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Lumos model for deinstitutionalisation: improving the lives of marginalised children

Forum on Investing in Young Children Globally (IYCG)

Workshop #6. Reaching & Investing in Children at the Margins

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The global picture of children in institutions

There are millions of children living in institutions worldwide. One estimate puts the total at up to **eight million**¹ - though, given gaps in global statistics and indications that there are many unregistered children's homes, the true figure may well be much higher.²



The orphan myth

We assume these institutions, or 'orphanages', are there to support orphans, **but over 80% of the children have a living parent**.³ The majority could be reunited with their families given the right support.

Although some institutions are well-resourced with dedicated staff, they cannot replace a family. **Eighty years of research has shown the negative impact of institutionalisation on children's health, development and life chances.**⁴

1. Awareness Raising - about negative effects of institutionalisation, better alternatives, the process of change and roles of all those involved
2. Managing the process - establishing appropriate and effective management structures at national and local level
3. Country analysis
4. County and institution analysis
5. Service design
6. Plan transfer of resources
7. Preparing and moving children
8. Preparing and moving personnel
9. Logistical planning for the whole process
10. Monitoring and evaluation

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Republic of Moldova – General context



- **Location:** South-Eastern Part of the European Continent
- **Population*:** 3,555.2 thousand people
- **Children*:** 749,350
- **Gross Domestic Product per capita:** 2,233.8 USD (World Bank, 2014)

- **Percentage of children with disabilities:** 1.86%
- **Enrolment rate in education:** children of 3-6 years – 85.6%; children of 7-10 years – 92.2%; children of 11-15 years – 85.8%; children of 16-18 years – 59.3%

* Note: Figures provided for 2014. National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova

Most marginalised children in Moldova

- Children affected by poverty
- Children having one or both parents abroad
- Children with disabilities
- Children placed in residential institutions
- Children victims of violence, abuse and trafficking
- Young offenders
- Street children



Reasons for exclusion of children

Factors of social-economic nature:

1. families affected by poverty, unemployment, migration
2. inefficient use of financial resources
3. limited access to community-based services

Factors of normative nature:

1. lack of coherence between international and national legal framework
2. lack of skilled professionals and appropriate services for children at risk

Exclusion

Factors within the education system:

1. insufficiency of educational support services at school and regional level
2. lack of qualified human resources for assisting children with SEN

Factors of cultural nature:

1. exclusive practices and attitudes of society, stereotypes, preconceived opinions
2. insufficient participation of parents in the education of their children

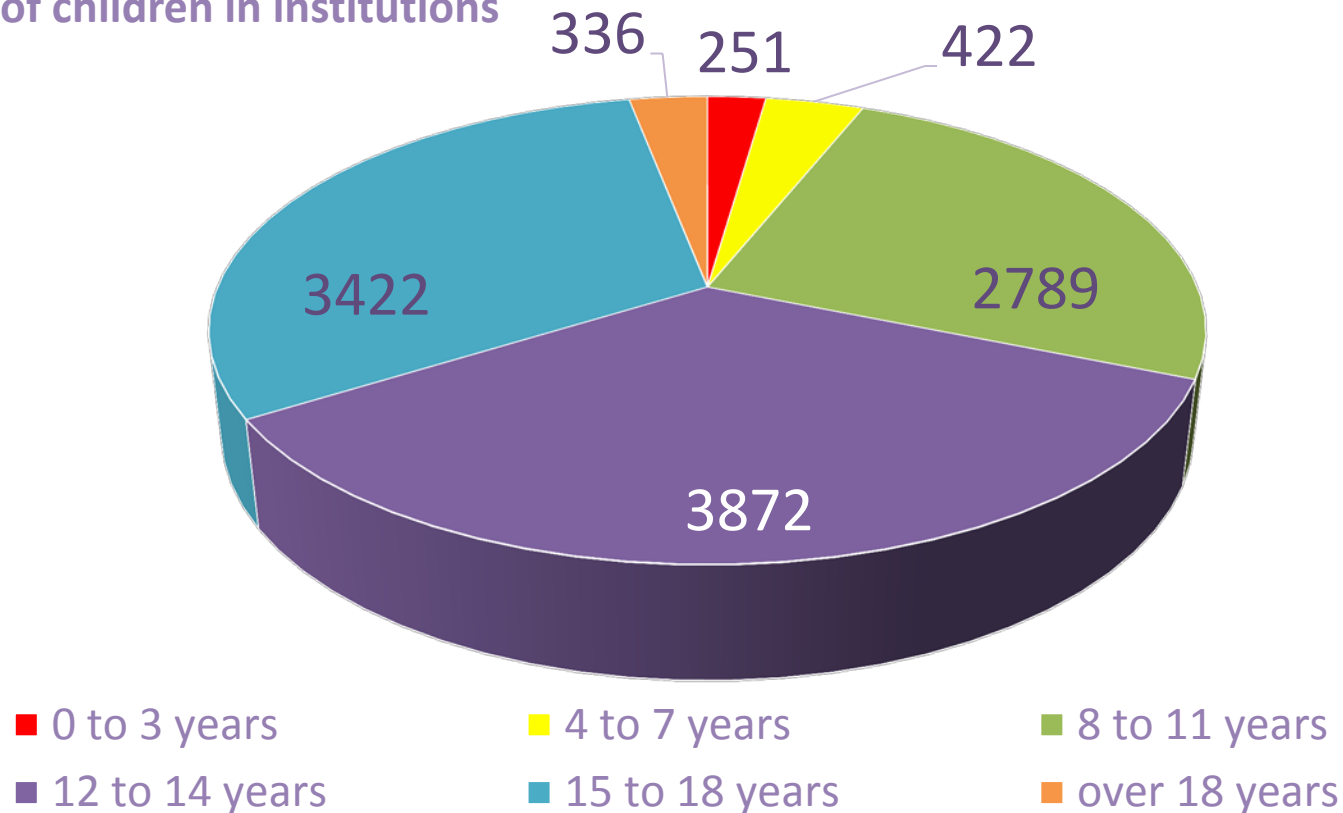
Residential child care system in Moldova. Situation in 2007*

