

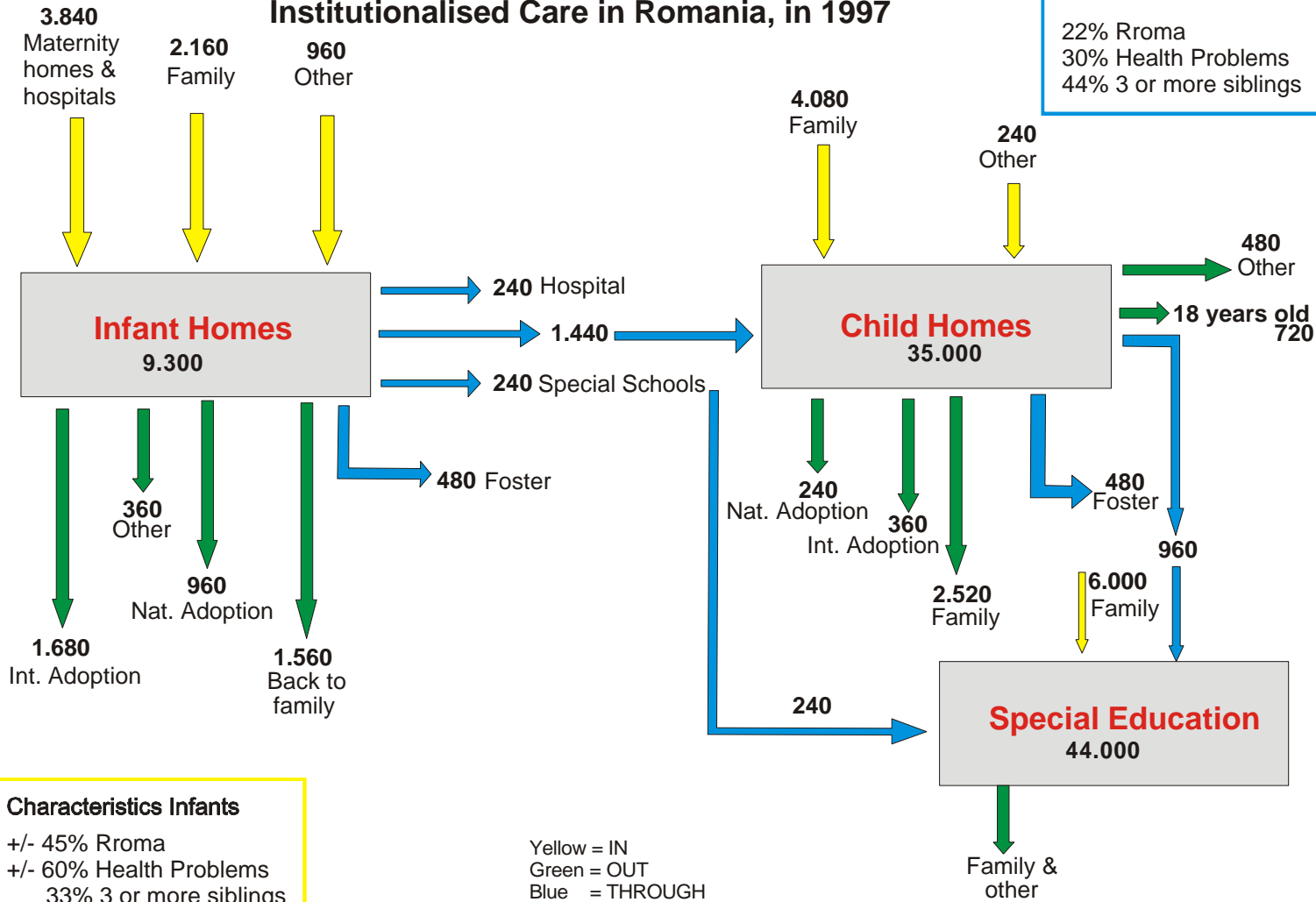
FLOW MODEL INSTITUTIONALISED CHILDREN IN ROMANIA AND THE DETERMINING VARIABLES

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1. Flow Chart: Number of Children IN, and OUT, Institutionalised Care in Romania, in 1997

Characteristics Children
 22% Roma
 30% Health Problems
 44% 3 or more siblings



INTRODUCTION.

This document is the first publication within a consultancy for UNICEF aimed to develop/ improve the system of indicators for child protection, more specifically to develop a retrospective analysis of the dynamics of the data in child protection which allows a thorough understanding of the trends. In the search for information it appeared that some of the most important documents produced in the nineties (especially the Institutional Census of 1997 (*1) and the 1997 UNICEF study "Reasons for Institutionalisation in Romania"(*2)) had been insufficiently used. That information even enabled the construction of a **Flow Model** of the situation of institutionalised children in Romania around the year 1997, something that has never been done before. The flow model is an estimate, but although the real numbers may vary it gives nevertheless a very interesting "film" (in stead of a picture) of the situation. While explaining and discussing the flows, this document will also highlight the most important determining variables. After 1997 the whole system changed it is therefore important to come with a good description of the situation before 1998 to have a certain **baseline** situation and besides , many of the dynamics which made up the flow model will still exist.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

Main results:

Although the proportion of Children in Care at a certain time (photo) is around 2% (special schools included) of the under 18 population according to the 1997 Census, the flow model shows that there are many more children involved. The percentage of children who will be in contact with the system is many times higher, 5% or 7,5% respectively. More than 17.000 children (17000 is 7,5% of the 226.000 yearly births) enter and leave the system of care each year. The main flow is in and out the system, not through the system, as the flow charts shows! The flow through the system is around 1440 children a year (around 2400 while including Hospital Homes and Foster Care) .

