



Who are the Vulnerable Children?

The World Bank's Policy Framework

Presentation for the Workshop "Helping Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Africa: Tips for Practitioners" Washington DC, October 27-29, 2004

The World Bank's Africa Region



The World Bank Institute





A Strategy for Social Protection

- In 2000, the World Bank adopted a new strategy for Social Protection: **The Social Risk Management Approach (SRM)**
- SRM includes
 - three strategies to deal with risk: prevention, mitigation and coping,
 - three levels of formality of risk management: informal, market-based and public, and,
 - many actors: individuals, households, communities, non-governmental organizations, governments at various levels, and international organizations,
 - all against the background of asymmetric information, and different types of risk.



Vulnerability: A core concept of SRM

- In the Social Risk Management Framework "*Vulnerability*" is defined as:

"the likelihood of being harmed by unforeseen events or as susceptibility to exogenous shocks"

- *A vulnerable household is a household with a poor ability to:*
 - prevent the likelihood of shocks hitting the household,*
 - reduce the likelihood of a negative impact if shocks were to hit,*
 - cope with shocks and their negative impact when realized.*



What is Child Vulnerability?

- In the perspective of SRM, OVC are children who typically face a higher risk than their local peers of:
 - ✓ infant, child and adolescent mortality
 - ✓ low immunization, low access to health services, high malnutrition, high burden of disease
 - ✓ low school enrollment rates, high repetition rates, poor school performance and/or high drop out rates
 - ✓ intra-household neglect vis-à-vis other children in the household (reduced access to attention, food, care)
 - ✓ family and community abuse and maltreatment (harassment and violence)
 - ✓ economic and sexual exploitation, due to lack of care and protection.

Child vulnerability is relative



- A child is vulnerable if there is a high probability, relative to others in the population, that a shock (such as famine) will cause a negative outcome (such as malnutrition).
- While all children by nature are vulnerable to some extent, they are not equally so:

Child vulnerability is a relative, not an absolute state. The degrees of child vulnerability can be seen as a downward spiral where each loop downward in the spiral leads to a situation where the child is more likely to experience a negative outcome as a result of a shock. The 'spiral' concept adds to the vulnerability definition by allowing for multiple stages of vulnerability.

The Downward Spiral of Child Vulnerability



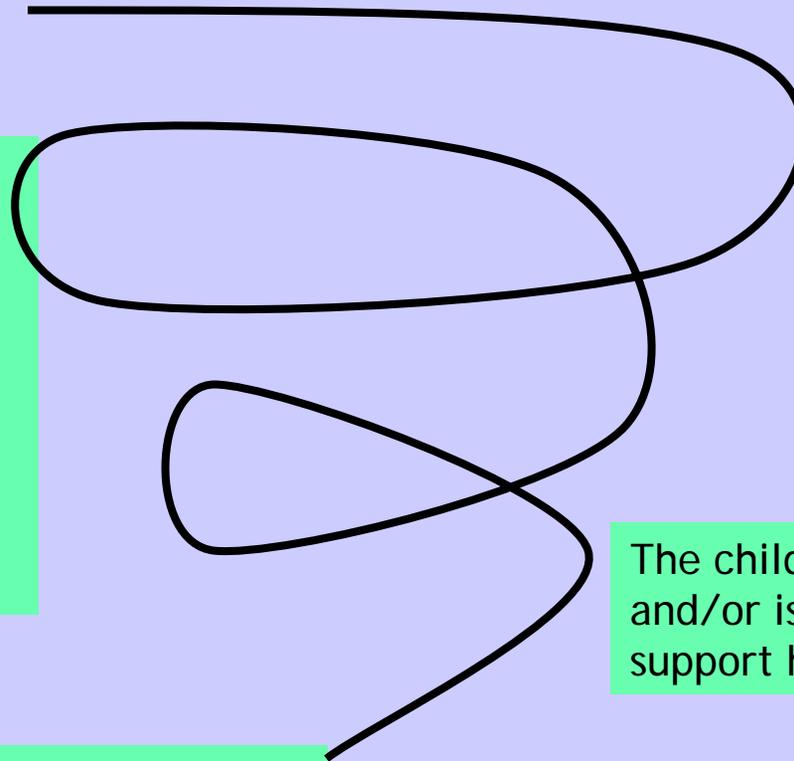
Even an ordinary child depends on the support and supervision of caring adults.

