

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN: A FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF UNICEF'S CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMME IN CAMBODIA

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International



Background to the Evaluation

- A Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme, 2016-2018;
- The period covered by the evaluation: January 2016 – March 2018; and
- The process was managed by UNICEF's Evaluation Team



Overview of Presentation

- Review of the methodology used for the evaluation
- Conclusions
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations

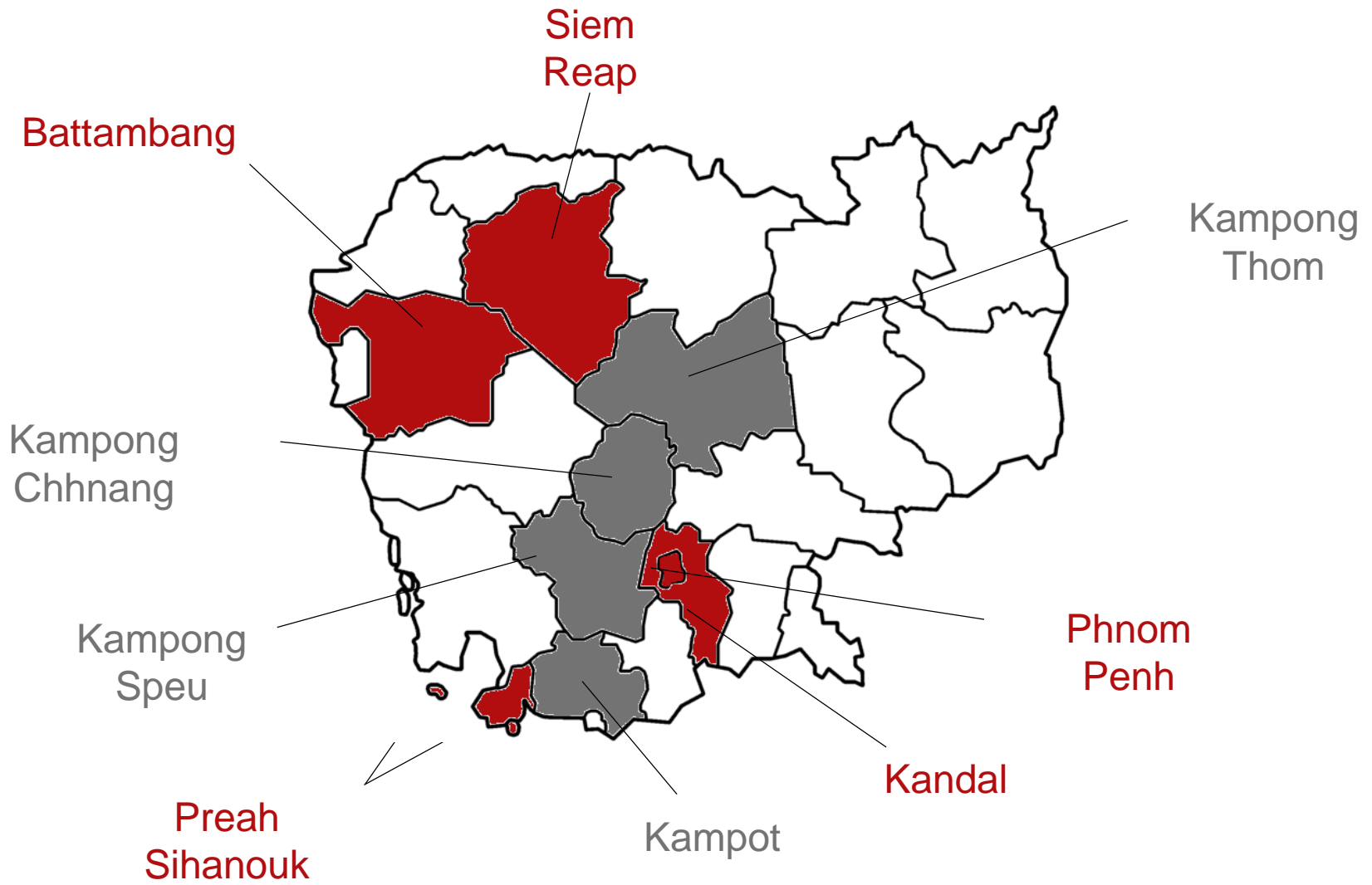


Methodology

Mixed methods:

- Review of documents critical to the design of the evaluation framework;
- Qualitative data collection: 157 key informant group and individual interviews, 38 at national level, 90 in intervention sites;
- 12 in-depth interviews with children and 10 with caregivers;
- 18 focus groups discussions;
- 143 beneficiary surveys of children undergoing reintegration and 73 caregivers; and
- 10 file reviews.