The flow model investigates three main groups: Infant Homes, Child Homes and Special Schools. Three subsystems with their own inflow and outflow, and their own characteristics of the children. (See Flow Chart 1). The flow analysis also shows that the subsystems are loosely connected. The first phase, Infant Homes, is the most dynamic stage, The turnover is almost 70%, the turnover of the Child Homes and Special Schools (excluding movements within the systems) is around 15%. The flow model shows that the one stream idea is not correct. The input at the source is important but not that many children in the infant homes will go to the Child Homes, they have a far bigger change to be adopted or reintegrated in the family before that time.
It is nor one stream, nor only fed at the source. Many streams join or leave the main stream during the 18 year period.

This flow model is an effort to make visible what is behind the stagnant picture. The stagnant picture is that the number of children in Infant Homes and Child Homes are very constant, year after year and that in a situation where the number of births dropped sharply. The flow analysis shows that the focus on the integration of the 18 year old is necessary but not the main priority in terms of a real analysis.
AN IMPORTANT FINDING OF THE FLOW MODEL IS THAT IT SHOWS THAT THE RECENT BELIEVE THAT TIME WILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM (because main bulk of children is older than 12) IS BASED ON A FALSE ANALYSIS

Although, if ask for the reason, most parents will mention reasons like poverty, family disintegration or can not afford the school, reasons that can be grouped as PUSH factors, (or demand), there are also strong **PULL** (supply) factors. Specially in the Child Homes (with school) and Special Schools many signals indicate that the whole system is designed to keep the number of children almost constant (despite falling birth rates). **The main conclusion is that if the National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption and the regional authorities can break that supply orientation, a tremendous reduction in number of institutionalised children can be achieved.**

Determining variables :

What are the main variables that determine the number of children in the system and the flow?

Adoption. During the last decade adoption has been one of the main reasons that the number of institutionalised children did not increase more. Almost one percent of every birth cohort is “exported” to another country while in-country adoption accounts for another almost half percentage of yearly births. In 2001 international adoption was halted. A first consequence will be more children in institutionalised care and more children in hospital maternities.

Rroma. Although the Rroma (five percent of total population in Romania) count for almost half the entries in the infant homes they are a taboo in the literature. This is no good. In order to be able to solve a problem, it should be named. As the Rroma themselves indicate, a sound policy can reduce their presence very substantial. Their strong presence in Infant Homes is related to poverty, the high number of Child Brides and also to the practice to “park/ station” the child for a certain period in an institution. In recent years, at last, the Rroma issue got more importance and in 2001 a so called Rroma Strategy to improve their situation was designed and put in place, with several components to reduce the institutionalisation of Rroma children.

Fertility. Fertility is an extremely important determining variable, if only for the fact that if less children are born there are less potential institutionalised children. Since 1989 Romania has seen an enormous drop in annual births (1989: 370000), recently the number of yearly births is constant at around 235000. Behind the stable data there are interesting developments, the number of births in the high risk group (15-19 years old) is still in decline and an analysis of the birth order shows that the numbers of child number 5, 6 or 7 is getting lower and lower. The number of wanted children is increasing! The fertility rate of the Rroma population has gone down rather dramatically. To conclude, there are many fertility related developments to expect less new comers in the system, but for other reasons that has not yet happened.

Poverty. The poverty rates reached dramatic levels in the nineties (*4). Although the economic macro situation is improving since 1999 this is first beginning to show in 2002 in stabilising and slightly lower poverty rates. But in the groups who are the main suppliers of children for the institutes, specially families with many children, there are no signs of improvement yet.

