



НОУ-ХАУ ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА АЛТЕРНАТИВНИ ГРИЖИ  
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# Evaluation as Intervention – Implementing Participatory Action Research in Studying the Deinstitutionalization Reform in Bulgaria

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# The Child Protection System Development

- Before 1944 - 30 institutions for orphans and children in acute medical conditions
- 1944-1989 - 287 institutions with 35000 children. Orphans - 2%.
- After 1989 - EU agenda to decrease the number of children in institutions
- In 2000 – the first child protections law
- In 2010 – DI as a political agenda – DI for 7000 children






# DI results

-  In 2000 – the first child protections law
-  In 2010 – DI as a political agenda – DI for 7000 children
-  Today: the number of institutionalized children is 300 – infants with multiple disabilities in the Mother and Baby Homes
-  Children in state care – 7000: residential services, foster care, kinship care






# The KHC Role and Task

-  Research and consultancy organization to bridge the gap between academia-practice-policy-clients
-  Mission – to change the attitudes preventing the child-centred approach, stigma, learned helplessness, reliance on the state

The culture of child care:

-  Lack of reliable data
-  Top-down approach
-  Control rather than support
-  Stigma related to Roma
-  Helplessness due to poverty








# Participatory Approach to Study DI

-  Participatory Action Research – why we use it?
-  The Cycle of Participation-Research and Learning-Advocating for Change – Evaluating the Change
-  The new culture if dialogue
-  KHC's 3 studies on DI
-  Scope
-  500 co-researchers
-  10 communities involved




# DY Study results

- DI is shaped by the context. Poverty level at each one of the contexts is key factor related to DI
- Intergenerational transmission of institutionalization in all contexts- erosion of child-parents ties through residential service
- Parent's need for secure long-term secure relationships
- Resolution of loss - recognition of the role of the state
- Ideas for change at local level

# DY Study results








-  DI and the Child Protection System function through different paradigms:
-  The Child protection system's values:
  -  - children can be traumatized by their own parents (trauma theory)
  -  - risk assessment
  -  - alternative care for children at risk.
-  The result: the system “sees” family abuse and neglect , frame the families as vulnerable, unable, incapable and putting children at risk
-  Remove the child and place the child in alternative care. The child loses the

# The Culture of the DI

-  Strengths perspective vs. medical model
-  Holistic approach vs. social sector interventions
-  Supporting child-attachment figure attachment  
**THROUGH** supporting the caregiver



# The DI Study Results Regarding Participation

-  The Role of Co-researchers
-  Local Level Changes
-  Advocating
-  Challenges the top-down approach
-  Changing the learned helplessness attitudes
-  Stimulating child and parent participation
-  Strengthening advocacy networks with data and participants co-researchers



# Example...