A child in a poor household or a household with a poor social network is even more vulnerable.

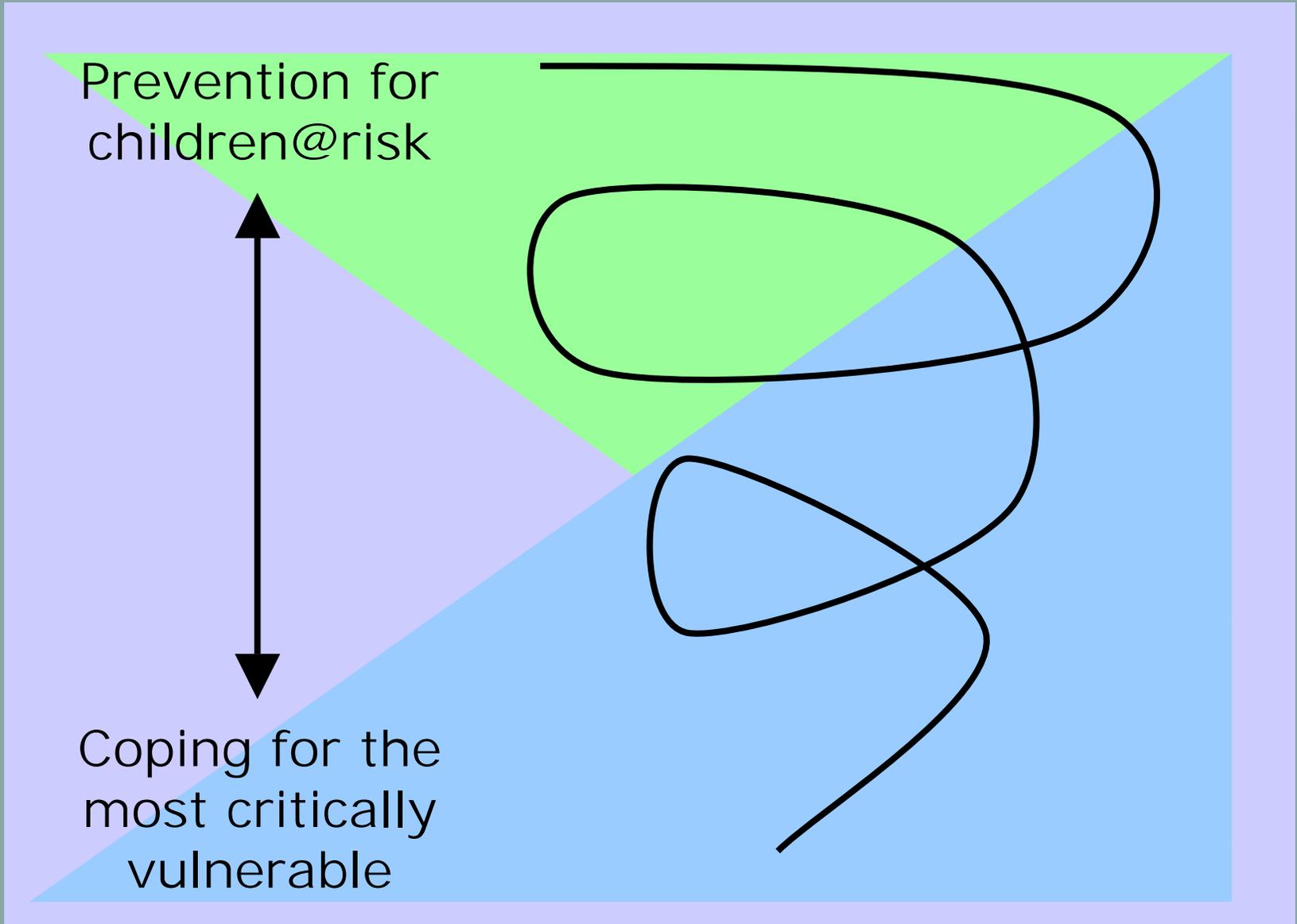
A shock to the household worsens the situation (one parent dies, loses his/her job, becomes ill or disabled, covariant shock to community...)