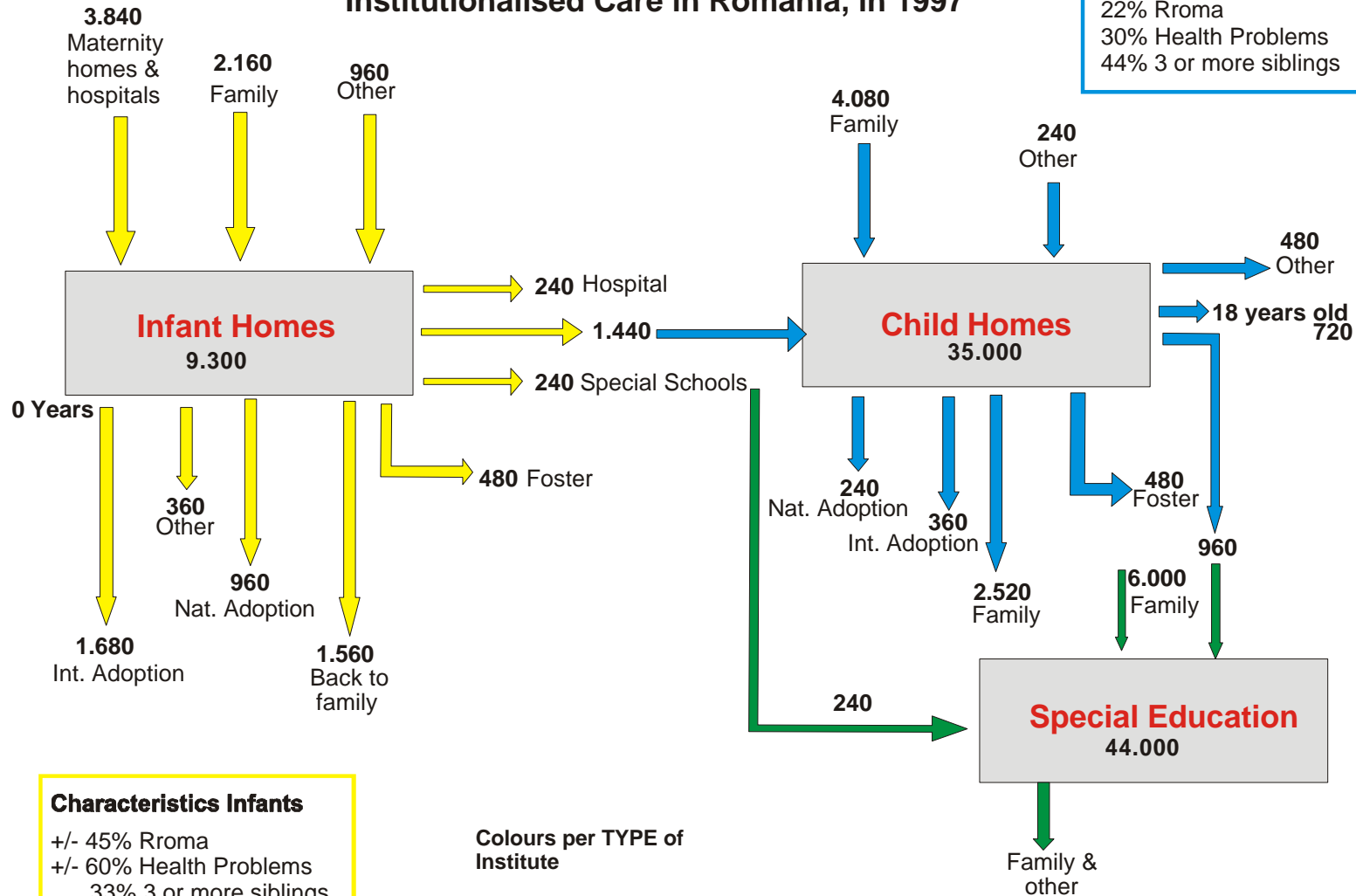
Gender. This is of course not a determining variable, the fact that it is proves that the Romanian system has very peculiar characteristics. Child Homes with a school have a sex ratio of 1,48!

Institutionalisation Culture. The analysis of the flow data gives the strong impression that the main determinant is the culture in which it is normal to give a child to an institute, a culture in which Institutionalization is seen as poverty relieve, a culture in which certain interests and mechanism exists to keep a high number of children in the institutes. One of the most surprising results was to find that the system is supply driven. The capacity is there, so use it. The system always runs on top capacity (at least according to the official data).

The data system. Although the situation of institutionalised children is an important topic for EU accession NO effort has been made in Romania to picture a more rosy situation. The reverse is true. This document will work primarily with the numbers of the census, acknowledging that this number of almost a 100.000 children is way too high. In recent publications does the number of institutionalised children increase enormously (see table annex 2). This is extravagated by some new measures But in older publications, like the census, no attempt has been made to exclude the population 18 years and older (no child), to exclude the children who are not present in the institutions or to exclude the children who go home most of the weekends. Even when the European Parliament accuses the country of selling their youth, no effort is made to present data showing that almost all adoptions are for the (very) young ages. The data system is part of the problem.

2. Flow Chart: Number of Children IN, and OUT, Institutionalised Care in Romania, in 1997

Characteristics Children
 22% Roma
 30% Health Problems
 44% 3 or more siblings



THE FLOW MODEL. 1-NUMBERS.

Introduction. The data presented in the flow charts is based on the information found in the Institutional Census of 1997 and the UNICEF study "Reasons for Institutionalisation in Romania" of that same year. It are yearly averages, the year being 1997 or for adoption and foster families the five year yearly average for the 1995-1999 period. The flow model is an approximation (see Justification chapter) and one should be cautious regarding the absolute figures but the most important thing is that the trends are for real. The flow model investigates three main groups: Infant Homes (main focus on children 0-5 year old), Child Homes (children 6-18) and Special Schools (children 6(12) -18 years old). Movements within the same system are excluded and have been recalculated (so the flow is even more fluid in reality). Flow chart 2 uses the same colour per group.

Infant Homes. The main inflow at the Infant Homes (**Leagan**) is at the source, children coming from Maternity and hospitals. They are like a modern version of Moses. On the other hand around one third of the children comes directly from their families. (and this trend was increasing in the nineties). Among those infants are the ones placed in an institute until it can walk, or just for the winter. (the institute as "parking place") This habit is specially frequent among the Rroma, who represent around 45% of the children in the Leagan. The outflow back to the family is an important one though, it is the second biggest. Surprisingly the main output flow is international adoption. The third, only the third, is towards the Child Homes. Other flows are towards the Hospital Homes, Special schools and Foster (an increasing activity in the late nineties).

