication means that will expand collaboration between CSOs and public actors.
- Maximum attention should be paid to the preference and use of the right communication channels suitable to the needs of internal and external communication activities. It would be more appropriate to operate the channels, especially those that are crucial to the workflow such as case monitoring and that contain sensitive information requiring confidentiality, through digital-base case monitoring system developed and operated by the institution, rather than external means such as messaging application operated through commercial GSM operators.





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- It would be beneficial to identify and adopt various principles determining the quality of all communication activities within the child protection system. These principles should be identified by actors in the field, including children in need of protection, and thereby increasing the likelihood of their adoption. These principles may include “being strategic”, “having child-friendly communication principles”, “participation”, “inclusiveness”, “accountability”, and “measurability”.
- One of the necessary elements for communication activities to be carried out as planned and to achieve the desired results is the existence of certain communication competencies in institutions and actors. For this reason, actors working in the field of child protection, especially among ministry personnel, should be offered capacity-building opportunities in order to instil in them various communication skills and competencies. These skills, which could be presented through various digital, face-to-face, and hybrid training methods, should be measurable and could be expanded in relation to concrete operational outcomes.
- Communication activities in the field of child protection need to be planned strategically and positioned within the framework of individual/social behaviour change. It would be befitting for MoFSS and MoLSS to play a leading role in this regard. Thus, communication efforts would not only support healthy collaboration and coordination but would also carry the quality that will directly affect the realization of targeted behavioural changes in the field of child protection at individual, institutional and social level. (See the box).

### **Recommendation:**

### **Adopting a Social and Behaviour Change Communication**



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It is important for MoFSS and MoLSS to address communicative activities within the framework of Social/Behaviour Change Communication in their strategic planning, both in terms of achieving the targeted results of child protection and in terms of basing the communication efforts of the ministries on solid theoretical ground. This approach, which has been adopted by various United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, and was applied in different global efforts, consists of developing and implementing measurable and participatory communicative interventions for the program-related results desired to be achieved in designated areas, related to individual or social behavior change.

For example, within the scope of a program aimed at solving a specific issue such as violence against children, communicative interventions geared towards the fulfilment of targeted changes at the individual and societal level should come into play, along with interventions such as system strengthening or legal improvements. The Social/Behaviour Change Communication approach provides exactly this and adopts a method in which the channels and messages suitable for the target audiences are determined and applied with the participation of the target audiences, following the analysis of dynamics of the behaviour or norms aimed to be changed among the target audiences. Due to measurable results of communicative interventions, resources would be used efficiently, and the program goal would be achieved.

As can be easily understood, addressing communication with this depth and scope is fairly new to the field of child protection. The dissemination of the Social/Behaviour Change Communication in the field of child protection in Türkiye will also have benefits in terms of institutional change and transformation, and it is therefore recommended that MoFSS and MoLSS play a leading role in this practice.

## 6. CONCLUSION



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The aim of the Communication, Coordination and Information Sharing Document is to make basic recommendations to strengthen inter-and intra-institutional coordination and communication in the four focus areas of children's rights, thus contributing to the more efficient exercise of children's rights in Türkiye.

The communication, coordination and information sharing mechanisms addressed in this document are those of the MoFSS within the institution and with other institutions. The communication, coordination and information sharing mechanisms of the MoLSS within the institution and with other institutions and civil society particularly in combatting child labour were also examined. When evaluating the relevant communication, coordination and information sharing mechanisms, both the central and provincial organizations were covered.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative studies and analyses, this document was prepared and recommendations were offered for the solution of common challenges in the fields of "coordination", "collaboration" and "communication". The aim of these recommendations is to contribute to developing a consistent, systematic, and well-planned communication, coordination and information sharing system between the MoFSS and MoLSS central and provincial organization staff and between the central staff and external stakeholders and the media. Evaluating and implementing these concrete recommendations relies entirely on the initiative of the MoFSS and the MoLSS, and it is envisaged that these will be brought to the agenda in due time and integrated with the existing system with a participatory approach. Action-oriented summary of these recommendations is provided below.

## Coordination:

Reviewing the laws and regulations that form the basis of the child protection system and updating them by considering the current institutional structure and the current duties and authorities of the MoFSS will enable the system to work more effectively.

Likewise, it would be beneficial to re-examine the different specifications of all personnel who are working in institutions and organizations and are all amalgamated under the single title of social work officer in the legislation but who have diverse educational backgrounds and expertise, and to identify more clearly their duties and responsibilities in order to improve the intra-institutional coordination.

Clarifying the workflow processes related to the duties and responsibilities of all institutions and organizations involved in the Child Protection System in a way that does allow ambiguity will increase inter-institutional coordination and collaboration. Preparation and visualization of workflow processes with the participatory approach of all institutions will enable these processes to be adopted by the personnel.



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It is thought that it will be very beneficial to establish an official supervision system both in the central and provincial organization of the ministry.

It is expected that the personnel who will work in the child protection system will be selected primarily from the permanent personnel and the efficiency in child protection and care services will increase by reducing the change of duties except for mandatory cases. Integrating these practices as a principle into the personnel policy of the ministry can make a concrete contribution to strengthening the coordination regarding child rights and child protection.