■ Intervention Provinces ■ Comparison Provinces

Aims of the Child Protection Programme 2016-2018:

“By 2018 girls and boys vulnerable to and exposed to violence and those separated from their family or at risk of separation, are increasingly protected by institutional and legislative frameworks, quality services and a supportive community environment.”



Outputs

1

By 2018, strengthened capacity of national government and five provincial authorities to formulate and implement the institutional and legal framework and costed plans for the scaling-up of child protection prevention and response interventions, including deinstitutionalisation and reintegration services;

2

By 2018, strengthened capacity of social service providers (health, education, justice and child protection) to provide quality services; and

3

By 2018, strengthened capacity of commune councils and religious leaders to protect girls and boys.

Key result 1.1:	A child care reform action plan developed and implemented in the five target provinces to promote family preservation, deinstitutionalisation, reintegration and alternatives to institutional care;
Key result 1.2:	A costed inter-ministerial action plan to prevent and respond to violence against girls and boys, operational in the five targeted provinces;
Key result 1.3:	A national child protection information management system(CPIMS) established and rolled out in the five targeted provinces;
Key result 1.4:	Cambodian National Council for Children (CNCC) and key Ministries assisted to prepare the Juvenile Justice Law for final submission and to update three child protection laws and associated regulations under the 2014 legislative reform agenda for child protection; and
Key result 1.5	Disaster risk reduction, resilience, and mine risk education incorporated into the National Child Protection in Emergency (CPiE) Plan and implemented annually.

Key result 2.1	Partnership Programme for Protection of Children (3PC) strengthened to provide child protection prevention and response services, including in emergencies and to reintegrate children in the five targeted provinces and integrated early childhood development (IECD) focal districts;
Key result 2.2	Education target provinces are implementing positive discipline and protecting boys and girls from abuse;
Key result 2.3:	At least 45 health facilities in the IECD districts are implementing the Clinical Handbook on Healthcare for Children Subjected to Violence or Sexual Abuse for screening;
Key result 2.4:	Child-friendly justice mechanisms for reporting, referral and response to child survivors of violence and children in conflict with the law developed and implemented; and
Key result 2.5:	Social work strengthened to support effective case management, family preservation approaches and alternatives to institutional care in the five targeted provinces.

Key result 3.1	A behavioural change campaign to prevent and respond to violence against children and unnecessary family separation designed and implemented in the five target provinces and IECD focal districts;
Key result 3.2	Key duty bearers promote the protection of children from violence and unnecessary family separation, including in emergencies in the five target provinces and IECD focal districts;
Key result 3.3	National strategic framework on positive parenting to prevent violence and unnecessary family separation implemented in the five target provinces and IECD focal districts, linked to parenting education programmes by sectors; and
Key result 3.4	The Child Protection Pagoda Programme established and rolled out to the five provinces.

Structure of the Evaluation

Following UNICEF's internal guide on evaluations, this evaluation looks at:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability
- Conclusions
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations





Conclusions

The programme has made a good start, but there is still much work to be done largely due to the low baseline from which the programme started.

Achievement Highlights

- Costed VAC Action Plan;
- MoSVY Action Plan and Provincial Operational Plans for Improving Child Care;
- Delivery of the Positive Discipline Programme in schools;
- Juvenile Justice Law;
- The 3PC Network;
- The reintegration of children; and
- The digital inspection system for RCIs.





Legislative Framework

- Legislative framework remains incomplete, despite Sub-Decree 34;
- No comprehensive child protection law/decreed setting out which body is responsible and accountable for the delivery of child protection;
- No clear referral process; and
- Insufficient clarity about which level of government should intervene and take responsibility and for what.

Supportive Community Environment

- Not possible to say, at the moment, that there is a supportive community environment for child protection; and
- Lack of a child protection budget at local level allied with lack of trained and skilled staff, even with the best efforts of the CWCC, makes it difficult to provide such an environment.





Quality Services

- Inspection of RCIs run by NGOs now more effective;
- Lack of economic development has impacted negatively on the development of quality government services, particularly alternative care services;
- Too great a reliance on NGOs; and
- Without greater investment in foster care services, there is likely to be continued use of RCIs.