As "The Causes of Institutionalization" study (*2) shows, more than 60% of the children in the Infant Homes do have a handicap (although the health problems are only mentioned in 16% as a main reason for the Institutionalization, much more important are: No financial support, Father does not recognize child and Mother is alone). The turnover in the Infant Homes is enormous, around 70% of the children go in and out the system on a yearly base. Despite the falling number of births and all efforts done one must conclude that the total number of children in the Infant Homes is very stable, around 9.000. Which means that the system year after year, works at almost top capacity. It seems that the handicapped children stay longer in the system, they move at later age to the "camina spital" and schools for special education etc.

Child Homes. Around 25% of de Child Home kids come from the Infant Homes, the rest comes mainly from their family. So the Child Home kids are more like "Hansel and Gretel" than a grown up Moses. The characteristics of the kids are rather different, they have less health problems (those kids are already in Special Schools, Camina Spitals or have died), there are far less Rroma children but the number of kids from big families is 44%.

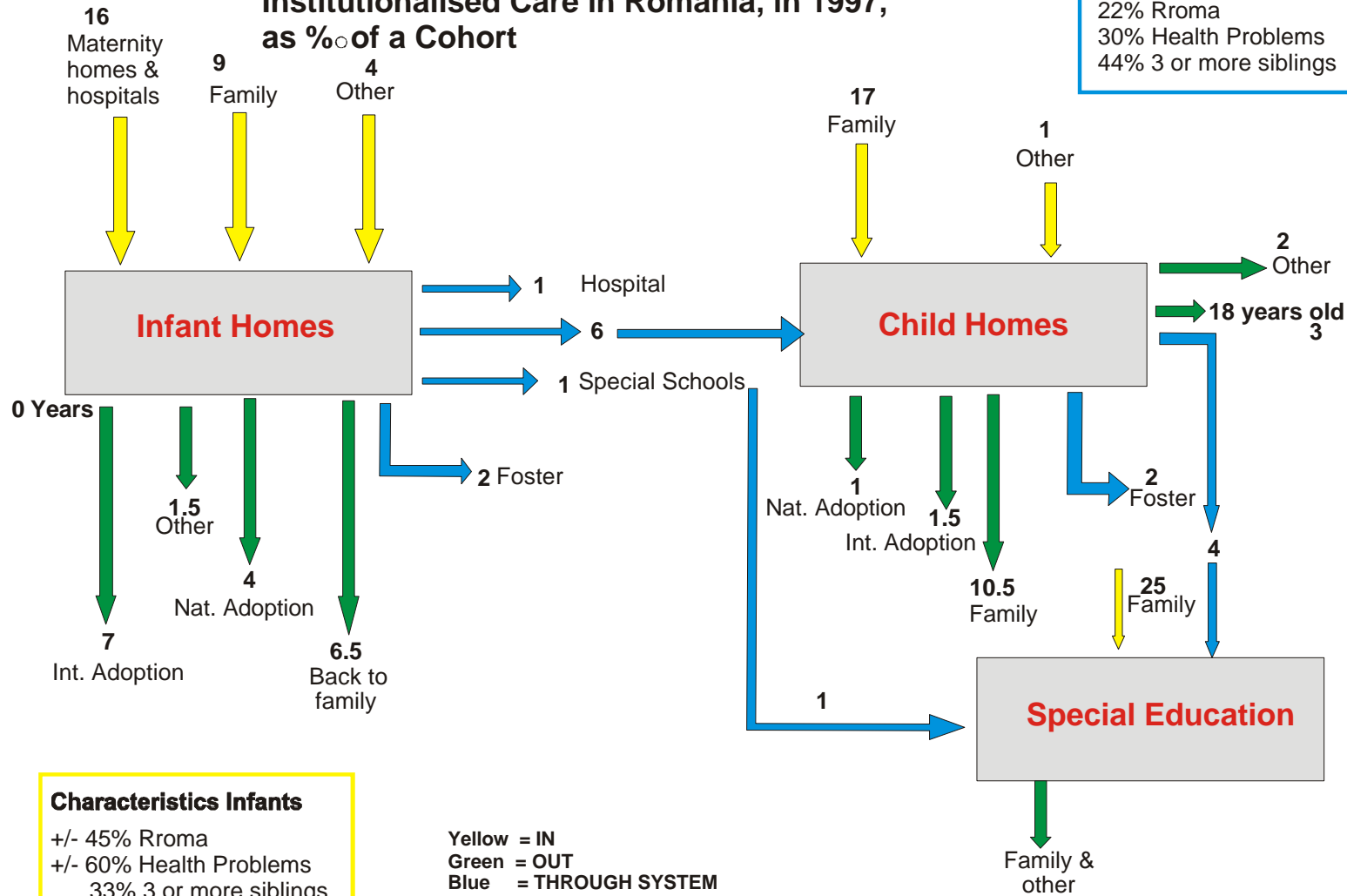
The main reason given for the children to be in the Child Home (*2) are: No financial Support (almost 80%), Extreme poverty (60%) Family disorganization (56%) or Cannot afford school (52%). Families use institutional care as a temporary measure in hard times. The main flow out of the system is back to the family. A second one is towards Special Education and the third one is the sad outflow of children who have reached age 18 and have been in the system for many years.

