

ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN UP TO 3 YEARS OLD AND CARE AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UP TO 6 YEARS OLD, IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE ROP DV 2014-2020

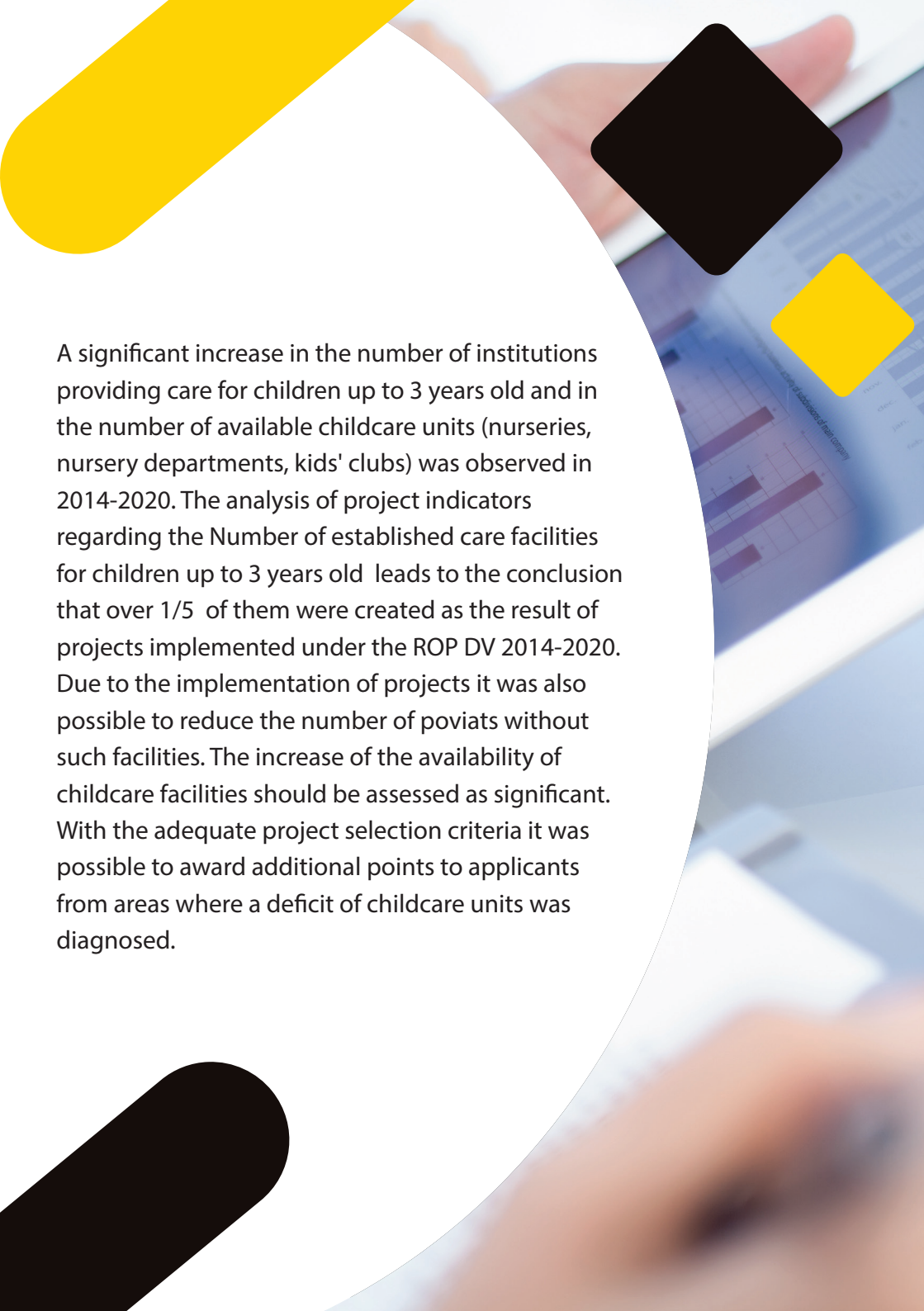
INFORMATION BROCHURE

The main objective of the research was the assessment of intervention's effects concerning support for children up to 3 years old and care and educational services for children up to 6 years old, implemented under the ROP DV 2014-2020.