Workforce

- Insufficient number of trained, skilled and experienced social workers in the government service to manage the complex child protection problems;
- Strides taken to address this with the appointment of 31 new social workers; and
- There is a need for trained staff at commune level as they are the ‘frontline’ staff working with child protection cases.





Reintegration

- 570 children under the age of 18 have been reintegrated – around 5 per cent of children found in RCIs (Mapping Exercise, 2017);
- Existing social workers have focused on reintegration; and
- There are lessons to be learned about reintegration.



3PC

- Provided much of the family support services including drop-in services for street kids, outreach and alternative care services;
- Services heavily slanted towards prevention – education support, counselling and basic needs; and
- A view that many vulnerable are still not being reached – street children, those subject to abuse and domestic violence in the home.

Lessons Learned



Identification and Response to Abuse

- Child abuse, its causes and manifestations are still not widely understood, resulting in low levels of identification and response to some forms of child abuse;
- The lack of an agreed child protection infrastructure is holding back attempts to address child abuse, particularly for communes, education and health bodies; and
- The lack of joint working relationships between different stakeholders in child protection results in duplication and some children falling through the gaps.





Training

- UNICEF and NGOs have provided training to provincial Department of Social Affairs (DoSVY) and District Office of Social Affairs (OSVY) social workers and to Commune Committees for Women and Children (CWCC) and Women and Children Consultative Committee (WCCC);
- Frontline staff need more practical, skill-based training particularly in relation to identifying abuse, domestic violence and the analysis of risk; and
- Professional supervision would help frontline staff and build their skills.

Coordination

- Although there are good relationships between NGOs and Government, and between Government departments, coordination is not working as effectively as it should be, and not well enough at service delivery level; and
- Detailed joint working protocols (e.g., setting out how the different child protection bodies should work together) would help coordination.

