

Alternative Care Workshop



Papua New Guinea



The Three Logs Story...



Situation of children without primary caregivers

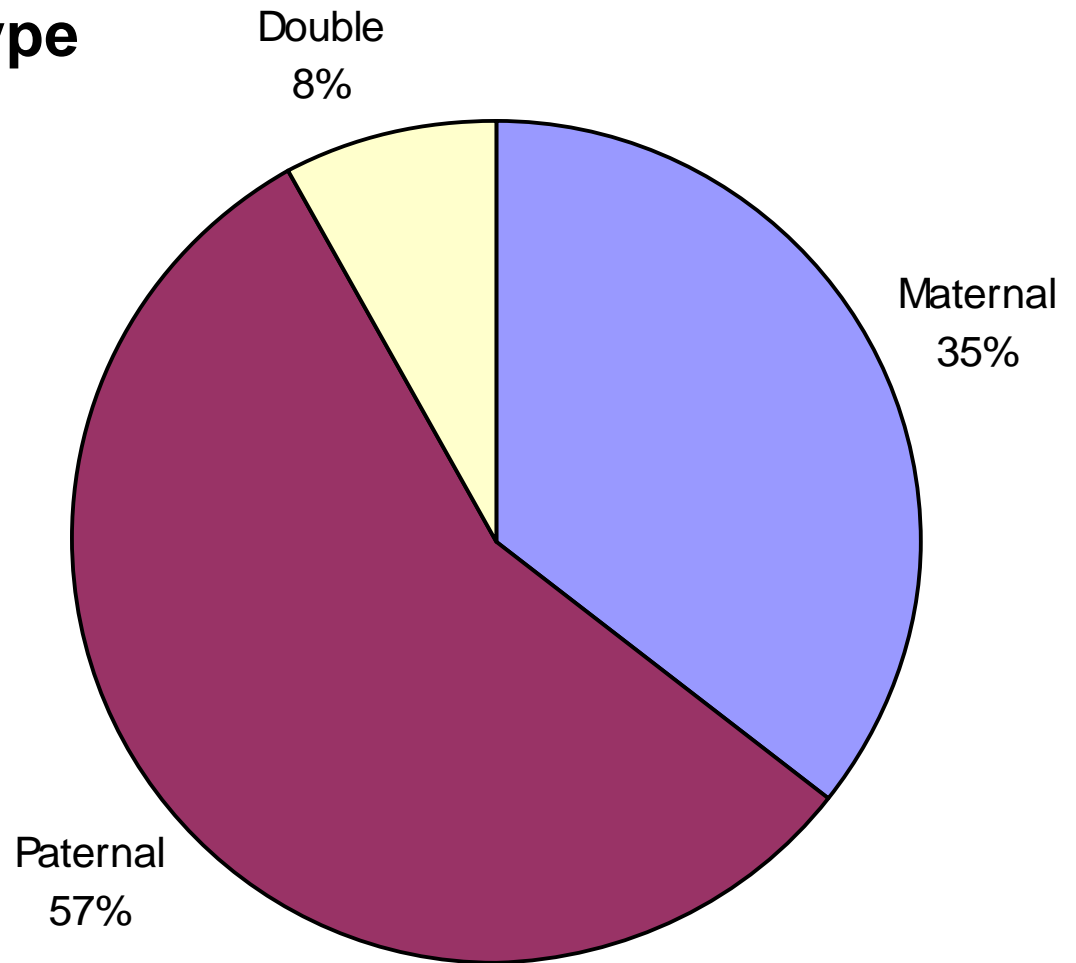
- 8% of children are double orphans (Children on the Brink)
- 22.4% of children were not residing with their parents in 2000 (Census).
- 10,000 children live on the street, up to half of whom live in the Nation's Capital (Hunter).
- High rate of informal adoptions and fostering (up to 16% of households have step or adopted children) (Census)





Orphans by Type in PNG, 2003

Source: Children on
the Brink
2004



Situation (cont)