Research methods

- Desk research analysis
- CAWI/CATI interviews with beneficiaries
- CAWI/CATI interviews with projects participants
- Individual interviews with representatives of institutions involved in the implementation of the ROP DV 2014-2020
- Panel of experts
- Focus group interviews
- Case study



A hand is holding a tablet computer. The screen shows a bar chart with several bars of varying heights. A yellow square is highlighted on the chart. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a person's face and other documents. There are decorative elements: a yellow rounded rectangle in the top left, a black rounded rectangle in the bottom left, a black diamond in the top right, and a yellow diamond in the middle right.

A significant increase in the number of institutions providing care for children up to 3 years old and in the number of available childcare units (nurseries, nursery departments, kids' clubs) was observed in 2014-2020. The analysis of project indicators regarding the Number of established care facilities for children up to 3 years old leads to the conclusion that over 1/5 of them were created as the result of projects implemented under the ROP DV 2014-2020. Due to the implementation of projects it was also possible to reduce the number of poviats without such facilities. The increase of the availability of childcare facilities should be assessed as significant. With the adequate project selection criteria it was possible to award additional points to applicants from areas where a deficit of childcare units was diagnosed.

In the case of the vast majority of product indicators under analysed investment priorities exceeded target values planned to be achieved by the end of 2023.

Achieved values of indicators reflect the fact that the intervention significantly contributed to the improvement of the availability of nursery and pre-school education, which is also evidenced by results of conducted qualitative research, including interviews with representatives of institutions involved in the implementation of the ROP DV 2014-2020.

Respondents confirmed the significance of infrastructure investments in terms of the access to facilities of pre-school education and nursery care. Attention of respondents were drawn to the fact that despite using up available allocation, a strong demand for funds in this area is still observed (which can be concluded from the number of applicants who did not succeed to obtain funds under recent calls for proposals).

As for the end of 2021:

4 231

created
childcare places
for children up
to 3 years old

5 886

places in
kindergartens
co-financed
under the
Programme

6 725

persons providing
childcare for
children up to
3 years old,
supported under t
he Programme



CONCLUSION

A significant increase in the number of institutions providing care for children up to 3 years old and in pre-school age, and the increasing number of available childcare places were observed in 2014-2020. Implemented intervention had a notable impact on changes in this scope, contributing also to taking up employment by most of surveyed caregivers. However, there is still a considerably low number of implemented institutionalised forms of childcare in rural areas, as the largest accumulation of childcare units is in cities. Furthermore, despite the relatively unfavourable demographic forecasts, the influx of refugees from Ukraine, including children, should be taken into consideration as an additional factor.

One of the most cost-intensive elements of projects concerned costs of building accompanying infrastructure (e.g. playgrounds) and equipment. The aspect of investing in the equipment is especially significant given the possibility to extend the durability of infrastructure projects' effects and in relation to children with special needs.

The analysis reflected a relatively low level of knowledge concerning sources of financing for soft projects among the society, including support participants.

RECOMMENDATION

Due to an uneven distribution of childcare places for children up to 3 years old and places for pre-school education, it is recommended to continue the support regarding the establishment of new childcare places, mainly in areas with diagnosed shortage in access to these places. Considerable needs in this respect were diagnosed in rural areas (despite low values of the birth rate, the offer available in this type of communes is often limited, therefore, the demand proves the necessity to implement this type of investment) and in peripheral areas of the metropolitan city.

For the 2021-2027 perspective it is recommended to introduce the possibility of implementing projects which would enable the development of infrastructure accompanying facilities (e.g. playgrounds, gyms, sports fields) and equipment for facilities, in order to improve the quality of childcare (including providing care for children with special needs).

It is recommended to implement a more considerable scope of information activities regarding sources of financing for projects, particularly for projects implementing soft activities.