Reforms of child protection systems in CEE/CIS

Progress and lessons learned

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Health, Education, Equality, Protection
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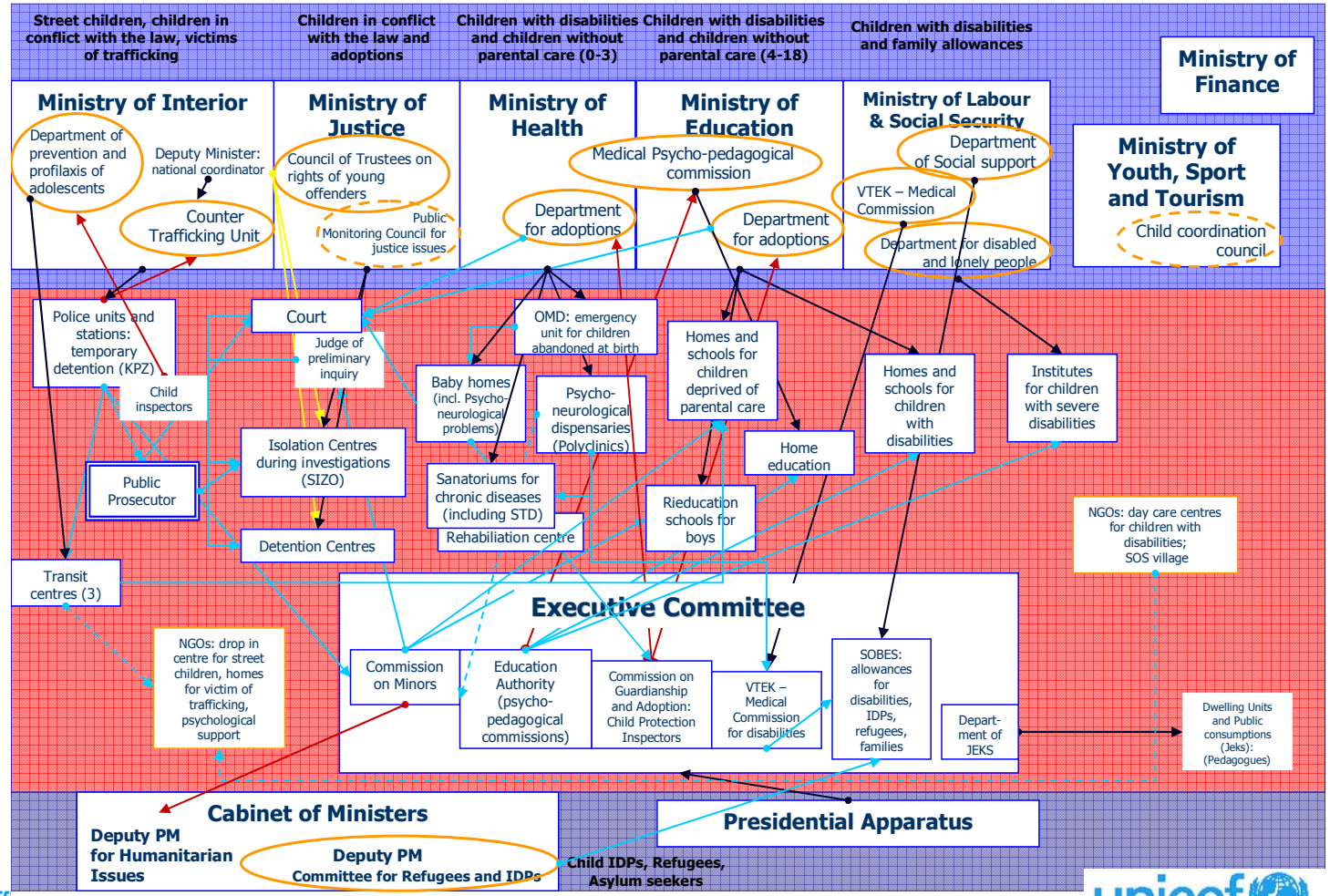
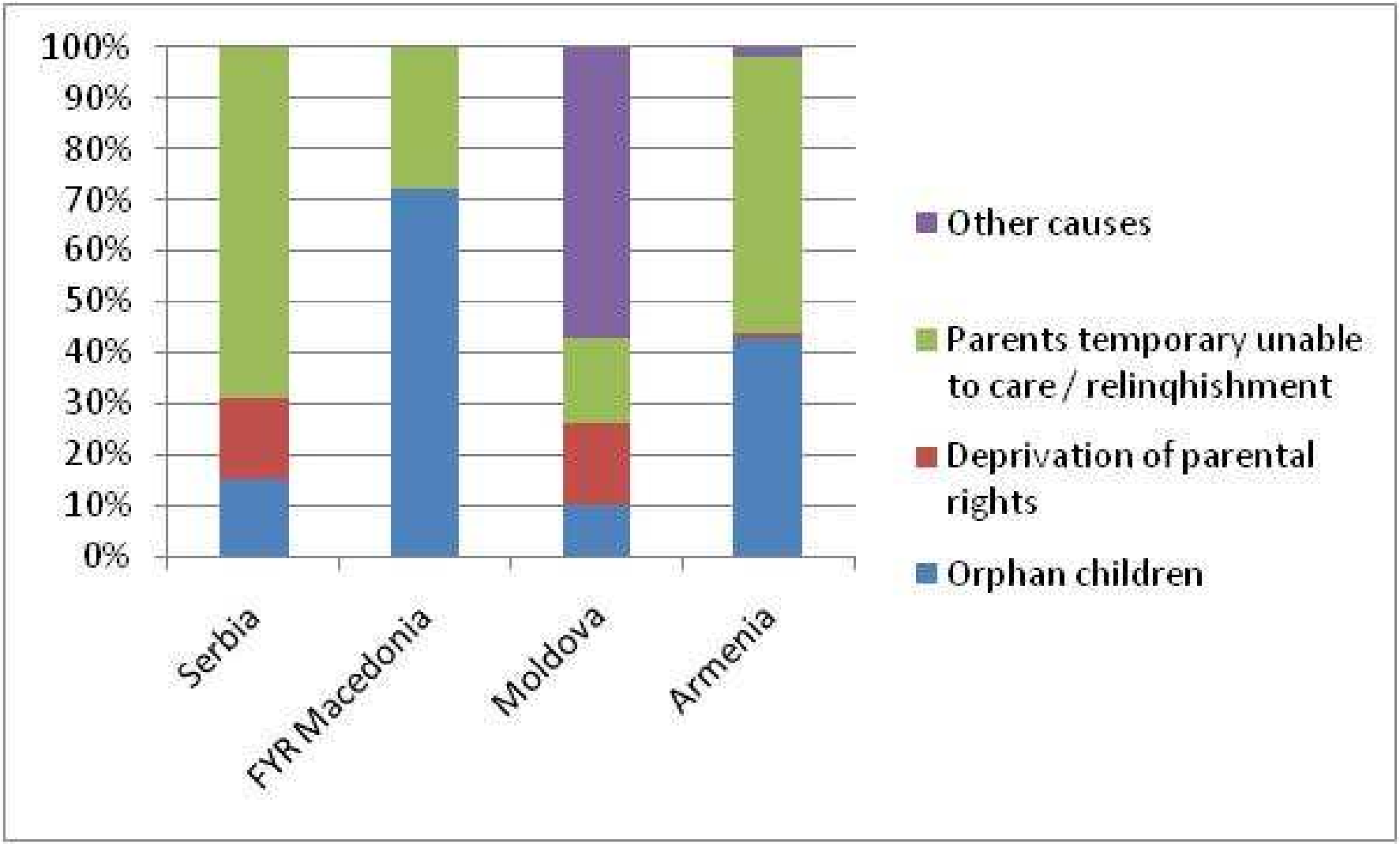
Background: the child protection system now and then