So 44% of the kids have three or more siblings while families with four or more children form only 1,5% of all families, 4,5% of all families with children. The conclusion seems obvious, but some observations need to be made. First we do not know how many of the 56% with less than three siblings are on their way to become a family with four or more children. In that sense 44% is an underestimate. On the other hand, if one family has four children in an institute, four will tell that they have three siblings. It is known that some groups of people seem to start sending children to institutes after child number three. Others send them all. So the main conclusion is that institutionalisation has a strong relation with the size of the families. That size of the family has also a relation with poverty (per definition as most studies are based on average income per household member), see for example Poverty in Romania. (*4). One should not forget however that the universal relation is: Poor People tend to have more children (and not People with more children tend to become poor).

In the investigated period all places in the Child Homes were filled, they worked at top capacity. However one might say all places were filled officially. Because the percentage not present during the census was almost 20%.

3. Flow Chart: Number of Children entering and leaving Institutionalised Care in Romania, in 1997, as % of a Cohort

Characteristics Children
 22% Roma
 30% Health Problems
 44% 3 or more siblings



FLOW MODEL INSTITUTIONALISED CHILDREN IN ROMANIA

Regarding the **Special Schools**, only a 15% of the pupils come from Infant- or Child Home, the others come from their families and return to their families (in the weekends). The schools are thus in majority Boarding Schools. But it still means that around 240 infants a year move from Infant Home towards Special Education (mainly to the Special Kindergartens) and almost a 1000 a year from the Child Homes towards the Special Schools, Special Vocational Schools and School-type hostels. Handicapped and chronically ill children require special care that is difficult to provide when parents lives are taken up with trying to make ends meet. In that sense it is of course good to have certain services. Where they will go afterwards? It seems that 20 till 40% of institutionalised children remain in institutionalised care their entire lives. Once adult, they will move to adult institutions for the mentally ill. One of the forgotten stories in Romania.

The turnover rate (for the group as a whole, excluding movements between different school types from the Special School system) is low, around 15%. It will come as no surprise that the utilization rate is high, almost a 100%. Of the 26000 kids in special schools (census) only 20000 were present at the school, 6000 were visiting their families or otherwise absent. A substantial part of the children at special schools are 18 years and older.

The literature normally focuses on Infant- and Child Homes, there is less attention for Special Schools. The schools are normally included if one wants to show how bad the situation is. The flow model shows that around 15-25% of the children could be included in the statistics, they are deprived of family upbringing.

Remarks about the numbers: it is important to stress that the numbers used are based on the Institutional Census from May 1997, totalling 98872 children (see annex 1). As with every indicator used in this field in Romania these are also subject to difficult comparisons with other sources (subject of next publication). So be careful with the numbers: the Special school exclude, for good reasons, the schools for blind etc. people. The number include however almost 10000 people who are 18 years or older (and so by definition are no children) and the numbers include 16.000 kids who were registered but not found. The census total of almost 100.000 excludes adoption and excludes the foster children. Overall the situation is remarkable stable (in 1995-1999), which proves to be caused by the supply based system.

THE FLOW MODEL. 2- COHORT

An other form of presenting the data is as **cohort** percentages. Since 1994 the average cohort is around 240.000 kids a year, so one percent of a cohort means 2400 children. In the flow chart the numbers are per thousands, so 10 means one percent. The Flow chart is based on the information of a year, but one can look at it as a cohort development based on prevailing rates.