- 9400 children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS (Hunter).
- 138,108 children living in families affected by HIV/AIDS (Hunter).
- Abandonment of children remains rare, but is increasing under the threat of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (e.g. single parents who are not confident that they can care for a child with HIV/AIDS)



Situation (cont)

Fostering and Adoption in Papua New Guinea may take place informally because:

- Single parents may feel unable to care for the child
- To maintain gender balance within the family
- A peace-building effort between tribes
- Marriage breakdown or death of parent
- Early marriage of the child (sometimes as young as 12 years of age)



Situation (cont)

- Fostered/Adopted children are often more vulnerable because:
 - Some children are separated from their mothers whilst still breastfeeding.
 - Children residing outside of their wantok are perceived to have a lower status in their new family, and are at greater risk of abuse and exploitation.
 - Some families feel pressured to take on the care of child, even if it is beyond their financial resources.
 - These children rarely receive any psychosocial support.



Situation (cont)

Children living on/off the street:

- Estimated 1000-5000 street children in Port Moresby.
- 89% male, 11 % female
- Majority are between 10-15 years of age
- Live off an average of 1-2 kina per day (appox..32-0.65).

(Hunter)





Residential/Institutional Care Programs

- Rare in Papua New Guinea.
- New draft legislation discourages this model of alternative care.
- Some quasi-residential community care centres are being developed in communities with high numbers of children who are orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDs.



Residential/Institutional Care Programs (cont)

- Example: Tengtenga Orphans Care Centre (WHP)
 - 39 orphans
 - reports that community attitudes encourage stigmatisation and isolation of the children.
 - Some orphaned children are being exploited by family or care-givers.

