



KINSHIP CARE AROUND THE WORLD

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KINSHIP CARE – DEFINITION, CONTEXT

- KINSHIP CARE IS AN EXPRESSION TO DESCRIBE “FAMILY-BASED CARE WITHIN THE CHILD’S EXTENDED FAMILY OR WITH CLOSE FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY KNOWN TO THE CHILD, WHETHER FORMAL OR INFORMAL IN NATURE.” (UN GUIDELINES ON ALTERNATIVE CARE OF CHILDREN, 2010)
- ANTHROPOLOGISTS DEFINE KINSHIP AS THE WEB OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT FORM AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE LIVES OF ALL HUMANS IN ALL SOCIETIES;
- UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC), THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE GUIDELINES FOR THE ALTERNATIVE CARE OF CHILDREN RECOGNISE THE NEED TO SUPPORT CHILDREN TO GROW UP WITHIN THEIR OWN FAMILIES;
- THE PREAMBLE TO THE CRC STATES THAT:
“THE CHILD, FOR THE FULL AND HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF HIS OR HER PERSONALITY, SHOULD GROW UP IN A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HAPPINESS, LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING”

DEFINITION AND TERMINOLOGY OF KINSHIP CARE

IN MOST OF THE COUNTRIES THERE IS NO WORD, EXPRESSION FOR KINSHIP CARE, IT IS WIDELY USED IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM AS IT IS MORE COMPLEX THAN FAMILY LINKS OR RELATIONSHIPS

SOME EXAMPLES:

- FAMILY AND FRIENDS CARE (UK)
- SWAP CARE (LAOS)
- IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND OF PALAU, RESEARCHERS NOTE AT LEAST SIX TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE DIFFERENT KINSHIP CARE ARRANGEMENTS
- CHILD SHIFTING (CARIBBEAN)
- INCLUSION IN THE FAMILY (HUNGARY)
- CHILD FOSTERING (IN MANY COUNTRIES AND CONTEXTS, E.G POLAND, SLOVAKIA)
- CHILD CIRCULATION (IN MANY CONTEXTS, PARTICULARLY BY ANTHROPOLOGISTS).

KINSHIP CARE – CONTEXT

THE REASONS FOR USE OF KINSHIP CARE (THAT ARE OFTEN INTERRELATED)

- SOCIAL – ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION
 - LACK OF ACCESS TO SERVICES
 - PARENTAL ILL HEALTH AND DEATH
 - INTERNAL MIGRATION, EMIGRATION, OR LACK OF PRESENCE FOR OTHER REASONS
 - NATURAL DISASTERS, CONFLICTS AND INSTABILITY
 - CULTURAL BELIEFS
 - CHILD PROTECTION INTERVENTION
- APPROXIMATELY ONE IN TEN CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD LIVE IN KINSHIP CARE. RATES VARY GREATLY BETWEEN AND WITHIN REGIONS. INFORMAL KINSHIP CARE IS MORE COMMON THAN FORMAL, AND CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE PLACED WITH GRANDPARENTS THAN OTHER RELATIVES
 - ACROSS THE WORLD, THIS KINSHIP CARE IS BOTH THE MOST WIDELY USED AND THE MOST VALUED OPTION FOR CHILDREN WHO CANNOT BE CARED FOR BY THEIR PARENTS. YET IT IS ALSO NEGLECTED BY POLICYMAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS, PLACING CHILDREN AT GREAT RISK (FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD, 2019)

KINSHIP CARE – CONTEXT

MULTIPLE CAREGIVING ARRANGEMENTS ARE POSSIBLE AND MAY INVOLVE:

- CARE BY GRANDPARENTS, AUNTS, UNCLES, ADULT SIBLINGS AND OTHER CLOSE RELATIVES, OR BY DISTANT RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY;
- VARYING DEGREES OF PARENTAL CONTACT AND ENGAGEMENT IN CHILDREN'S UPBRINGING;
- BOTH INFORMAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS, AND MORE FORMALIZED PLACEMENTS INVOLVING THE COURTS OR SOCIAL WORKERS;
- STABLE, LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS, OR FLEXIBLE, SHORT TERM-MEASURES THAT SEE CHILDREN MOVING FREQUENTLY BETWEEN HOUSEHOLDS;
- ARRANGEMENTS THAT ARE SUPPORTED BY THE CHILD AND CAREGIVER OR ENFORCED ON THEM, EITHER THROUGH COERCION OR THE PRESSURE OF SOCIAL NORMS; (FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD, 2019)