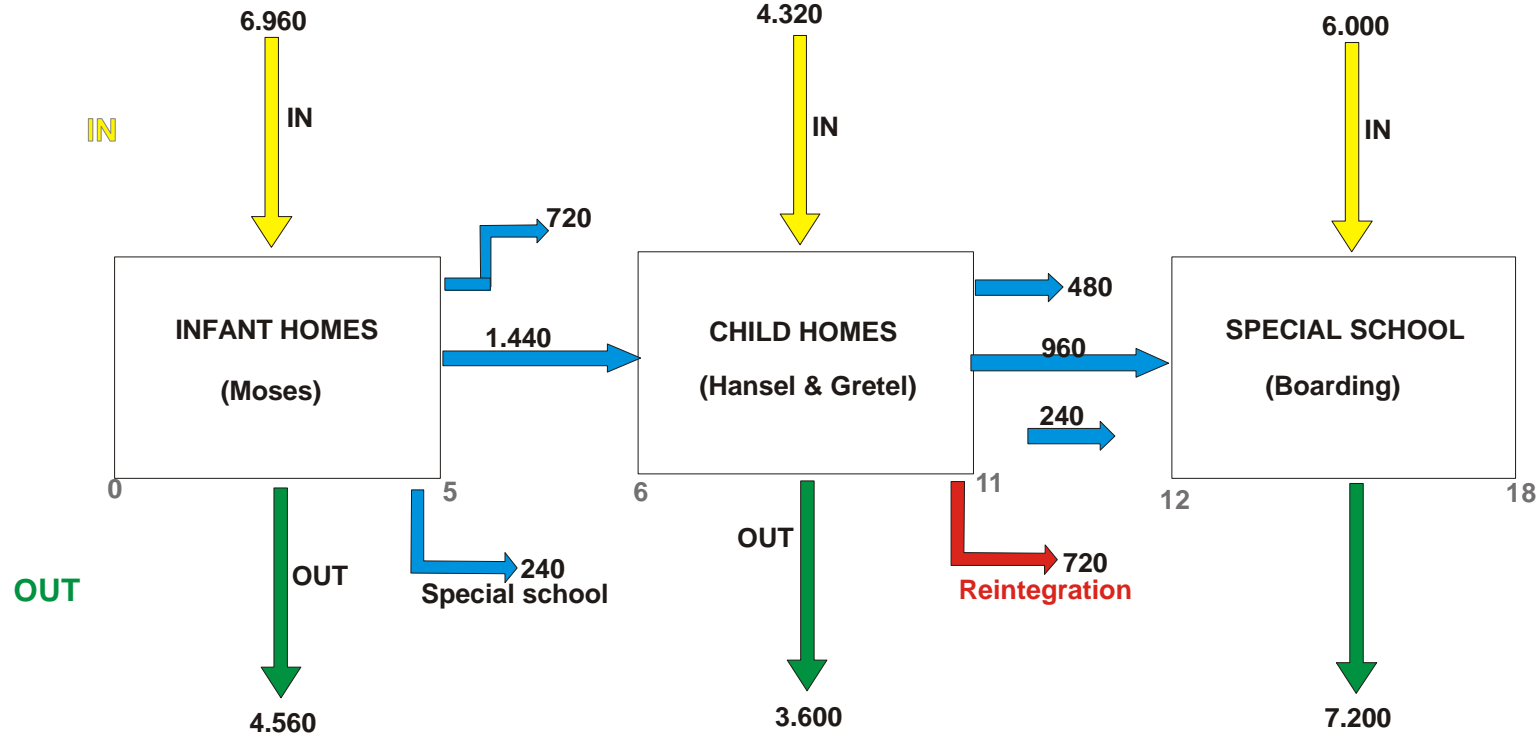
Infant homes have an inflow of 29, which means that 2,9% of a cohort will go towards an Infant Home. 10 (one percent) will move through the system, 19 (1,9%) will leave the Infant Homes of which adoption counts for 11 (1,1%). For the Child Homes, the inflow is 24 of which a quarter is coming from the Infant Homes, however by far the biggest group comes directly from the family. The biggest flow out is back to the family. The great variety of inflows has another consequence: it means that "Gatekeeping" is a much more time consuming activity than thought based on the stagnant situation.

The cohort analysis shows that from a certain birth cohort $7+1,5=8,5$ out of thousand, almost one percent, will be adopted in other countries. National adoption counts for another half percentage. These kids leave the system, others stay (foster).

As expressed in a percentage of the 0-18 year old population it is true that around half a percent of that group is in a Infant or Child Home (1% including special schools). But almost 5% of the children will pass through the system, 7.5% including the special schools! The flow model shows that there are many more children involved than originally thought. The main reason for this are the kids involved in adoption and the big number of kids who return to their family (beware, the percentage may be somewhat lower because of double entrees and because of the bigger size of the older cohorts)..

4. Summary Flow Chart MAIN YEARLY FLOWS, 1997

Totals



FLOW MODEL INSTITUTIONALISED CHILDREN IN ROMANIA

Regarding the percentages, the publication Pleegzorg (* 12, annex 6) gives the numbers of several countries about children in care, an **international comparison**. No information is given about definitions used or position of handicapped children and the systems seem to vary a lot among countries. Finland has the highest proportion with 1,5% of under 15 year olds (0,9% in institutes and 0,6% in Foster Care). Israel has 0,5%, all in institutes. Ireland 0,5% almost all Foster care. Great Britain has 0,6% and in the USA the percentage is 0,9% of which 0,7% in institutes. So it seems that Romania, with one percent, is not doing that bad, in comparison. However Romania is exporting part of the problem and has a system with a high turnover.

THE FLOW MODEL. 3- SUMMARY RESULTS

The summary flow chart, see previous page, focussing on the in and out flow shows once again how loosely connected the systems are. There are three different circuits. On average 17280 children enter the system each year (7,5% of the number of births!).

One of the most surprising results is that the flow from the source (abandonment at birth) till the sea (18 years) is rather limited.. But the believe that the source of the system is at the font only is also totally incorrect. Many streams join the main stream during the 18 year period. Looking at the cohort flow as a river one sees irrigation (adoption) and evaporation (back to the family). The water of the sources will become only a fraction of the 3-18 year old population.

That inflow at higher ages, combined with the inflow at higher ages in special education proofs that the system is driven by the capacity, it is supply orientated. This was confirmed in an interview: "there are three commissions who decide about placement, the institutes signals that they have capacity and the commission sends a candidate" (interview at NACPA). We have the capacity, let's use it. In a normal, demand driven system, you would find no strong sex ratio, you would find a relation between the size of the group and the numbers in the system.

FLOW VERSUS PICTURE

The analysis of the flow data is extremely important, otherwise a look at the data may cause totally wrong conclusions. For example in the publication "Early Warning System" (*6) it is stated: "70% of all institutionalised children are above 12 year old, which means that a growing number will exit the system in the next years, an effective Social Insertion Strategy is needed". And in the recent (end of April 2002) meeting of the GIASA: "By 2010 over 32000 institutionalised children will turn 18, Social Integration is a key issue"

There is no reason to neglect the importance of the social integration of the 18 year old ex institutionalised children. What is important however is to show that drawing conclusion about the flow based on one picture, static data, is dangerous indeed.