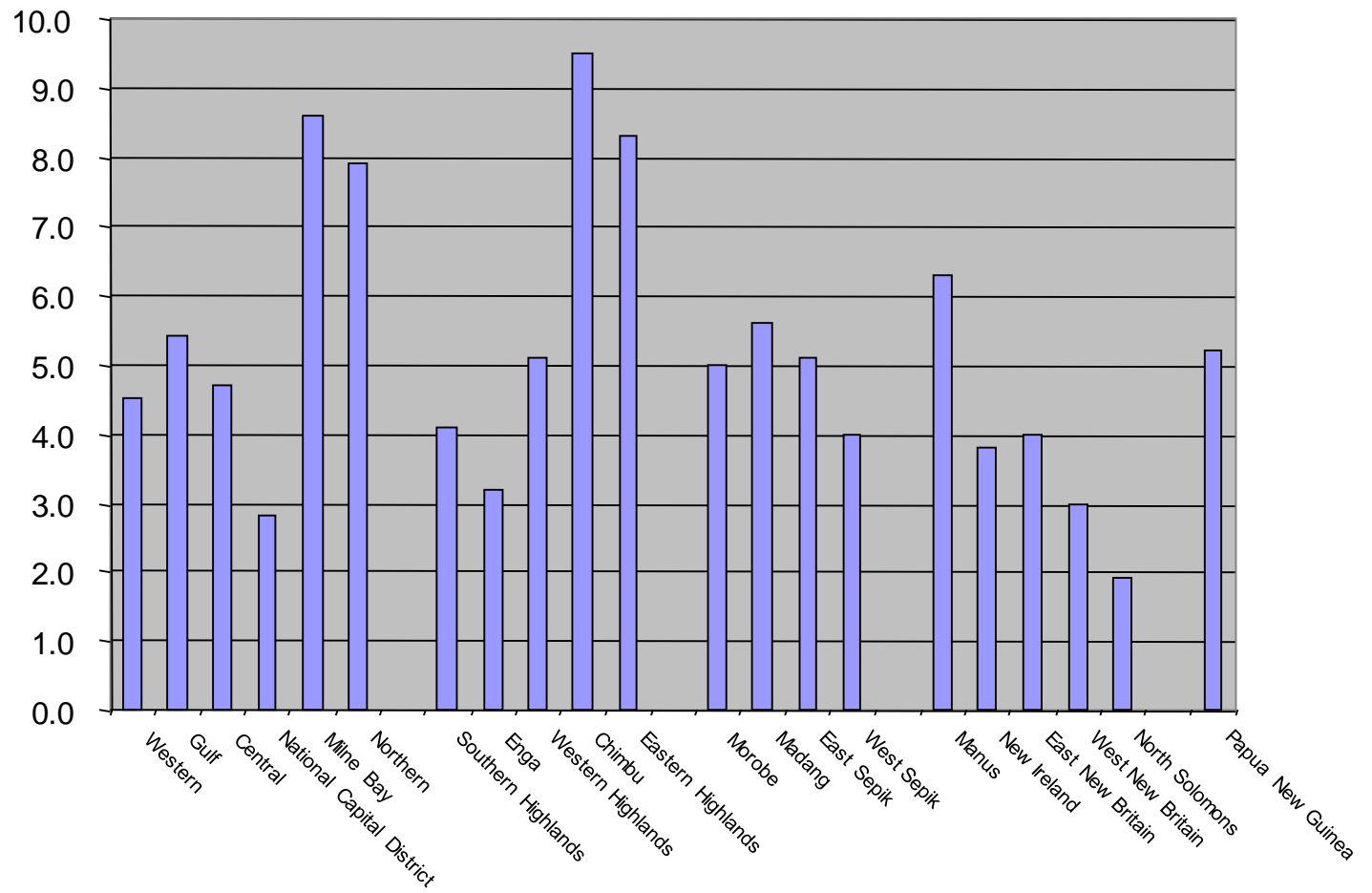


Non-residential Care Models

- Erosion of the traditional Wantok system has resulted in reduced extended family support.
- Child-headed households are becoming more common.
- 2000 census identified approximately 5.2% of children as “fostered or step.”
- If those residing with adults who are “other relatives” or “not related,” this figure rises to 22.4%.



Proportion of PNG households with step or adopted children





Non-residential Care Models (cont)

- Majority of adoptions are done under traditional arrangements and without formal recognition.
- Reasons include:
 - reinforcing family ties
 - caring for orphaned children
 - family unable to financially support child
 - balance family size/gender ratio
 - to provide help to older relatives
- Without adequate birth registration, it becomes difficult to track the movements of these children.



Govt Response to Date

- Enabling legislation & policy
 - Draft Lukautim Pikinini Act
 - Juvenile Courts Act (and new draft Juvenile Justice Act)
 - National Disability Policy (draft)
 - Education Policy (prioritizes vulnerable children)
 - Proposed new National Child Policy can provide overarching framework
 - Legislation will be reviewed in 2006.
- Orphaned children currently do not have access to psychosocial or placement monitoring support services.

Constraints and Lessons Learned

- HIV/AIDS Epidemic
 - Prevention is an ongoing challenge.
 - Some predictions suggest up to 13% of the adult population will be infected by 2010.
 - Less than 10% of those with HIV/AIDS are aware of their status.
 - Poor health services at primary, secondary and tertiary levels
 - Capacity for timely positive changes at the community level (Three Logs Story).



Constraints and Lessons Learned

- Lack of accurate data
 - Low birth registration
 - Low rates of HIV/AIDS identification
 - High levels of informal and unrecorded alternative care models.





Constraints and Lessons Learned

Many aspects of the current informal fostering and adoption systems provide a protective safety net for vulnerable children, however there is a need to influence the current systems to become more child-centered to ensure that the rights of the children in alternative care are respected.

Recommendations

- Support and strengthen existing clan-level safety nets.
- Promote a child-centered, human rights based approach to informal fostering/adoption.
- Review and amend relevant legislation.
- Monitor the “mushrooming” of care centres and support the replication of good models already developed by local communities.
- Building issue of orphaned children into the proposed National Child Policy.



One Blood



Examples of Alternative
Care in Papua New Guinea



*“They are my wantoks. We
are one people, one
colour, one blood.”*

– Community leader, Poi
Village

Shalom Care Centre



Tengatenga 'Orphanage'



Kartanim Care Centre



Kenan Care Centre



Peace Care Centre