Republic of Azerbaijan: Child Protection Institutional System

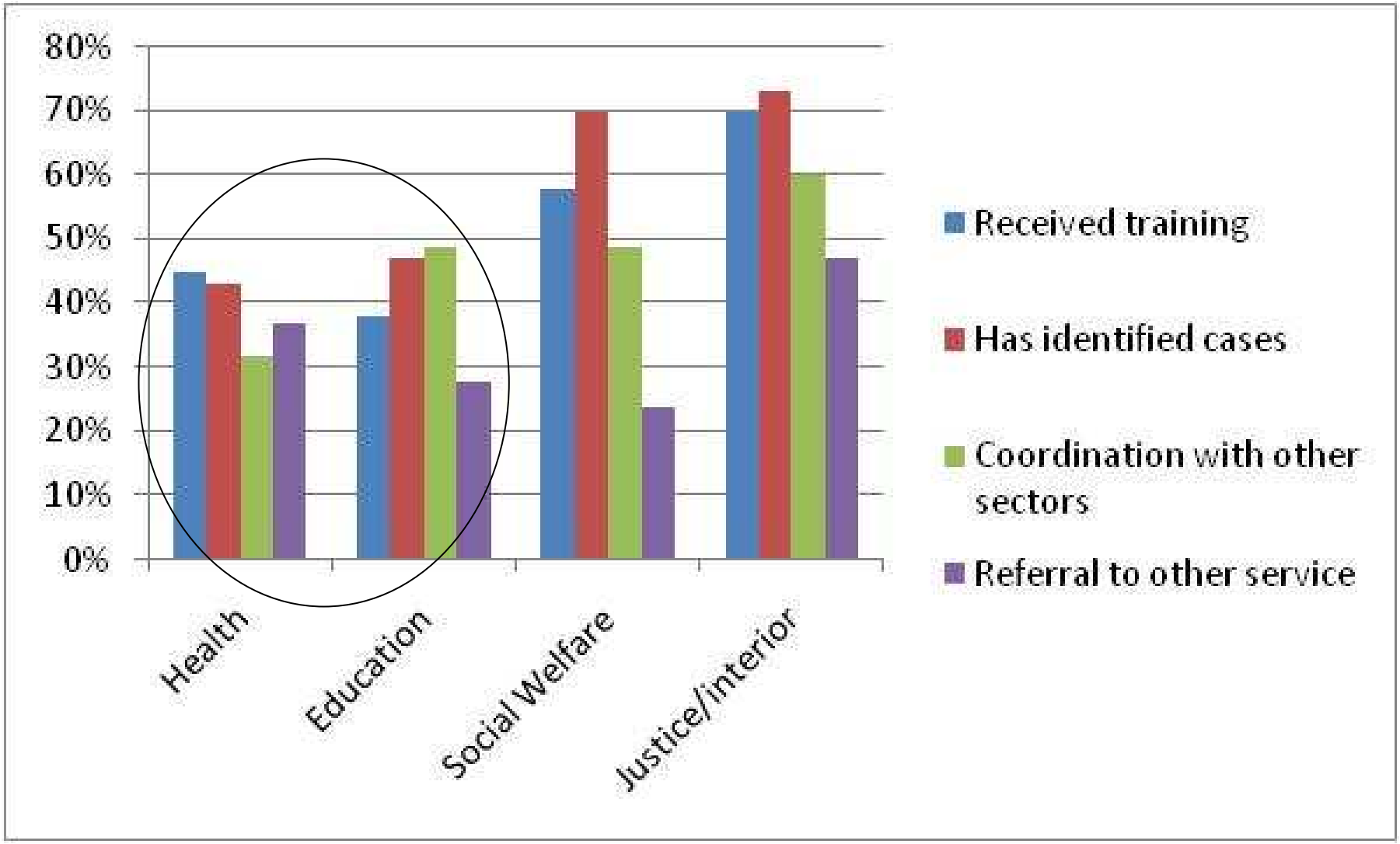


National and **District** level. Subordination, **reporting**, **referral** and **monitoring** lines.

