

**THE CHILD DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE - BETWEEN  
INSTITUTIONS, FOSTER FAMILIES AND PERSONAL DESIRE.  
ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF A SURVEY  
AMONG CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS.**

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**ABSTRACT:** USING THE METHOD FOCUS - GROUP OF CHILDREN, RESEARCH TEAM EXAMINES THE VIEWS OF THE CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS FOR THEIR FUTURE PLACEMENT IN FOSTER HOMES. THE METHOD WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE OF HIS SINCERITY PREDISPOSING CHARACTER. BY PRE-PREPARED QUESTIONNAIRE CHILDREN FRANKLY ONRAZYAVAT THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR REMOVAL FROM THEIR HOMES, AND THAT DETAILED IN ARTICLE KINASES.

**KEY WORDS:** SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS, CHILDREN AT RISK, FOSTER FAMILY, FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION, RESEARCH TEAM

**BULGARIA** is located in an active process of removal of children from specialized institutions and their placement in alternative us.ugi for children at risk. One of them is called. "Foster family", which many experts on this matter cited as a major alternative to the institution.

**THERE** have been many conferences, discussions, seminars, etc. in the direction of foster care. Small research team of Department of "Social pedagogy" of Shumen University however decided to explore the views of children in institutions - those who should be a priority in foster care. For this purpose, the research method Focus - group. Formation are 2 Focus - groups, two homes for raising and educating children deprived of roditellska care in Bulgaria, which for reasons of confidentiality is termed as Home-1 and Home-2.

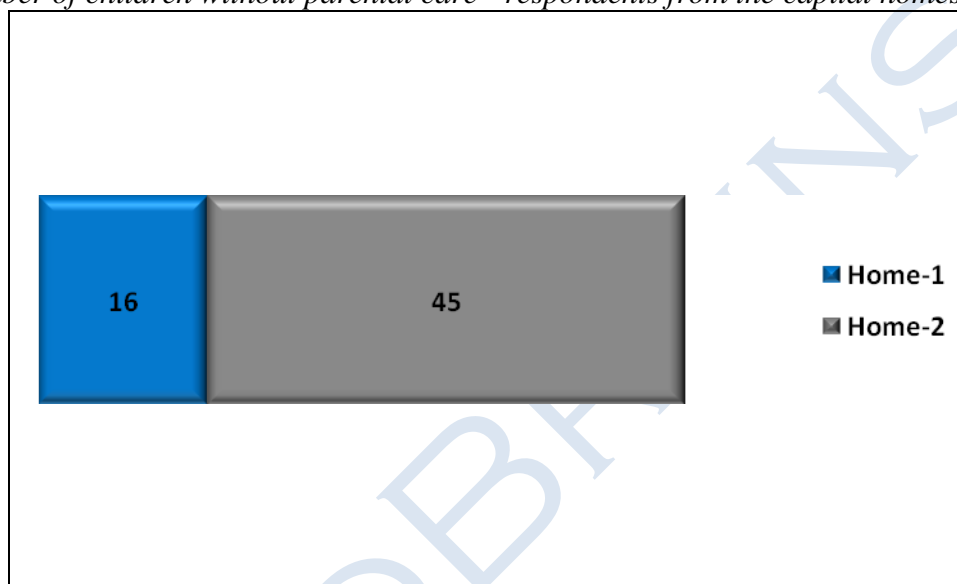
**THE** research team estimates that the use of the method Focus - group of children living in an institution is determined by its sincerity predisposing character. Focus groups and serve as a forum for Expressions of personal views, worries and concerns to discuss the controversial interests of participants, as well as to identify potential fields of co-operation.

**JUSTIFYING** its research team is based on a number of theoretical and practical work, indicating the effective conduct of focus groups, namely those of: Atanas Atanasov, Maxim Molhov and Svetlana Saykova [1]; David Stuart and Prem Shamdasany [2]; Tomac Грийнбаум [4]; Jamie Hardinig [5] and finally - Manual wonderful to work with focus groups presented online on the Internet [3].

IN a discussion among students of homes attention of respondents focus on pre-defined problem areas, and for this purpose is predetermined moderator of the research team. It introduces themes guide the discussions and seek time are not run from 1 hour, According to preliminary instructions.

IN conducted two focus - groups involved 61 children between 14 and 18, from Home-1 (16) and Home-2 (45) (*Figure 1*).