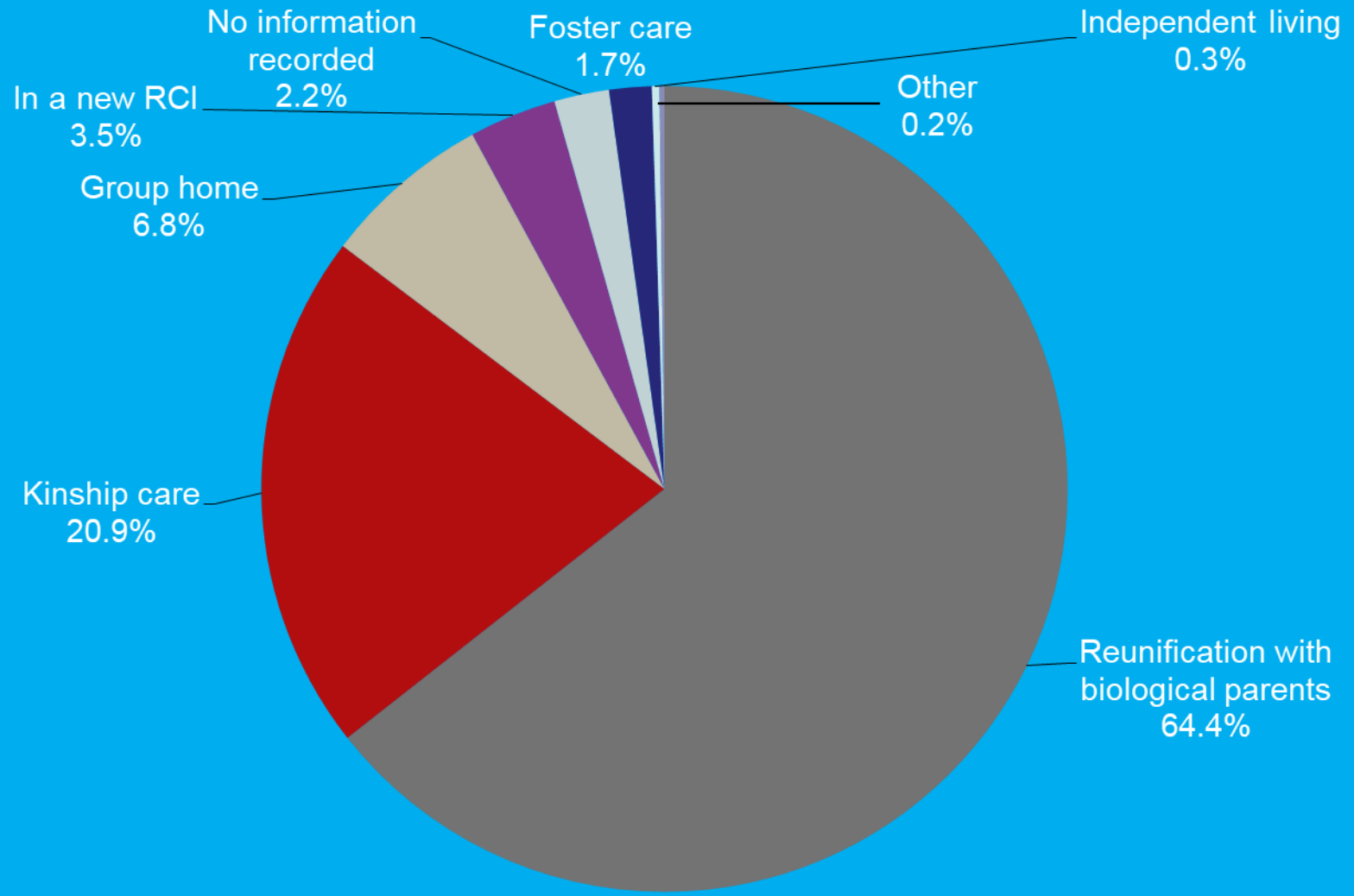


Reintegration

- The reduction of the number of children in RCIs has been prioritised since 2015;
- The Action Plan for Improving Childcare contains a target of safely returning 30 per cent of children in residential care to their families, reflected in the 2016-2018 UNICEF Child Protection Programme;
- Reintegration has been a major activity of the Child Protection Programme and a major focus of DoSVY social work; and
- During the evaluation period 570 children under the age of 18 were reintegrated.