Causes of placements

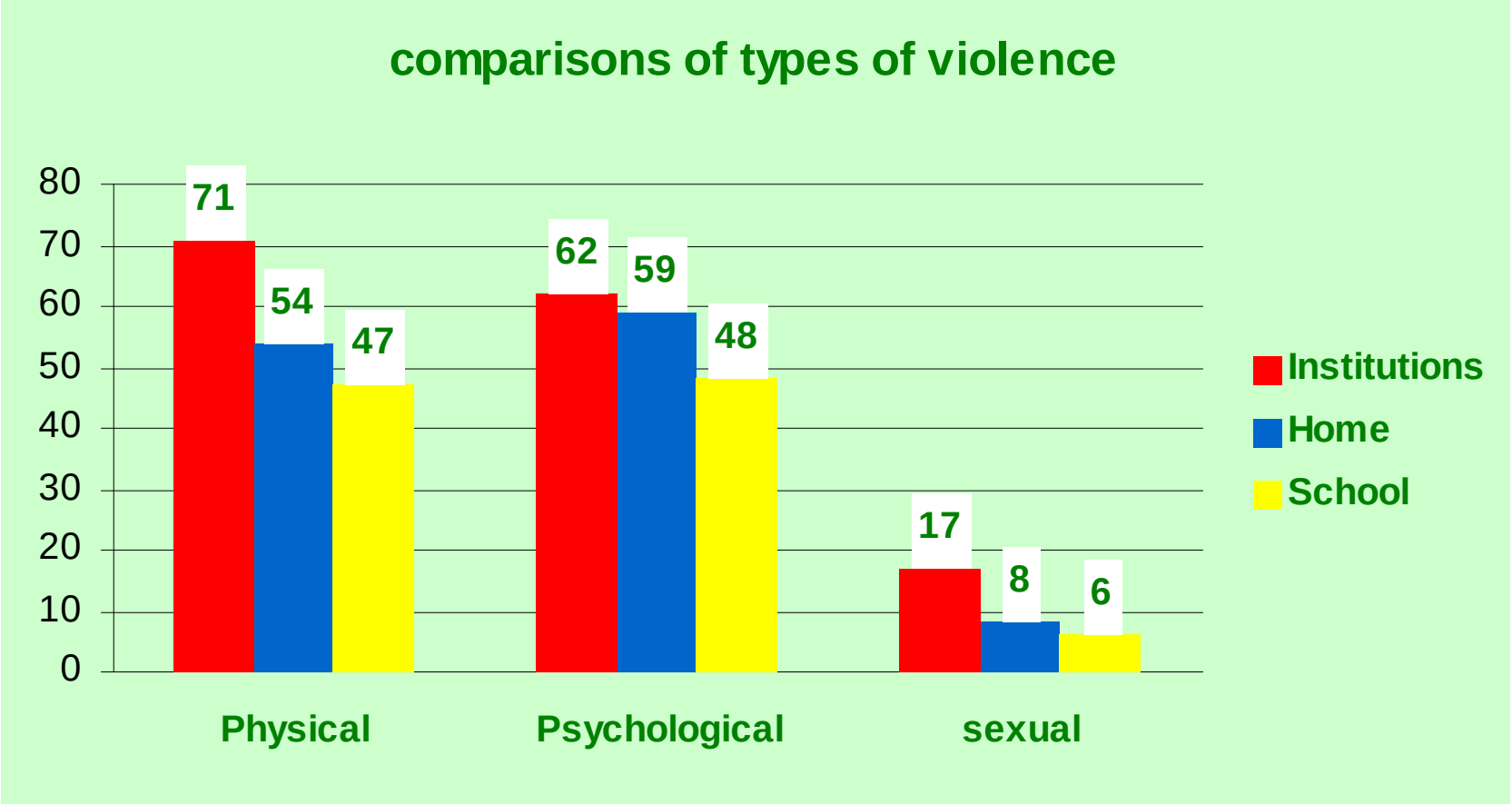


Responses to violence by sectors



Weak child protection system = vicious circle

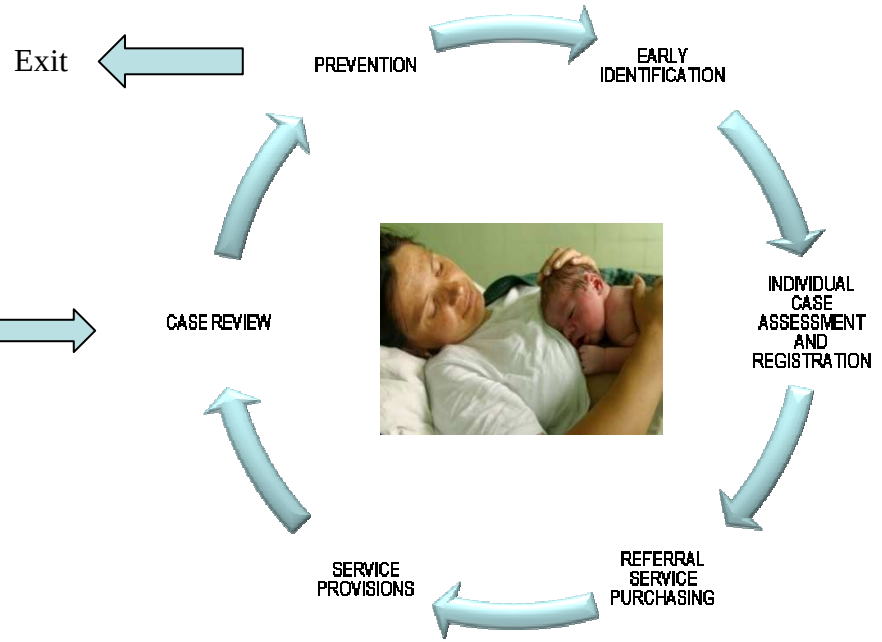
More sexual abuse in institutions than in any other setting!