As the flow model shows, there exist three more or less separate systems: infant home, child homes and special schools. The special schools, boarding schools, are concentrated in the 12-18 year old groups, and for that reason is the proportion of >12 year olds so high. But they go, normally, just home after having finished school. No social integration is needed. The number of kids in the special education system are exactly the same, year after year, (see later), there are no dynamics at all, underwriting the idea that time will solve part of the problem is incorrect.

Structure by age groups of children included in the assistance system

Based on Institutional Census, May 19 1997

	Number of Children, total.	Under 6 years	6 till 11 years	12 till 18 Years
Infant and Child Homes	43246	12910	14975	15361
Distribution		30%	35%	36%
Size of age group	5500000	1400000	1900000	2200000
Per 1000	8	9	8	7
All types	93403	14116	29643	49644
Distribution		15%	32%	53%

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Per 1000	17	10	16	23
Including over 18 years old	<6	6 till 11	12 and older	
Infant and Child Homes	44474	12910	14975	16589
Distribution		29%	34%	37%
All types	98872	14116	29643	55113
Distribution		14%	30%	56%

So in 1997, the group 12 year and older made up 56% of the total.

The under 5 year groups number on average 2200, one percent of the age group. The older groups are much bigger. (7000 a year). Is this the smell of success? No, nothing to do with that. The groups are greater because they have more schools, other schools for that age group. If we look only at the data for Infant- and Child Homes we see a stable situation, however because of the drop in fertility we see a proportional increase in the numbers.

A more detailed look at the data shows that the only group with a lower proportion is the group in between Infant Homes and Child homes. The group which has seen a lot of outflow because of adoption and of children who returned to their families. But at age 7 the new inflow starts, especially to the Child Homes with a school.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

In the table in annex 3, Special school attendance per year by age groups, the results of several Statistical Yearbook (*3) tables have been grouped to show some remarkable things. Most notable observation: There exist no relation with cohorts. If the 10 years old number 10.000 in 1998, one expects around 10000 eleven years old in the system in 1999. In the table, the horizontal lines are the cohorts, the age group through the years. Conclusion: there is no cohort flow at all, absolutely nothing of that. What one can observe is a constant number for the grades. The total is also tremendously constant at around 55.000. This is strange, since 1991 occurred a remarkable drop in births, this should start having an impact from 1996 on. No slump is to be seen however.

Some examples to explain the point:

	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/2000
9 years	3660			
10		4401		
11			5177	
12	6124	6389	6726	6773

If we look at the 12 year olds in the 4 consecutive years we see the numbers 6124-6389-6726-6773. But the kids 12 year old in 99/2000 were 11 in the year before etc. So what are these cohort numbers? 3660, 4401, 5177 and 6773. No relation at all with the size of the cohort, the only relation is with the school grade.

Another example:

	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/2000
15	5840			
16		6278		
17			3657	
18	4193	4115	4303	4383

The 18 years old number: 4193-4115-4303 and 4383. Remarkable constant.
The 15 years old in 96/97 numbered 5840. They were 16 in 97/98 and 6278 needed special education. However in 98/99 only 3657 were attending special education. Which increased to 4383 in 1999/2000.

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The data proofs: the special schools are in the first place Supply orientated. (they exist, so let the children come). The Special Schools should be considered Boarding Schools. Conclusion: most kids at special schools are no problem kids in the definition deprived of family care. (except a 15%-25%)
Sex Ratio.

A variable that should not be a determining variable at all and for that reason indicates that the system is supply driven is gender. Of the 98.000 kids found in the census 57.000 are boys and 41.000 are girls. Quite a difference. The boys represent 58% of the total, the sex ratio (boys/ girls) is 1.37.

The special schools (not even mentioning the school for reintegration of young offenders) have a ratio of 1.60. This is another proof for the boarding school thesis. This can not be caused by the fact that families do not want to take care of their kids, it is due to other reasons. It might be that boys are more difficult or less useful at home but that can only explain part of their overrepresentation. The system is boys orientated and so they come.

If one looks at the sex ratio by age one can observe that the sex ratio is only normal at age under one and at age above 18, at those ages where there is no supply orientation, but just a demand, a need for certain services.

The normal sex ratio at birth is 1,05 (of every 205 births, 105 are male and a 100 are female), world average, for Romania the number is 106. (* 8) . The excess male mortality at all stages reduces this ratio and at age 25 the ratio is normally around 1.

The census data allows us to look at the sex ratio's by type of institution.

Overall	1.37
Infant Homes	1.11
Hospital Hostels	1.11
Child Home, no school	1.16
Child Home, with school	1.48
Special Kindergarten	1.28
Special Schools	1.60
Special vocational Schools	1.48
Special School Groups	0.37
Centres for under aged receival	3,03

The less biased are Infant Homes and Hospital Homes. That is no surprise. Handicap's do not have a relation with the sex of a person, and the mother who decides to leave the kid behind in a hospital after delivering normally does not take that decision based on sex of the child. Children in real need at very young ages should not have a gender bias.