Considering that the psychosocial needs of the children in vulnerable situations in need of protection are higher than of other children, the provision of child welfare training to staff and systematic and continuous in-service training will increase the quality and effectiveness of services. Likewise, the preparation of in-service training on issues such as child rights, child welfare and the best interests of the child and the systematic provision of this training to the personnel working in the field would lead to an increased quality of service.

In order for the policies to be developed in preventing child labour to function properly, the betterment of the personnel who will work on child rights and child labour in the Units of Combatting Child Labour (UCCL) through in-service training on "child labour and child welfare" could lead to an improvement in the quality and efficiency of the services of MoLSS in this field.

## Cooperation:

Restructuring the boards and structures that facilitate collaboration, such as the coordination boards at the local level in the provincial organization, in a way that would work more effectively among the Ministries will allow the functionality of the services provided in the four focus areas of child rights to increase.

The comprehension of the importance of inter-agency collaboration by directors in other public institutions and organizations is expected to increase ownership and contribute to the establishment of collaboration mechanisms. Inter-institutional collaboration could be increased by operating concrete initiatives in this field (e.g., the introduction of incentives, making positive results visible and appreciated, organizing workshops) and incorporating them into the strategic plans and/or annual action plans of the institutions.

The quality and effectiveness of services can be expected to increase with the organization of field-specific regular and periodic in-service training in order to enhance the capacity of personnel working



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in the field of child protection and in institutions and organizations which have roles in the field of child rights and child protection.

The inclusion of the issue of the rights of the child to the curricula as a course during the training periods of the staff working in this field would increase the fundamental knowledge and resources of the personnel. In this way, it could be ensured that every activity performed is carried out with a rights-based approach.

In order to transform the perception of the society of child's labour, the combat against child labour should be carried out in unison in all areas. Efforts towards ensuring a more effective for CSOs regarding this all-out combat would increase successful results in combatting child labour.

In order to improve the effectiveness of the current cooperation between public institutions and civil society organizations in the field of child protection, it would be beneficial to create areas that will facilitate the possibility of communication and coordination by bringing together managers and technical personnel in public institutions and officials of non-governmental organizations.

## **Communication:**

Developing communication channels between managers and staff to ensure inter-departmental coordination and collaboration within the General Directorate of Child Services (ÇHGM) will strengthen both internal and inter-institutional communication. In this context, informal methods (experience exchange, networking meetings, etc.) can be utilized together with official methods that can provide interpersonal communication (interdepartmental business meetings, output-oriented meetings, etc.).

Regular exchange of content, such as activities carried out by in-house actors in the field of child protection with all relevant actors, especially the personnel of the MoFSS, positive outputs obtained, and encouraging the staff to create their own content on similar themes will strengthen the communication mechanisms and interdepartmental information flow. This can be made possible by establishing a corporate communication unit within the institution.

Detailed definition of the communication-related functioning and procedures of inter-institutional collaborations and ensuring the implementation of this detailed functioning via laws and regulations may support the strengthening of an operational communication mechanism.

The establishment of a common digital platform between MoFSS, relevant institutions and organizations and civil society, and direct liaison through this channel can facilitate communication



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between the parties. This could be made possible by a functioning and regularly updated CSO information system and communication network.

Maximum attention should be paid to the preference and use of the right communication channels suitable to the needs of internal and external communication activities. In this context, the establishment of digital-based case monitoring system developed and operated by the institution, instead of external channels such as messaging applications operating on commercial GSM operators, would mitigate the concerns about the privacy of data in the child protection system.

Approaches such as "having child-friendly communication principles" and "participation" in communication mechanisms of the child protection system would contribute to the preservation of child-centred focus in communication.

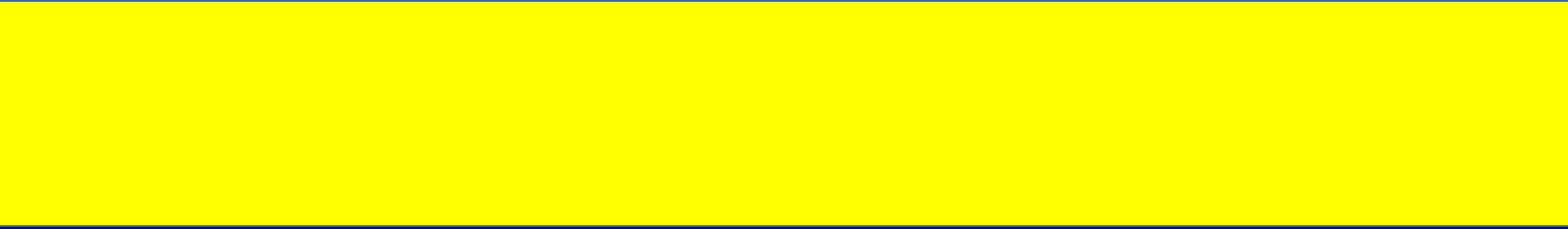
The communication skills of the related staff could be improved through trainings aimed at increasing the various communication skills and competencies of the staff in both MoFSS and other public institutions and organizations. These communication skills that could be created with various online, face-to-face and hybrid training activities would be measurable and could be expanded in relation to concrete operational outputs.



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