Vision for the reform

BASELINE 1989 - RESIDENTIAL CARE

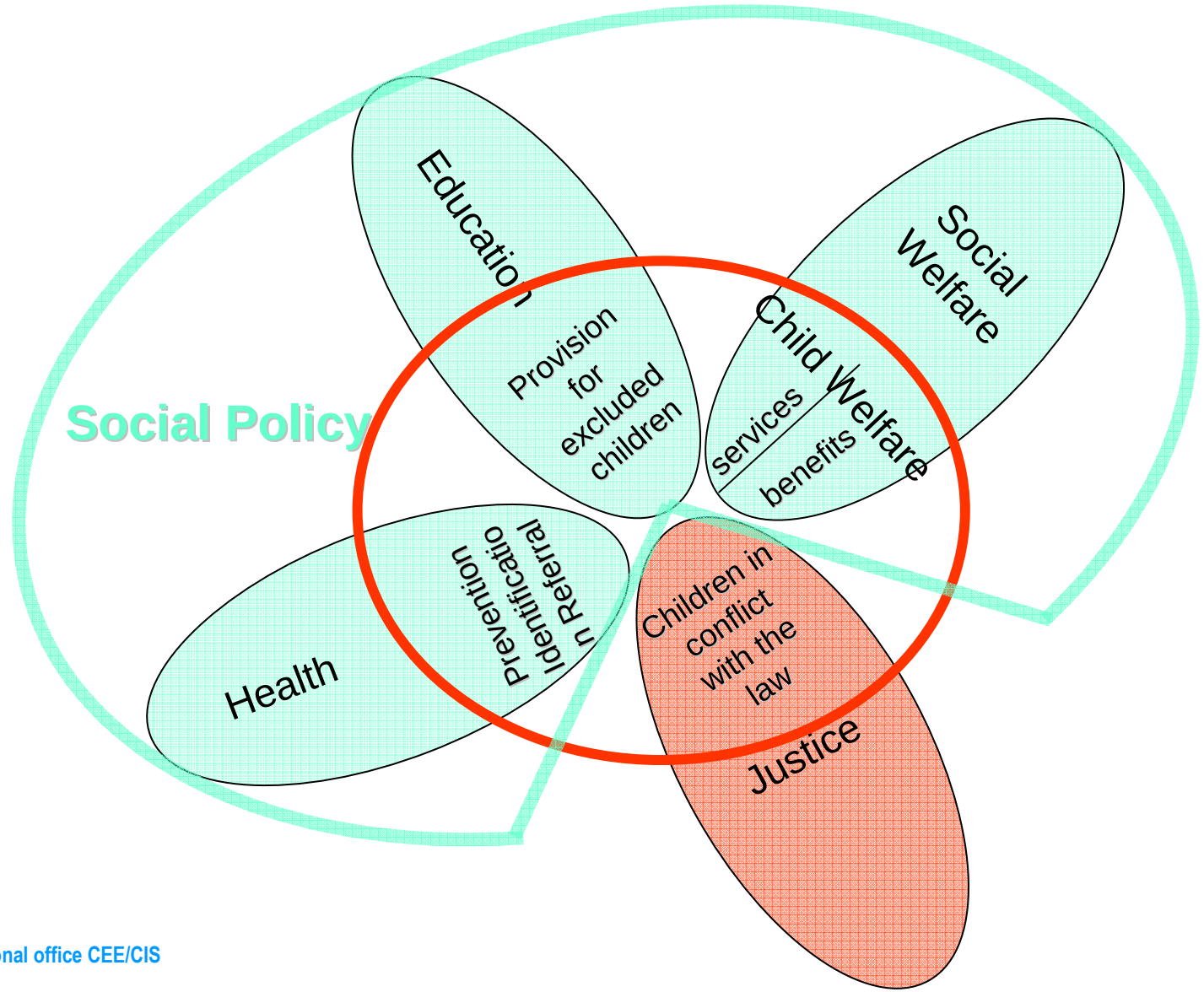
TARGET YEAR X – CONTINUUM OF SERVICES