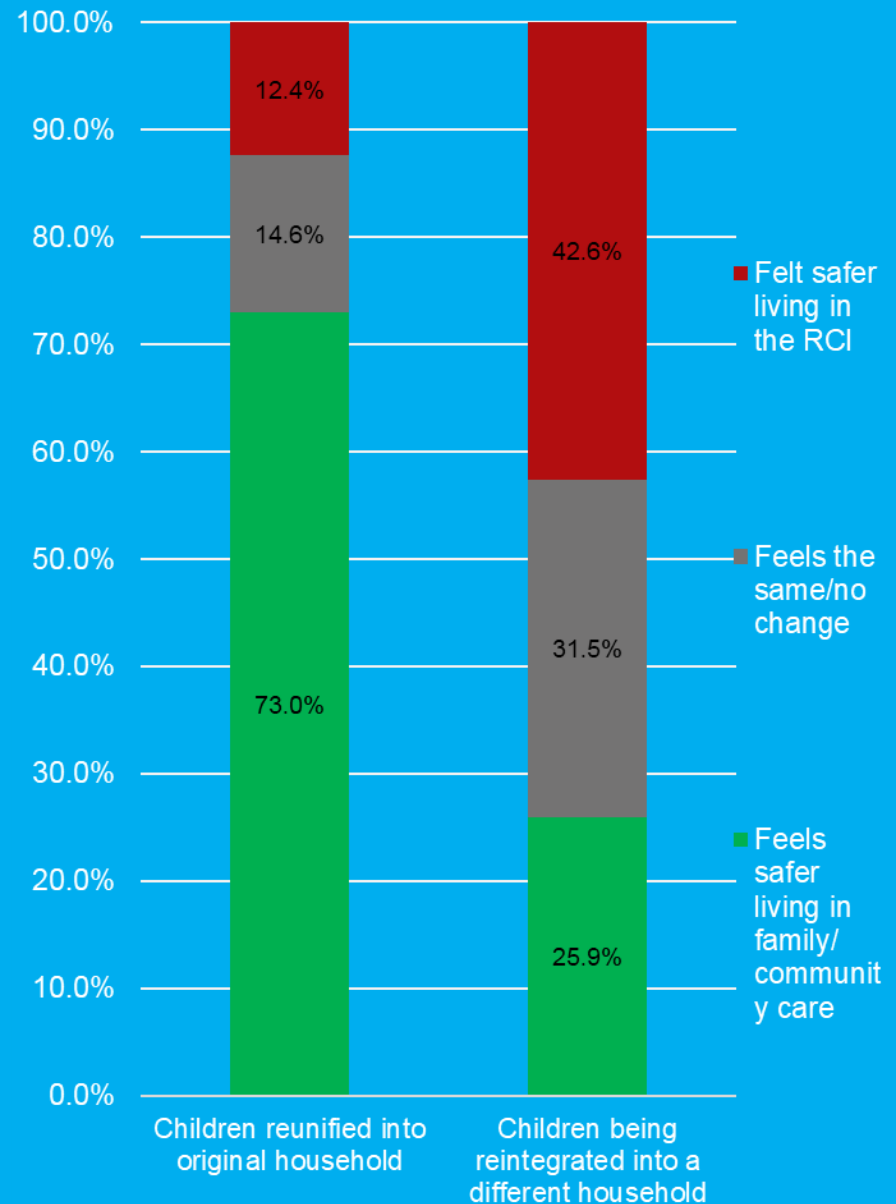


Placement of Reintegrated Children

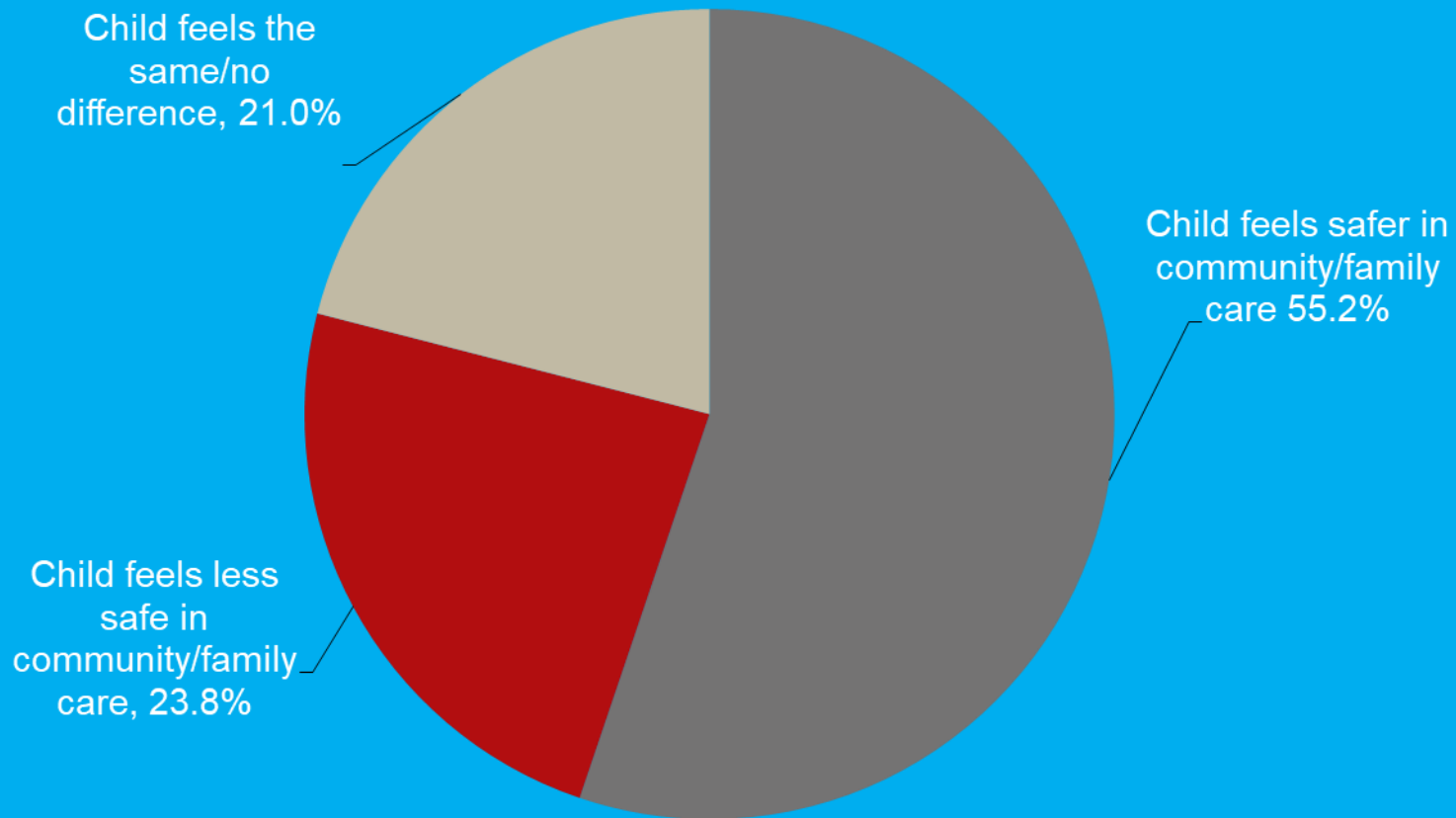


Implementation of Reintegration

- The decision to undertake safe reintegration was an appropriate decision and reflects good practice;
- A survey was undertaken with 143 reintegrated children under 18;
- 73 per cent of children felt safer once reintegrated but 23.8 per cent said they felt less safe than in the RCI; and
- Some reintegrated children could not be located, most likely due to migration.