**Figure 1**  
*Number of children without parental care - respondents from the capital homes*



THE children from the Focus - groups meet unprepared for discussion questionnaire, which reads as follows:

***Questionnaire group interview with disadvantaged children***

1. *Have you heard of a foster family?*
2. *What is a foster family for you?*
3. *How do you imagine it?*
4. *If it depends on you, where would you rather be right now?*
5. *How do you imagine that?*
6. *How long have you in the home?*
7. *How did you know that you will be accommodated here?*
8. *Does anyone speak to you and ask you what you think about it, you'll be placed here?*
9. *And if he did, would you have taken yourself solution?*
10. *Do you consider yourself can make decisions about their future?*
11. *Who is responsible for you now?*

THE purpose of carrying out the **focus groups** is dictated by the desire to understand the attitudes and desires and the other party in foster care - children, and defended the thesis that the institution was established (and functions) for them, but they are not for her. This requires not only knowledge of **particularities of the children deprived of parental care**. These children are subjected to various forms of discrimination because they combine multiple signs of discrimination, leading among them has the attribute social status (child from home). They

are more vulnerable because of social exclusion, lack of family environment and support from family, friends, relatives, neighbors and by the shortcomings in the legal, institutional and administrative framework and ensure that it works properly application, which disables the full guarantee of their rights. Not felt unequal treatment and even tend to over-exposure to unequal treatment. Very often these are children, some of which are abandoned at birth, children of single mothers, but also children from families. According to educators, in most cases, after the fall in these homes no one is more interested in them. Exceptions are rare. Concern for the fate of a child placed in this institution is the product of chance or luck just fall educator, which formed an emotional bond, thanks to which shall be made available environment for its development.

IT is also important to highlight and **selection of appropriate alternative family form for each child**. The deinstitutionalization process in Bulgaria provides for all children from institutions for closure should be provided accommodation in a family or family-like environment, no child should be omitted. Ensuring priority for accommodation in a family environment - in demand for services alternative to placement in an institution, first make every effort to reintegrate the child in the birth family, when appropriate and does not endanger the child's life. Where this is not possible, seek an opportunity for long-term solution in the best interest of the child who first sought accommodation in a family of friends or relatives, then in foster or adoptive parents.

**CHILDREN** should be included as much as possible in making decisions about the form of care, which will be selected.

**THE** choice of **age of respondents** to study the questions above questions (14-18.) is connected with the fact that they pass the group of minors and are closer to the age - old, which will also be able to make their own decisions. They understand the ability to fit into two families - at home and in the host. This means to understand and accept disfunktsionalnostta his family and at the same time can be entered in it. The question of origin is central to every person he can not be neglected, and in this sense it is important for the child to understand and accept their origin, which would allow to function socially, i.e. to establish relations with other people, to situate social and this is the role of the host family.

**ALTHOUGH** most of the children in institutions are heard for foster care, for them it means mostly "People who care about you Saturday and Sunday" (holidays and vacations). This stems from the fact that these homes include such a service, which is also called foster care. It thus already available and negative experiences: "I for one night at a woman who died daughter and wanted another. I left!" Not less however, and the children adequately define its essence - "People who you can call mother and father" "... "but not replace real parents", "A person (or people) who wants to care for a child, there are options", "You have to take care of us as a true family", "... to show us that we can succeed without parents. "In their present host family is closely linked to their needs: "Constantly show us that love us', or: Let us create a normal life, as true parents take care of us," "Be kind, be treated well." Overall image is linked to economic opportunity - to be rich, to have opportunities. So exaggerating a foster parent is not only a savior, but in "man providing pleasures" - an underwater reef for anyone who is not prepared and strives to satisfy all desires (or most).

**THERE** are rare cases of the belief that a child can be placed with a foster family - "if they like me". One of the conditions for success in the implementation of any alternative form of care for children is their consent (or at least a positive attitude). Very small number of children who would prefer to stay in the home - for the most part prefer to be with their

parents (not always understand the need to change the situation) or be independent. This fact of course, can change (or at least its effects can be mitigated) targeted organized pedagogical work, combined with appropriate psychotherapy. There are also those children who would rather foster family.

**INTEREST** are several answers related to the rejection of such a possibility: "There will be arrangements and rules", "... like me someone to tell me something, when to go home - I would say in ten will go in twelve ". This is the main reason why the home is preferable - the freedom and confidence that no one can be punished ("Here we like - no rules, are free, nobody can tell us!").