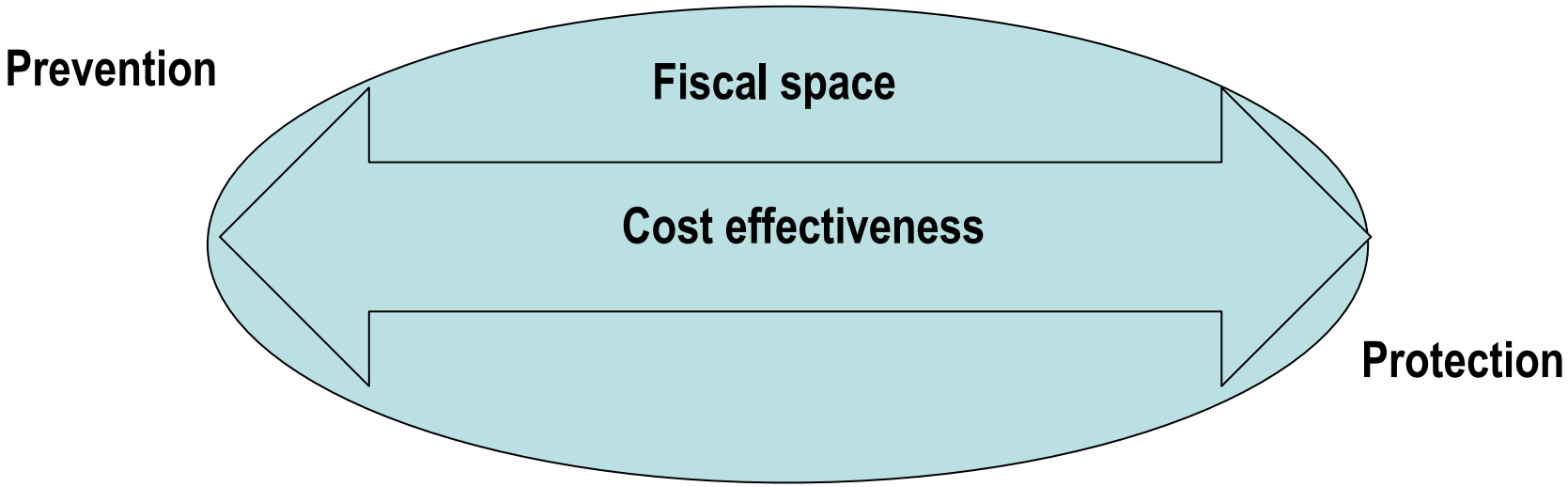
1989: 980,000 CHILDREN IN FORMAL CARE OUT OF WHICH 750,000 (77%) IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