The child loses protection and/or is gradually forced to support him/her self.

The child disconnects completely with family and household.



Interventions should happen at all levels of the spiral!



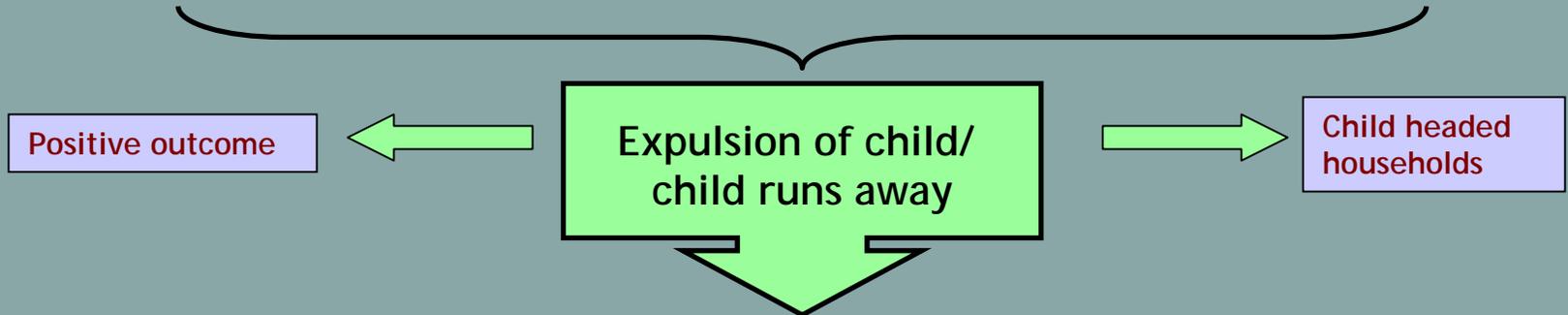
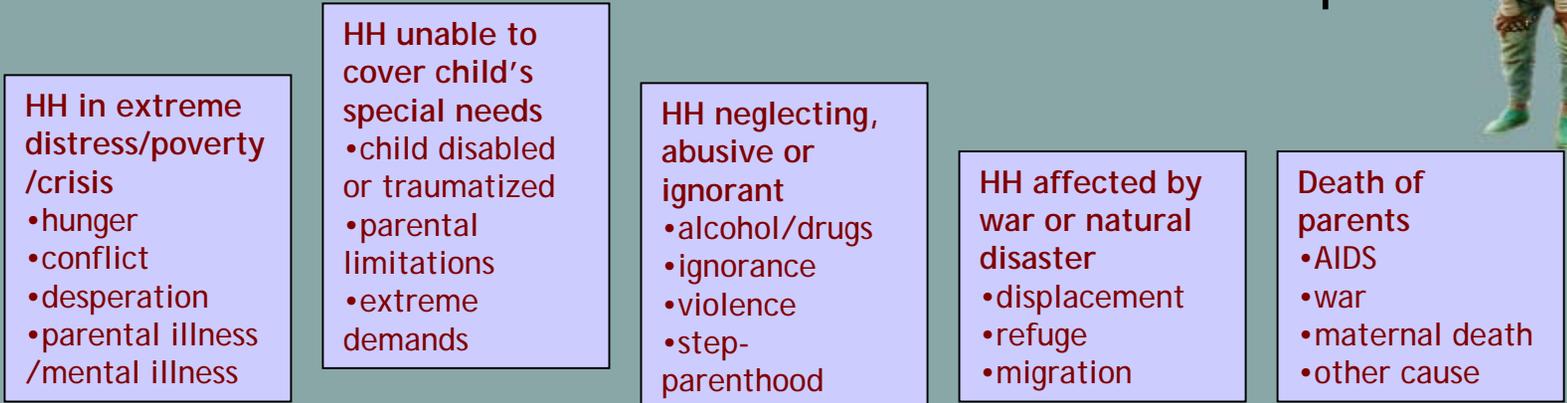
The downward spiral simplified: A cause-consequence tree with some examples