KINSHIP CARE AROUND THE WORLD

- KINSHIP CARE IS THE HIGHEST IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, IN SOME COUNTRIES ONE IN THREE CHILDREN LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH NEITHER PARENT, MOST OF THEM CARED FOR BY KIN.
- RATES ARE LOWEST IN NORTH AFRICA, THE MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA AND SOME PARTS OF EUROPE,
- IN THE UK, INDONESIA, AND RWANDA, CHILDREN ARE UP TO 20 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE PLACED IN KINSHIP CARE THAN OTHER FORMS OF ALTERNATIVE CARE.
- IN MANY COUNTRIES, THE USE OF KINSHIP CARE IS INCREASING AS PART OF THE DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION EFFORTS, PREFERENCE GIVEN TO FAMILY-BASED CARE
- VERY LIMITED DATA IS AVAILABLE – AS MOST OF THE PLACEMENTS ARE INFORMAL

SOME EXAMPLES

- IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA, THE CARIBBEAN, EASTERN-EUROPE MIGRANT PARENTS STAY IN FREQUENT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND WITH RELATIVES, NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS INVOLVED IN DECISIONS THEIR SCHOOLING AND CARE AND SENDING MONEY HOME;
- IN BRAZIL, KYRGYZSTAN, CAMEROON, AND RUSSIA CHILDREN ARE OFTEN PLACED WITH CHILDLESS RELATIVES IN PERMANENT ARRANGEMENTS BUT SEE THEIR BIRTH PARENTS OFTEN;
- IN SOME COMMUNITIES IN MALAWI, ADOLESCENT BOYS SLEEP IN THE HOMES OF RELATIVES, REMAINING UNDER THE CARE OF THEIR PARENTS;
- IN ETHIOPIA, CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE LISTED PARENTS AS THEIR MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF SUPPORT;
- IN GHANA CHILDREN HAD LIMITED TO NO CONTACT WITH THEIR PARENTS; (FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD, 2019)

AGE, GENDER, DISABILITY, ETHNICITY

- WIDE VARIETY OF PRACTICES
- IN NEW ZEALAND MOSTLY YOUNG CHILDREN, WHILE IN THE UKRAINE, JORDAN, PACIFIC ISLANDS OLDER CHILDREN, INFANTS MOST OFTEN WITH GRANDPARENTS
- SIBLINGS CAN BE DIVIDED AND PLACED WITH DIFFERENT RELATIVES, GIRLS OFTEN USED AS HELPERS,
- OTHERS ARE SENT FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES
- LIMITED EVIDENCE ON DISABILITY AND KINSHIP CARE, IN CHINA AND RUSSIA IT IS NOT ACCEPTED IN MOST INSTANCES, CHILDREN ARE INSTITUTIONALIZED, WHILE IN THE UK IT IS MORE GENERAL
- IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ABORIGINAL AND MAORI CHILDREN ARE HIGHLY OVERREPRESENTED IN KINSHIP CARE (11 TIMES)

INFORMAL AND FORMAL KINSHIP CARE

- CHILDREN SEPARATED BY THE CONFLICT IN SYRIA ARE OFTEN INFORMALLY PLACED WITH KIN, BUT OFFICIALLY REGISTERED WITH UN AGENCIES AND MONITORED AND SUPPORTED BY THEM;
- IN LAOS, CHILDREN ARE NOT USUALLY PLACED OR MONITORED BY SOCIAL WORKERS OR THE COURTS, THOUGH VILLAGE HEADS WILL APPOINT A GUARDIAN FOR AN ABANDONED CHILD FROM AMONGST HIS OR HER RELATIVES AND ACKNOWLEDGE PERMANENT PLACEMENTS THROUGH A FORMAL LETTER;
- IN THE US AND IN THE UK 20 TIMES MORE CHILDREN LIVE IN KINSHIP CARE THAN IN OTHER FORMS OF ALTERNATIVE CARE. IN RWANDA THE NUMBERS ARE 200 TIMES HIGHER. 95% INFORMAL, IN THE US 33% OF CHILDREN IN KINSHIP FOSTER CARE
- IN RUSSIA 47% OF CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE LIVE WITH RELATIVES UNDER GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS
- ACCORDING TO THE DATACARE PROJECT IN EUROPE: 15 EU COUNTRIES KINSHIP CARE IS CONSIDERED AS A FORM OF FOSTER CARE, IN MANY COUNTRIES BOTH EXIST, 3 COUNTRIES GATHER SOME DATA ON INFORMAL KINSHIP CARE BUT NOT AS PART OF CHILD PROTECTION

