

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHILE | Childhood Alert System

“**Sistema Alerta Niñez**” (Childhood Alert System, SAN for its Spanish Acronym) is a computer system developed and maintained by the Undersecretariat for Social Evaluation and implemented as a pilot for the Oficinas Locales de Niñez (Local Childhood Offices, OLN for its Spanish Acronym) of the Undersecretariat for Children, both under-secretaries under the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia (Ministry of Social Development and Family, MDSF for its Spanish Acronym) in Chile.

The objective of the SAN is to **estimate and predict the level of risk of children and adolescents of suffering some violation of their rights in the future**, through an analysis of data from different administrative sources, in order to anticipate and intervene in an early and preventive fashion in each case. In practice, the system generates a score or “risk index” for each child and adolescent that allows the cases to be classified in order of priority for the Local Childhood Offices. Besides, the system has become a platform for recording, managing, and monitoring the cases of children and adolescents identified as being at higher risk.

The first part of this work offers data on the country's sociodemographic, regulatory, and institutional landscape in relation to AI, data and algorithms, in order to provide contextualization to the case study. In the second part, the SAN case is described in detail, from its bidding process to its implementation in the OLN's.

Following the social life of this program, it is possible to observe two moments or phases marked in the SAN: **a first moment for the design and development of the SAN**, when actors from the academy, both from Chile and New Zealand, are enrolled, strongly oriented to the predictive nature of the system. A second moment appears in **the integration of the SAN within the OLN in which the system is mobilized at a communal level**. In the process, expectations with the system are lowered, emphasizing more on its capabilities for recording, managing, and monitoring the entered cases, mentioning the SAN scores as a complement to the information collected by the OLN in each territory. In a critical evaluation of the case, a number of points that need to be addressed are problematized.

- In the development of SAN there is a strong determination of social policy by the use of technology, clearly evidenced in a sequence of events in which the system creation is the first thought and the institutionality is defined later.
- The bidding process was oriented towards a single bidder without setting any ex ante criteria of ethics, transparency or data justice within the evaluation of the proposals.
- The descriptions given to the SAN under the heading of “targeting” tend to hide the particularities of “predictive risk models” development, affecting any possibility of a duly informed consent on such particularities.
- The possible performative impact that the SAN may have has not been taken account, particularly when establishing contact with families who have not requested help from the State and who may experience it as a strong intrusion into their private life.
- The “pilot” figure have been used to justify the opacity of the SAN operation. The absence of public documentation on the current design and performance of predictive models and the absence of citizen participation or consultation processes in the development and implementation of the SAN rises concern.
- By integrating information from multiple databases to increase the predictive capacity of the SAN, a clear understanding of the scope and processing of personal data when requesting consent can be lost, and it becomes dangerous to centralize and process sensitive information from children in a single computer system.
- Doubts remain as to how the MDSF has resolved several methodological issues in the SAN modeling process. Particularly, regarding which variables features the model connected to its goal and how they are connected to the OLN orientations.
- There is a marked socioeconomic gradient both in the target variables for making predictions and in the SAN prediction process itself. The overrepresentation of children and adolescents from households with lower socioeconomic status and the underrepresentation of households with higher socioeconomic status is something to consider if equal treatment is to be sought in the OLN.

This research was developed by **Matías Valderrama**.



About Derechos Digitales

Derechos Digitales is a Latin American, independent, non-profit organization, founded in 2005, whose main objective is the development, defense, and promotion of human rights in the digital environment

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