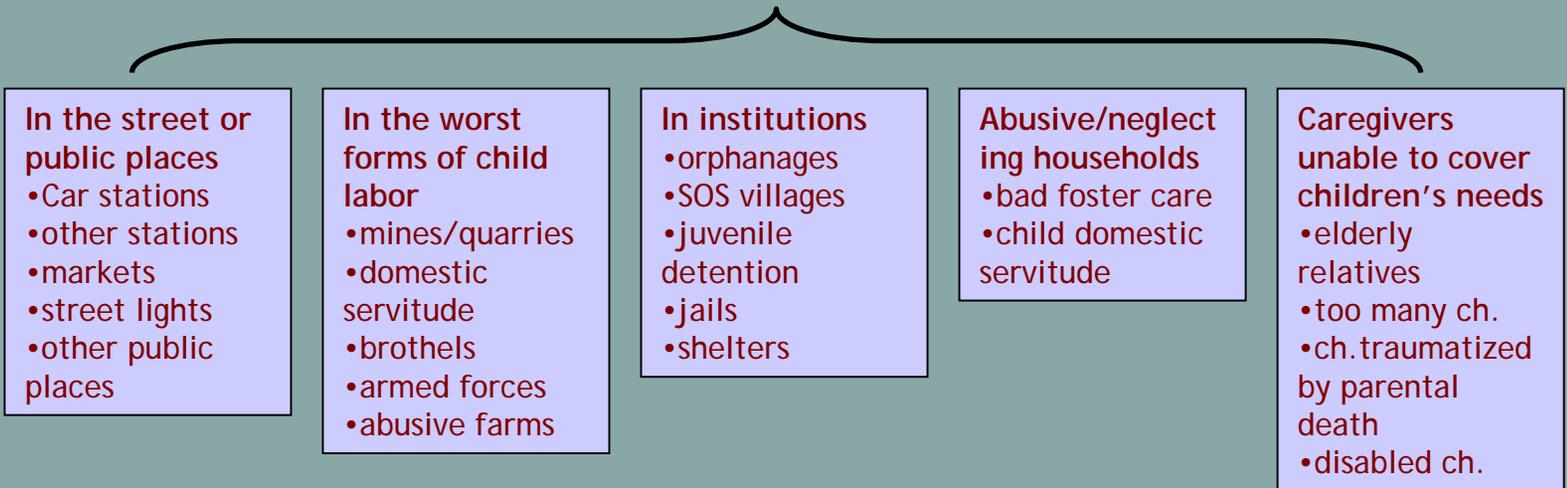
SRM:

Prevention

Mitigation



Coping





How Many?

- 39 million orphans (or 12.3 % of 0-15 year olds), 16 million of whom orphaned by AIDS (28% of all orphans)
- 7 million double orphans, 5 million of whom because of AIDS
- 3 million 0-14 year old children live with HIV/AIDS
- 5+ million displaced or refugee children
- 120,000 child soldiers
- 2+ million children severely injured or traumatized by conflict
- 3 million children of the street, 27 million in the street
- 600,000 children in “worst forms” of labor
- 2+ million children in hazardous work (domestic servants, mining)
- 10+ million disabled children

ABOUT 20% OR OVER 70 MILLION (0-17)



5 main OVC areas for Bank's involvement

- Orphans in general, and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in particular.
- Children associated with armed groups and other children made vulnerable by armed conflict.
- Street children.
- Children in the worst forms of child labor.
- Children living with a disability.