Residential institutions	67 (total number)	11,096 children (total number)
Subordinated to Ministry of Education and Youth	62	10,028
Subordinated to Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child	2	678
Subordinated to Ministry of Health	2	290
Subordinated to local public administration	1	100

* Note: Study conducted by the Ministry of Education and Youth, Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child and Ministry of Health with the support of the UNICEF-EU/TACIS Project (Chisinau, 2007)

Children in institutions*

Number of children in institutions



Flux of children in 2006:

number of entries – **1,978 children**; number of exits – **2,531 children**

* Note: Study conducted by the Ministry of Education and Youth, Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child and Ministry of Health with the support of the UNICEF-EU/TACIS Project (Chisinau, 2007)

The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Reform of Residential Childcare System for 2007-2012

Objectives:

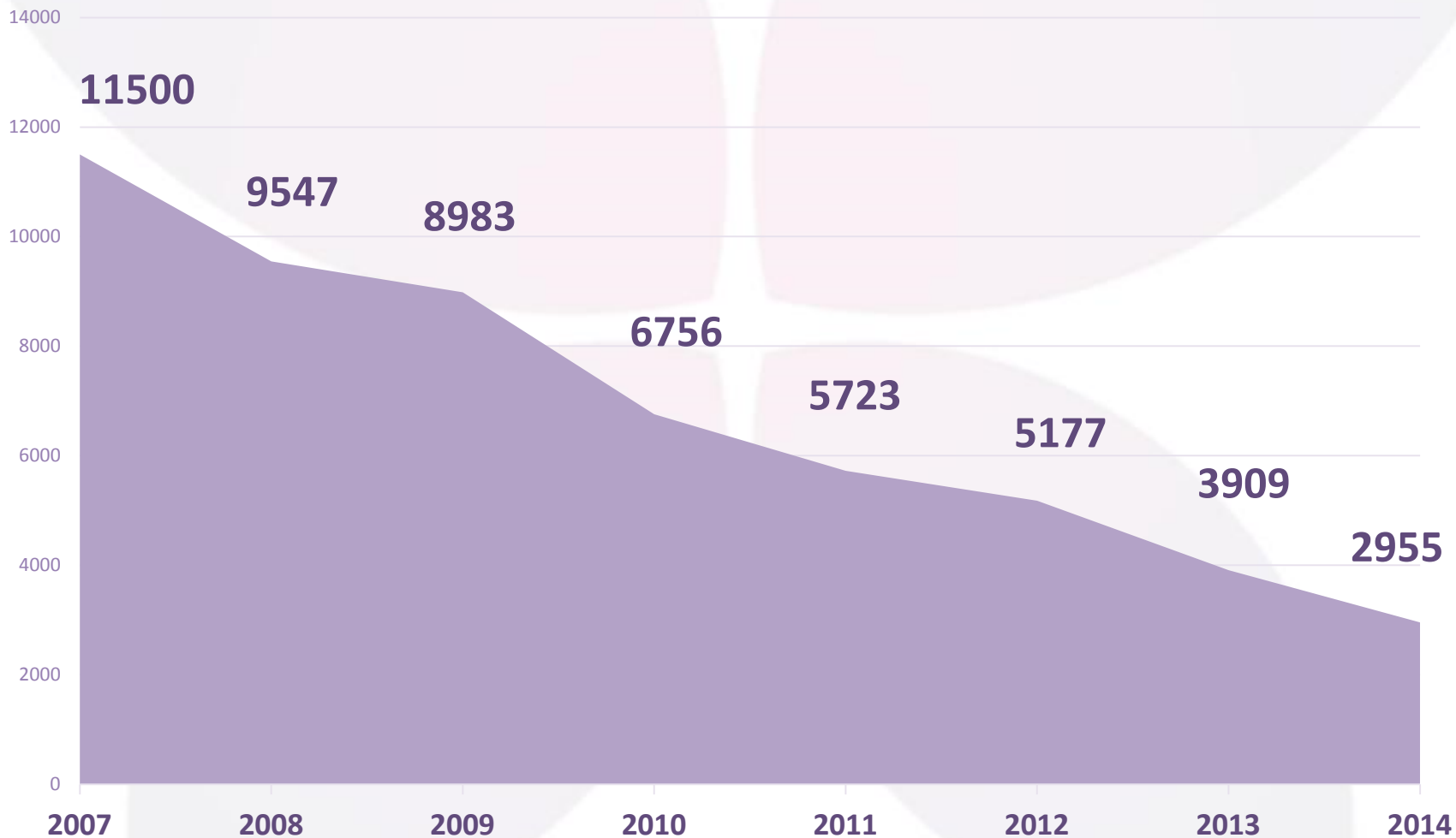
Reduction by 50%, until 2012, of the number of children who live separated from the family environment

Re-organisation of all residential institutions on the basis of a general transformation plan

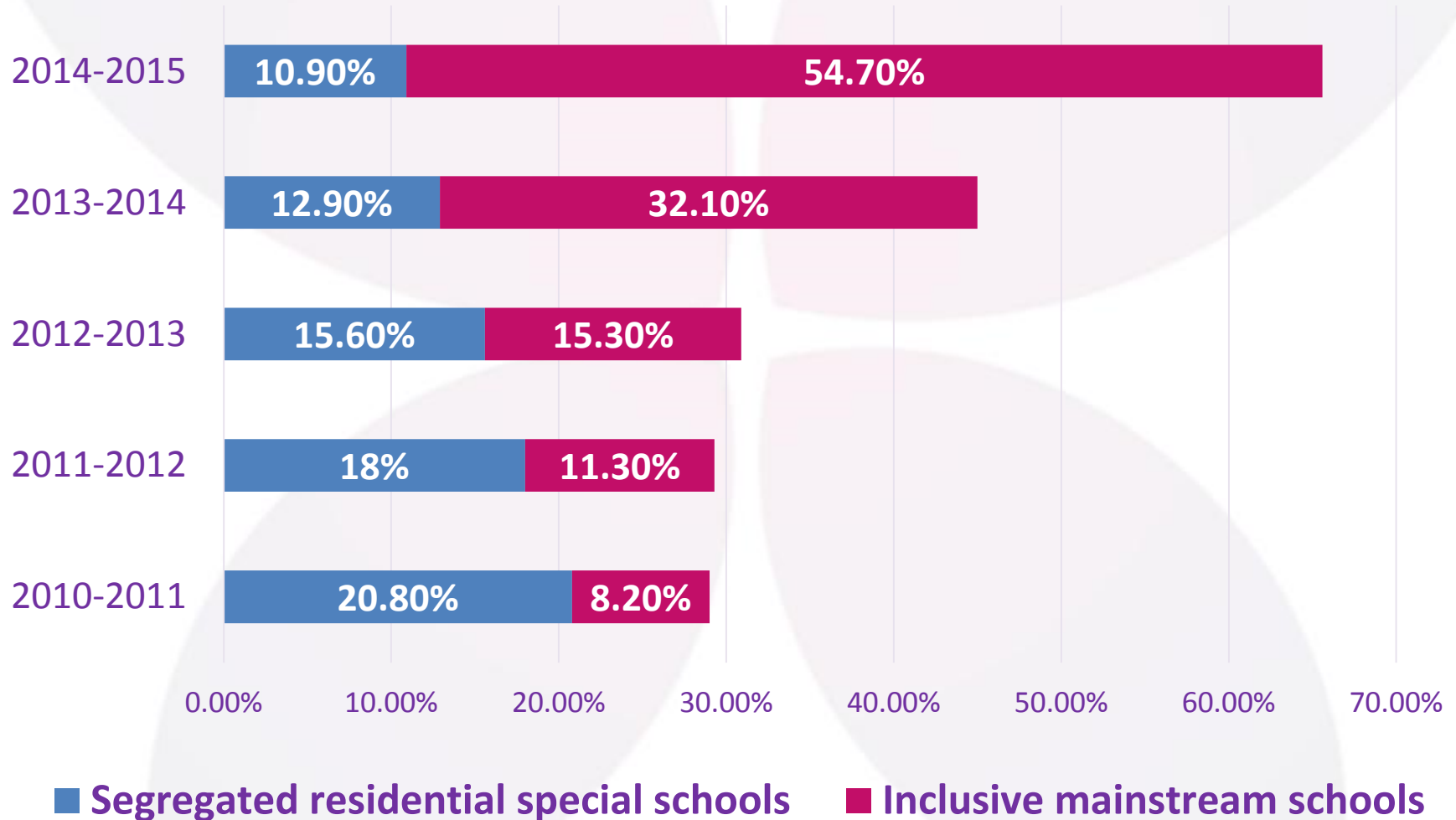
Result:

The number of children in institutions decreased by 62%

Decrease in numbers of children placed in institutions in Moldova



Increase in numbers of children with disabilities included in mainstream education in Moldova



Lumos Moldova

- Works in 4 regions
- 6 residential institutions
- 1,039 institutionalised children in 6 institutions (at the moment when Lumos began working with these institutions)

DI implementation in the pilot regions

- Cooperation Agreement with local public authorities
- Evaluation of children, families, institutions, and needs for alternative care services
- Mapping of services existing at regional level
- Support to local public authorities in planning the DI process
- Approval of the Action Plan on the reform of the residential childcare system in each pilot region
- Establishment of the Steering Committee at regional level
- Inter-sector cooperation throughout the DI process
- Support to local public authorities in implementing the reform

DI process – working with children and families

CHILDREN

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graph TD; A[CHILDREN] --> B[Initial and complex assessment of institutionalised children and their families]; B --> C[Elaboration of individual placement plan for each child]; C --> D[Reintegration of deinstitutionalised children in birth/extended families]; D --> E[Design and development of alternative care services and specialised services (foster care, family-type home, small group home)]; E --> F[Preparation and transfer of the children into social services, inclusion of children into mainstream education]; F --> G[Monitoring of reintegrated children and their families, re-evaluation of their situation];
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Initial and complex assessment of institutionalised children and their families

Elaboration of individual placement plan for each child

Reintegration of deinstitutionalised children in birth/extended families

Design and development of alternative care services and specialised services (foster care, family-type home, small group home)

Preparation and transfer of the children into social services, inclusion of children into mainstream education

Monitoring of reintegrated children and their families, re-evaluation of their situation

DI process at the level of institution

HUMAN RESOURCES

Assessment of human resources

Planning of HR reconversion /
requalification

Organisation of reconversion /
requalification trainings, providing
assistance and guidance to HR