Children's relative feelings of safety: Comparing family and community-based placement to living in an RCI



Implementation of Reintegration

- Inadequate assessments of the child and family prior to reunification and placement in family based alternative care;
- Pressure on families to take back care of their children;
- Lack of understanding of risk and underlying reasons for the initial placement and no contingency planning for failed placements; and
- Better follow-up support and monitoring required to ensure safety and best interests.





Recommendations

Activities Still to Be Implemented

- Positive parenting programme;
- Training on the Clinical Handbook on Child Protection;
- Acceptance of the 3 year Strategic Plan and Operational Guide for Juvenile Justice Law and the Guidelines; and
- Communication strategy for violence against children and prevention of separation.

There are no recommendations on this aspect of the Child Protection Programme.

1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Strengthen Sub-Decree 34 (while awaiting a new Child Protection Law) by:

- Developing working protocols or standard operating procedures to cover the process of child protection from the moment of suspicion of abuse to the closing of a case;
- Deciding which body is to take responsibility for responding to referrals and making applications to court; and
- Placing a statutory duty on all bodies and professionals working with children to report suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence.

2. ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK: CHILD PROTECTION AT SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL

- CWCC to be the front line service for child protection, receiving allegations and concerns about a child at local level;
- CWCC should support children and families at local level who are in need to material assistance and family support, where child protection intervention is not required; and
- Where there is a likelihood of abuse or risk of family separation, a referral should be made to DoSVY/OSVY who should be responsible for the child protection investigation.

3. ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK: POLICE

- Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Police to take on a wider remit of cases and to function as specialist children's unit;
- Any report of abuse of a child should be referred immediately to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (including physical abuse);
- Referral should trigger a child protection referral to DoSVY/OSVY; and
- When commune police receive a report of domestic violence and there are children in the house, police should make a referral to CWCC who should refer on to DoSVY/OSVY if there are child protection issues.

3. ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK: POLICE

- A joint working protocol to be developed covering the roles and functions of the Anti-Trafficking Police, commune police, CWCC and DoSVY/OSVY; the procedures to be followed and joint working arrangements; and
- Further training for Anti-Trafficking Police who are to deal with children and for the community police.



4. POSITIVE DISCIPLINE PROGRAMME

- Recommend that this programme continue right through the next Country Programme (2019-2023) and be embedded in training for new teachers; and
- Wherever possible, Level 1 (universal 'light' parenting support) of the Positive Parenting Programme should be offered at the same time to parents and caregivers of the children at the school.



5. SOCIAL WORK CASE MANAGEMENT

- Introduce a social work case management system;
- Case files should be kept by the body responsible for investigation, assessment, etc. (i.e., DoSVY/OSVY); and
- UNICEF to endeavor to continue funding social workers and advocate with Government for their employment.



6. REINTEGRATION

- All children who are resident in RCIs should be the subject of a full assessment in early 2019 to determine whether family reunification is possible – and a care plan developed;
- If reunification is not possible, these children should have priority for alternative care in the community, which may mean growth of **small** group homes (at present 15 is the maximum number of children); and
- Process of reintegration needs to be revised, with Family Care First draft Guidelines on Reintegration to be implemented.

6. REINTEGRATION

- Tighter monitoring and review process for reintegrated children with visits every week for the first months, then every month for six months by a social worker;
- Reassessment in two weeks if there are concerns about a child or a child is migrating or moving; and
- Contingency plans to be put in place for breakdown of placement.



8. TRAINING

- Practice-based training and coaching for DoSVY and OSVY to ‘professionalise’ the child protection service;
- Training on identification of child abuse etc. for CWCC members; and
- Training on family assessment and risk analysis for both Government and NGO social workers.



9. PLANNING

While there is planning on issues such as maternal health, water and sanitation, education, there is little in child protection. Thus, provinces to draft bi-annual child protection plans which set out:

- Demography of the province and the needs of its child population;
- The services available;
- The services that will be needed; and
- How any gaps will be met.





Thank you!

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