ADVANTAGES OF KINSHIP CARE

- A FORM OF SOME CONTINUITY,
- KNOWING THE CAREGIVER, SHARED CUSTOMS, CULTURE, LANGUAGE,
- BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (WITH CHALLENGES),
- OFTEN REMAINING IN THE SAME COMMUNITY,
- LESS FREQUENT PLACEMENT CHANGES,
- LESS STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION,
- MORE PROBABLE LONG-TERM CARE INTO ADULTHOOD,
- BETTER EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES,

ADVANTAGES OF KINSHIP CARE

- BENEFITING CARE TAKERS EMOTIONALLY
- ECONOMIC BENEFITS – CONTRIBUTION TO LIVING EXPENSES – PARENTS SENDING MONEY, ALLOWANCES, SUPPORT
- BETTER EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOME CHILDREN
- IT IS CHEAPER BUT SHOULD BE RATHER MORE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT
- SERVICES PROVIDED ARE COVERING A LARGER COMMUNITY
- SOLIDARITY, CO-OPERATION, MUTUAL SUPPORT

RESEARCH OUTCOMES ON NEEDS OF KINSHIP CARERS:

- EMOTIONAL SUPPORT: CHILDREN OFTEN COME INTO KINSHIP CARE HAVING EXPERIENCED THE TRAUMA OF SEPARATION FROM PARENTS, OR ABUSE, NEGLECT AND VIOLENCE, AND IN MANY CONTEXTS, THERE ARE A DISPROPORTIONATE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN KINSHIP CARE;
- POVERTY ALLEVIATION: KINSHIP CARE HOUSEHOLDS ARE OFTEN POORER THAN AVERAGE;
- EDUCATION SUPPORT, AND ACCESS TO OTHER SERVICES: CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE FREQUENTLY DO LESS WELL IN SCHOOL THAN THOSE IN PARENTAL CARE. CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE WITH DISABILITIES ARE LIKELY TO NEED PARTICULAR ASSISTANCE;
- PROTECTION FROM ABUSE, NEGLECT, EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATION: WHILST MANY CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE ARE LOVED AND WELL CARED FOR, SOME ARE TREATED DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHERS IN THE HOUSEHOLD, AND ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO EARLY SEXUAL DEBUT, CHILD MARRIAGE AND CHILD LABOUR;
- MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS: RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS ARE PARTICULARLY FRAUGHT IN HIGH INCOME CONTEXTS WHERE KINSHIP CARE IS MOST USUALLY CAUSED BY ABUSE, NEGLECT OR VIOLENCE BY PARENTS;
- PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS: KINSHIP CAREGIVERS CAN STRUGGLE WITH DRAMATIC CHANGES TO THEIR LIFE PLANS, STRESS, OR HEALTH PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE ELDERLY;
- SUPPORT TO OTHER CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: KINSHIP CARE ALSO IMPACTS ON OTHER CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD, WHO MAY SUFFER FROM A LOSS OF PARENTAL ATTENTION OR RESOURCES AND NEED SUPPORT;

CHILD WELFARE AND PROTECTION POLICY SHORTCOMINGS

- NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGNS ON CARE HAVE TENDED TO FOCUS ON DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION AND PAY ONLY LIMITED ATTENTION TO THE NEED TO DEVOTE MORE RESOURCES TO KINSHIP CARE.
- NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS OFTEN EXPECT CAREGIVERS TO CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH NO OR MINIMAL SUPPORT BOTH FINANCIAL, IN KIND AND PROFESSIONAL
- OFTEN NO SUPERVISION, COMPLAINT MECHANISMS,
- NO REPRESENTATION INFORMATION ON THE WELL-BEING OF CARE TAKERS, CHILDREN, PARENTS – OTHER MEMBERS, CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY
- THERE IS A LACK OF RESEARCH AND DATA ON KINSHIP CARE AND THERE ARE MANY GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING, HOW TO PROCEED?
- LIMITED POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ON THE FORMS AND CONTENT RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FORMS OF CARE,

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!**