2008: 1.3 MILLION IN FORMAL CARE OUT OF WHICH 650,000 (50%) IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

What is the child protection system?



Getting the balance right…



Progress in countries: 1

Diversification of services

- Policy and legal documents favoring development of a continuum of services
- Several new types of family and child support services in most countries
- New services established both as pilots and some integrated into public budget (but sometimes slow expansion)
- Development of new types of family based substitute care services advanced in some countries (emerging in others)
- Availability of family oriented benefits but relative low value and delinked from individual assessments of overall needs (cash and services)
- **BUT : Inequitable distribution in countries (pilots, concentrated in major towns etc.): alternative family based substitute care not developing fast enough, prevention of family separation**

Progress in countries: 2

Inter-sectoral responses & outreach

- Emergence of new outreach services with potential to reach out to most vulnerable groups and identify problems early on
- Integration of social services at local level
- Pilot sites of intersectoral responses (protocols for referrals, guidances etc.)
- **BUT: remain island of "good practice", without proper standardization, budgeting and scale up.**

"Gatekeeping"

- Several changes are happening to improve better target quality services to the right beneficiaries at the right time, but progress has not been enough and some countries are yet to embark on reforms
- Professionalization of social work through introduction of individual case management processes
- Development of standards for services, certification and licensing of service providers, inspections of services

Progress in countries: 3

State accountability:

- In services for children, complaints systems exist in some countries but even in best cases are not very regular. Most efficent has direct communication channels between children and management of services proven to protect children from violence
- Regular inspections by authorized bodies exist in many countries but situation is very varied and in many cases, even if prescribed by law, happens too irregularily to really make a difference

Professional accountability in services working with children:

- A lot of training of professionals but often ad-hoc. And without properly accompanying such training with accountability mechanisms: formal and qualification of staff with regards to identification, reporting and referral of violence;
- Ad.hoc interventions, mainly in health and education services which are the ones who come first into contact with children.

Lessons learned – what can change the system?

Planning for reform:

- An issue of national priority with clear targets, timelines and benchmarks for reform – lead and monitored at highest possible level.

Strategy for reallocation of resources:

- Planning for transforming, downscaling closing down residential care services (all countries have been experimenting with closing down of institutions - the number of institutions reduced, but comprehensive National Plans exist only in 5 countries)
- Funding mechanisms to cover transition costs and stimulate emergence of new services
- Forecasting needs for new services (Profile services, Magnitude of services, Targeted beneficiaries , Timeline, Place in the system and budgeting)
- Early investments in case management and services which can serve as alternatives to residential care (i.e. foster care)

Lessons learned…

Challenging social norms

- System to change the societal norms?
- Or societal norms to change the system?