**MOST** of the children have presented opportunities for the realization of their aspirations regarding future selection, but a small part bind achievements with efforts - they have unrealistic ideas about how it could happen, "Being a businessman" "Yes I have a lot of money and a computer." This finding is not only due to the gaps in educational work, but talking about the overall psycho-social perception of the world of the child. Of course, there are children who commit their future with specific efforts ("I will learn", "will work") and those who have left the events just happen until the desired change in their families did not happen ("It's hard to imagine ... I imagine it", "I do not want to imagine it does not make sense").

**ALTHOUGH** Bulgaria procedure "hearing" of the child in placement in an alternative form of family is more formal, it should be somewhat offset by his meeting with a social worker from the "Child Protection" (or parent, relative, psychologist home before 2000.). For the most part, though, children are not only taken and brought in the home without any explanation, but no one has talked to them (and asked), a professional "conversation" what they think that will be accommodated in an institution. Thus, children are not only committed to the developments, but negative attitudes - they perceive accommodation as punishment, as something bad, you have to endure. Many children do not even know why they are here - this is probably due to the fact that if educators are afraid to speak on this subject (or for them it does not matter) psychologists and other functions. Almost all children would take their own decision about their future, if someone asked them, since almost all believe that they themselves decide their fate. This is also in favor of the idea of introducing precisely this procedure "hearing" before issuing an administrative order for placement, but is part of the activities of the Children's Court. Thus, children not only will not see in the "one who holds them by force," the villain, but will also support the work of educators (and foster parents) to put forward a decision of the court and the need to respect rules. The law would "entered" and in reality.

**IN** terms of who is responsible for them while they are in the home, the children are divided between the directors and educators. The issue of liability is important because at least two main points: the one who wears it is accepted by the child as a guardian authority that takes the most important decisions regarding it. And second - this implies construction of "privileged relationship" between them. In this sense worrying is the fact that many are children who believe that they themselves are responsible for yourself. Thus they are "samoosinoviyavat" by simultaneously placed in the position of an adult - a problematic position in relation to their development. At least are those who delegate to the parents and relatives.

**So**, existing in the country so far this tradition of "final decision" taken sole (or the Commission), without taking into account the willingness of the child - it is statistics, part of

the "number of children in ...". If you need here to talk about humanism, then it should be noted that this is a vicious practice that is a consequence not only of the legislation and the peculiarities of work at the "Child Protection" (which accommodated), but stems from the long delay construction of a system of juvenile courts. This in turn hinders the implementation of various projects (services) - requires professionalism by which to "facilitate" the process.

**SURVEY** of children placed in institutions outside their concrete posts and shows things outside their statements, namely that adequate physical care is not sufficient for their development. The first person to which the child can be knit, which meets the needs of the child and initiating positive things with the child becomes indispensable for the child. Although this primary caregiver should not meet all the needs of the child all the time, usually he / she is responsible for the child and care for him even in his absence.

**IN** biological families provides support for past and maintain their memories alive. This helps the children to develop their sense of self. In foster care often diminishes the child's past. Sometimes even discounting their future, because there is no certainty about what will happen to them in the future. This uncertainty can be dragged to the point that it can not be said of the child, who will take care of it next year. Focusing only on the here and now. Therefore, in consultation of receivers should be given to familiarize children with the story of his life. To help the receivers to handle as this story do not like, no matter how unpleasant the child.

**FIRST** registered empirical analysis of information held fokes - groups allows to derive at least some conclusions:

1. *Children do not accept ourselves as a side in solving their own destiny and future, leading both to lower success of the accommodation and to activate the child's specific mental mechanisms.*
2. *The placement in an alternative form of family is the result of subtracting from gross family.*
3. *The lack of professional "conversation" by a psychologist or social worker is not "in the best interests of the child".*
4. *Underestimated pedagogical work on the explanation of the children and answer (though too rational) to the question "Why am I here?".*
5. *There is misguided liberalism in the upbringing of children, which stems from ignorance peculiarities of children deprived of parental care, striving for "compensation" of their "fate" (only in reality) and difficulty in implementation (and defending) the rules.*
6. *The state will build a system of professional foster families.*
7. *Efforts are under way to overcome "the lack of information and clarity in the implementation of foster care" because it fundamentally determines the next steps.*

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