



Establishing a Family Justice Center in Moldova

Background:

Domestic and gender-based violence is widespread in the Republic of Moldova. Seven out of ten women in the rural areas and six out of ten women in the urban areas experience at least one form of violence*.

Lack of access to specialized and integrated services given the insufficient number and types of services prevents girls and women to report and request support and protection.

Especially for people still in danger, a timely intervention by the responsible authorities would lower the risk for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

*Data from the National Bureau of Statistics

Project Budget:	\$1,441,071.16 (including extension costs + shared costs)
Project Period of Performance:	01/30/20 – 12/31/23
Financier:	US Department of State - Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)
Grantee:	Te Doy Foundation, Inc.
Partner Ministry:	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) Moldova
Subgrants:	La Strada; Women's Law Center; Casa Mărioarei; Centre for Justice Innovation (CJI)

Project objectives:

- Establish a Family Justice Center (FJC) in the national infrastructure of assistance and protection services in order to support a comprehensive protection and response framework for victims of domestic and SGBV in Moldova.
- Assist the Government of Moldova in harmonizing a national legislation and framework with international standards and in accordance with the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating domestic and SGBV.
- Raise public awareness about these kinds of violence and possibilities of help, including the FJC. International conferences facilitate the exchange of good practices with experts.

The first Family Justice Center in Chişinău:

- Is the first of its kind in Eastern Europe;
- Is and has been fully self-sustainable since its inauguration under the General Police Inspectorate (GPI) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA), with a full staff and permanent budget;
- Operates as a “One-stop shop” where victims can receive all services needed in one place;
- Includes services for victims to obtain legal advice; protection; psychological and social work support; forensic medical examinations to gather evidence of violence; medical and health care; safety planning; transport assistance; trauma processing; and more – all provided in a victim-centered, and trauma-informed manner;
- And serves as a model for further FJCs in Moldova, Eastern Europe and elsewhere.



Inauguration of the FJC Chişinău in October 2023.
Photo: ©[Ministerul Afacerilor Interne al Republicii Moldova](#)



Newly renovated FJC: The interview room with an audio-visual recording system to record (single) interviews with victims. Investigators and other actors can watch the interview in a separate room without being present. Photos: ©Te Doy Foundation

278 victims attended



264 female victims, 14 male victims
120 children

**with safety and empathy,
24/7 availability and
integrated services**

Project approach:

- **The concept for and model of the FJC** in Moldova were developed through a technical working group (TWG) with Te Doy Foundation support. It incorporates best international practices in holistic service provision and adapts them to local needs.
- A **building was renovated** and procured with all the necessities – furniture, IT equipment, forensic medical supplies and equipment (including a specialized gynecological chair and examination bed), and an audio-visual recording system for recording “single fact-finding interviews.” This system contributes to the “single interview approach” which assures that victims only have to tell their often traumatizing story once to staff members. The recordings can then be used to support further investigation.
- A **multidisciplinary team** of local experts covers the various services for victims. It consists of: two legal aid lawyers; six prosecutors from the Chişinău Municipal Prosecutor’s Office; six police investigators from Chişinău Municipal Police Department; five forensic doctors from the National Legal Medicine Center; one nurse from Holy Trinity Hospital; one gynecologist from Holy Trinity Hospital; five social workers from local government social assistance departments; and two psychologists provided by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- **Capacity Building Training Programmes** teach the staff how the FJC works. Trainings cover the use of trauma-informed approaches and victim interviewing. The focus of the team is on high-risk situations, where a preventive, proactive approach that offers early detection is recommended. Part of the training has included study visits to other FJCs to understand better interinstitutional activities, multidisciplinary victims’ support programs, roles, and responsibilities of national and civil society agencies.
- **Agreements with the government and other partners** strengthen cooperation and increase trust between the FJC and other providers involved. A total of 12 agreements were signed with other governmental agencies regarding participation in the FJC. Moreover, the FJC has agreements with seven local NGOs (La Strada; Women’s Law Center; Casa Marioareoi; Rehabilitation Center Memoria; Association of Women Entrepreneurs in Moldova; the National Center for Prevention of Child Abuse; and Barnahus) as well as a general agreement with the National Coalition for a Life Without Violence and its 21 specialized member NGOs to receive referrals from the FJC.



Entrance of the FJC Chișinău.
Photo: @Ministerul Afacerilor Interne al Republicii Moldova



Project approach:

- A **referral mechanism** assures that victims, after their case is initiated, are referred to other continuing specialized services that respond to their specific needs. This way, victims can access a wide variety of services as part of their personal recovery process. This mechanism also includes a call option that victims can reach out to. In cooperation with the non-governmental organization La Strada, a hotline can be reached through them or #112.
- A **Lethality Commission** among the Government of Moldova (GoM), supported by Te Doy Foundation and the Women's Law Center, analyzes and issues annual reports about specific femicides.
- Together with local partners, a **lethality assessment program** is being implemented in the Government of Moldova to reduce risk and incidence of SGBV; including femicides.
- An automated **case tracking system** is improving management and monitoring SGBV cases. Designed by an expert consultant, it provides a record of each case handled in the FJC. This provides for filing each case, searching for cases, a complete case history, case control capacities, approval flows, and contributes to the referral system.
- A **communication strategy** assures the dissemination of information about the FJC to Moldovan society. It includes the:
 - Production of a video detailing the history and mission of the FJC;
 - Production of flyers and social media content, distributed by relevant influencers in the Moldovan context and by officials of GoM institutions speaking out in support of the FJC and against SGBV;
 - Programming of TV shows; and the organization of public outreach events.



Workshop with "Casa Mărioarei" for the FJC implementation.
Photo: @Centrul de Justiție Familială



Children's reception room in the FJC in Chișinău.
Photo: @IOM