

Alternative Care: From Prevention to Response



Alexandra Yuster, Bangkok 28 November 2005

For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY



Alternative Care and Social Protection

Social protection

- Increasing recognition and action on right to social protection by governments and donors
- Important impact on reducing the need for alternative care
- Needs to be implemented in ways which are not narrowly cash focused if children are to be protected

Alternative Care and Social Protection

Building on Opportunity

- Think strategically: plan for social welfare sector as a whole
- Think innovatively: how can non state partners cooperate/enhance capacity?
- Don't be shy: build capacity to make the case to Ministry of Finance

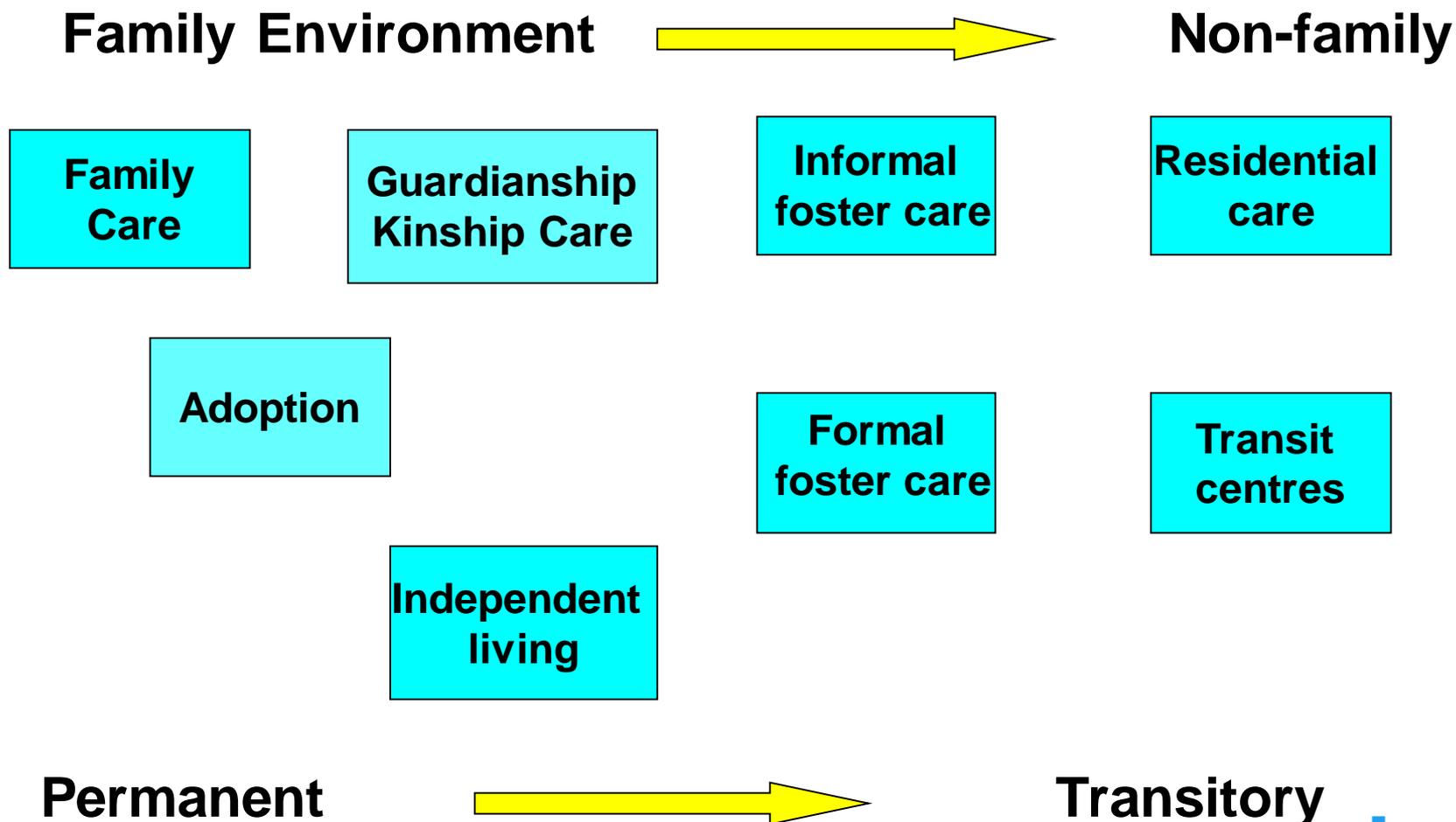
Medium Term Strategic Plan

Key Result 5: Children and families identified as vulnerable are reached by key community and government services

Targets:

- Improved systems for identification, monitoring and support
- Improved systems for alternative care
- Increased number of social workers; better quality training
- Birth registration – focusing on excluded groups
- In emergencies: registration, tracing, care and reunification for separated children

Alternative care continuum



Common Knowledge or Urban Myth?

- Child care benefits are unaffordable
- Children living with relatives are safe, well looked after – the only problem is resources
- Communities and extended families make the most appropriate decisions about where children should live
- There is no capacity or resources to monitor foster or kinship care families
- Everyone knows how many children are in residential care
- There is one common definition of residential care
- Most children in residential care are orphans or abandoned

National Package for Alternative Care

Prevent separation through:

- Priority attention to at-risk families from government social safety nets
- Improved access to basic social services
- Supportive child care, psycho-social and child development initiatives for children and care givers at community level
- Legislation addressing discrimination, inheritance, gate-keeping

Support, regulate and monitor alternative care:

- Legislation defining adoption, guardianship, alternative care
- Policies, regulations and standards for full range of care options
- Capacity to monitor and support foster families– social work and links to community protection systems

Lessons Learned in other regions

- Concern about children in institutions can be entry point for wider social welfare reform
- Focus on improving range of social welfare services – not standards for residential care in isolation
- De-institutionalisation should focus on family reunification and kinship care; also address vested interests of institutions
- Listen to children and find ways to support their wishes
- Use attention to HIV to support comprehensive approaches to social welfare – avoid separate, vertical planning for one group of children

Global Resources, Initiatives and Partnerships

- **Indicator development covering formal care**
- **International Guidelines on Children without Parental Care**
- **Guiding Principles for Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Emergencies**
- **Better Care Network**
- **Christian Aid publication: A Feeling of Belonging**

Global Child Protection Indicators

Why

Identify ways to measure the 'unmeasurable'

Promote visibility of CP issues

Standardisation to facilitate comparison

Use

Monitoring and systems improvements at country level

Accountability – national and international reporting

Advocacy and awareness raising

research and publications

Progress

CICL, Formal care, Early marriage and FGM – indicis available

OVC – further development on PSS underway, care arrangements needed

Violence – underway

TBD – Worst forms of child labour

Core indicators: Children in formal care

- **Number and rate of children living in formal care**
- **existence of an acceptable legal/ policy framework**
- **Number and proportion of children < 15 leaving residential care for family placement**
- **Distribution of child protection expenditure on prevention of separation vs. formal care**

Other formal care indicators

- **# and rate of children entering formal care per year**
- **% children in care who have an individual care plan**
- **% children in residential care attending a neighbourhood school**
- **# of child deaths in care**
- **# and rate of adoptions – domestic & inter-country**
- **% of children in care placed through an established assessment system**
- **% children in care whose placement has been reviewed in last 3 months**
- **% leaving care for permanent family placement**
- **% care workers with child development qualifications**
- **Existence of complaints mechanism within the care system**
- **% children in care visited by family member in last 3 months**
- **Distribution of care expenditure between residential, foster and after care**