Transfer of HR to new social and
educational support services

FINANCES and ASSETS of RI

Transfer of the RI from the central level
to the regional level

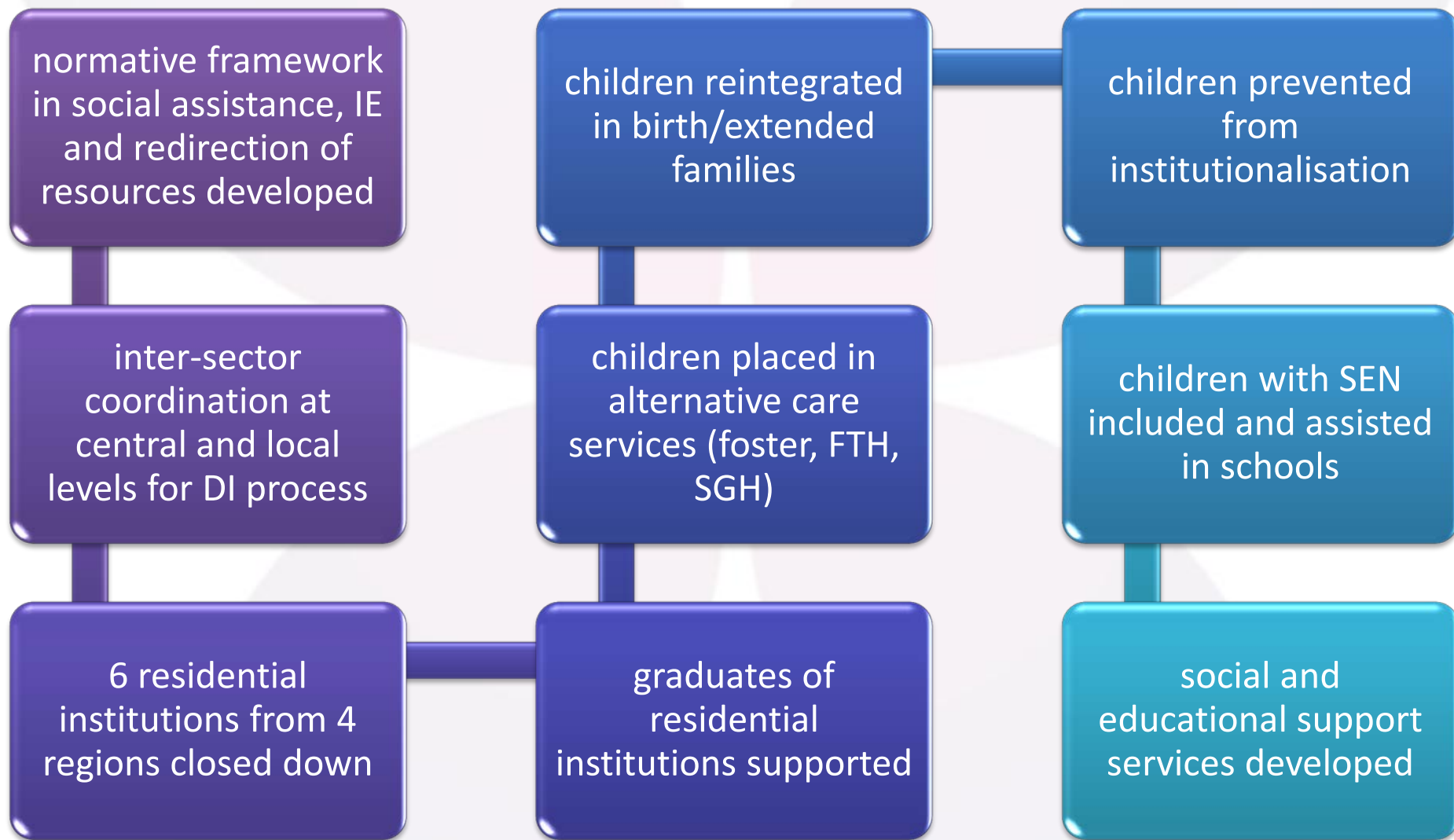
Assessment of all assets

Redirection of the financial resources
and assets from the RI to new services

Lumos principles in DI process

- Development of normative framework ensures efficient implementation of DI and creation of alternative care services
- Establishment of partnerships with local public authorities guarantees sustainability of created services
- Moratorium on new admissions to institutions and prohibition of transferring children to other institutions is crucial in DI
- Careful assessment of situation and needs at local level is a key factor in DI planning and budgeting
- Support to families in reintegrating children should be available simultaneously with transfer of children
- Child opinion and preparation of children for the transfer have to be a priority
- Inclusive education is essential for a successful DI process
- Situation of children and families must be monitored

Key achievements in DI



Challenges and lasting problems

- Institutionalisation of very young children
- Insufficient development of family support services, alternative family-based services for children at risk
- Exclusion of children with severe disabilities from mainstream education
- Lack of leaving care services
- Fluctuation of staff from the social assistance system



Thank you!

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