

International Alternative Care Conference

Geneva, 3 to October 2016



Bulgaria's journey through child
care reform 2000 - 2015
Dani Koleva

Hosts



Partners



Initial situation – 1999

- More than 35 000 children in institutions
- Child protection system and legislation – none
- Child care responsibilities – divided
- A few community support services –day care centres and shelters - around 15 in total
- No unified placement procedures

Current situation - 2016

- 1318 children in institutions as of May 2016
- A significant increase in the community-based services & children prevented, reintegrated or placed with extended family
- But...No. of children in formal care remains the same
- A child protection system and co-ordination mechanisms
- Increased public understanding and support

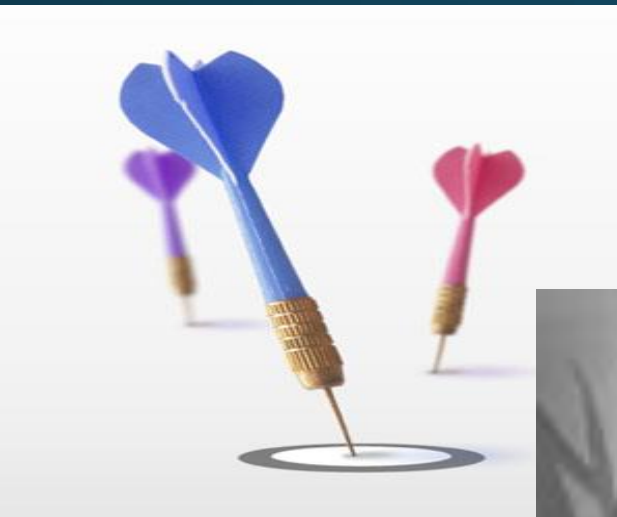
How? Strategic choices & implementation stages

- Clear Gov responsibility and leadership
- Legislation and reform focused on child protection
- Gate-keeping & case management approach
- Investment funds
- Agents of change and NGOs
- Network of community-support services first
- Closure of institutions – should it be a goal or a result?

A promising practice related to the Guidelines:

Vision for Deinstitutionalisation

2010 - 2025



The Vision:

- **Aims** -> all reform initiatives are consistent + are made within one clear, coherent, national framework
- Sets out **clear definitions, philosophy + approaches**
- Puts a **focus on prevention of risks, family support and early intervention**
- **A holistic approach** + sets out the key changes in the respective sector policies
- **Closure of all 137 large-scale institutions by 2025 and moratorium of residential care placement for 0-3**

Implementation:

- **5 year action plan** - > originally started with 6 pilot projects
- Built on with **other projects** re: ECEC, inclusive education, exchange of practices and know-how and improvement of communication and co-ordination
- **Investment** of more than 100 million euro from EU structural funds and reform supported by a wide range of donors and organizations.

Existing challenges: Integration?



Challenges are also and the way forward!

Integration

A wider child protection concept: focus upon child-rights and prevention

Respected, competent and professional workforce

Investing in children, but also parents & family-support

Shared philosophy, aims and frameworks

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Thank You!

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