Regarding the Child Homes there is an enormous difference between Child Homes with and without school. This seems clearly to indicate that the system is supply orientated. There are more schools for boys.

The special schools (not even mentioning the school for reintegration of young offenders) has a ratio of 1.60. Once again, this is another proof for the boarding school thesis. This can not be caused by the fact that families do not want to take care of their kids, it is thanks to other reasons. It might be that boys are more difficult or less useful at home but that can only explain part of their overrepresentation. The system is boys orientated and so they come.

So what are the sex ratio's by age?

Under one	1-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-15	16-18	> 18
1.04	1.16	1.2	1.33	1.35	1.46	1.51	1.12

At those ages that supply does not count, at birth and after age 18 (the real problem kids) the sex ratio is the lowest. Further does the ratio increase by age, as the number of boarding school places increases.

DETERMINING VARIABLES.

Why are the children in care? Why if the Romanian people have so few children? Why so many Rroma children if the Rroma are known to love their children so much? In general are the main reasons now well known but it is strange that relatively few studies have been done to investigate the "Why and Who" in dept. A good definition/ description of the problem is of course fundamental for any solution.

The culture of institutionalization.

So what's behind the flows? One group of inflow are the abandoned children of unwanted or unintended pregnancies. Also in a context when poverty rises, alcoholism increases, more families break up, child allowances go down and the institutes are getting better and better, it will come as no surprise to see high numbers of children if no actions are taken. However, there is still normally much pressure on mothers to institutionalise the child as one step in dealing with the social problems. (especially for Rroma, see later) For that group life is miserable, it is good that institutions exist. This group normally tries to keep a lot of contact with their children and accounts partly for the big in- and outflow from and towards family. Families do use institutional care as a temporary measure in hard times.

The social assistance system in the late nineties seemed to be still orientated towards institutionalisation. The magnet attracting the children. (The observation by L. Fox of the World Bank (*10) seems to be confirmed in Romania: If the financial and human resources are in the institutions, that is where the children go!) The families, mothers are receiving the suggestions from authorities that , in cases of need, to give away the children is the solution for their problems. "In Romania it was very easy to institutionalise a child also because most members of child protection commissions are directors of institutions. Directors of institutions have significant economic incentives to keep their institutions full" (*2). However it is also true that few alternatives existed for families in trouble.

It is an objective to keep the system working. The census results also seem to indicate a rather massive creative bookkeeping, as almost 25% of the children were not at the institute but home! The social environment of people still see it as a normal solution. Regarding the outflow: "The level of commitment of the institution director and the staff and the presence of any NGO may determine how many children are eventually deinstitutionalized. Contact with the family is key". (*2).

Many conclusion coincide with the conclusions of the "Causes for institutionalization" study. "The institutional infrastructure for child protective services is a self-sustaining (but not sustainable) system and will remain so as long it is maintained. The directors of institutes main concern is on keeping the census of the institution high enough to avoid budgetary and staffing cutbacks". "Public attitudes need to change so that institutionalization is seen as a measure of last resort. There the media has a significant role to play in increasing awareness". The media campaign should be serious one of course, build on the knowledge that exist and build on the knowledge that to change a culture is not easy.

Adoption.

This is a very controversial topic, this document will only focus on some facts. The facts are that there exists very limited information that differs depending on the source. See the table in the annex 4. The information used in the flow model is a five year yearly average.

Romania had in the last decade almost a 10% share of the world market for International Adoption. As stated, on average almost one percent of a birth cohort is exported towards other countries. Romanian Gross Adoption Rate is among the highest in Central and Eastern Europe, it is however half the Bulgarian rate. Romanian Gross Adoption rate is half the Infant Home Rate. (*11)

In the last years of the nineties, adoption was at the increase. But as also observed in other countries this did not have lower numbers for institutionalised children as a consequence. With the current stop on international adoptions one might expect an increase in the number of institutionalised children in

the coming years. National adoption seems to be on the increase however. And if the supply trend is confirmed, then does an decrease in adoption cases not automatically lead to higher numbers, it might be that less newcomers at higher ages will be allowed in the system!

Rroma.

As the institutionalised children are a very important subject, how come the Rroma are so under lighted in most documents, despite the fact that almost 44% (adjusted for non response) of the children in Infant Homes in Romania is Rroma. It is useful to quote some new documents which have included this important issue. (see also annex 5)

According to the World Bank (*14), the percentage for Romania fits in the overall picture: "Although no reliable statistics are available, experts and officials agree that a disproportionate number of the children in Institutional care are Roma. An estimate for the Czech Republic ,in 1990, suggested that the figure was 50%. In Hungary in 1987 50% of children in state welfare centres and 31% of children in the institutes for the mentally handicapped were thought to be Roma There is a wide range of reasons of why children ends up in institutions ranging from actual disabilities to questionable assessment of special needs. Poverty is also an important factor, for some families in desperate conditions the provision of food and shelter in institutions is an alternative to deprivation at home".

The same was confirmed by other sources in Romania: "Rom children account for a large percentage of institutionalised children in Romania, according to reports and interviews with health care workers". (* 13). The same document finds that: "Children have a special place in Roma society. Children tend to be cared for by the entire community. It is ironic, then, that so many Roma children are institutionalised. One explanation offered by some Roma women interviewed is : "At least they have food and clothes in the institutions. When they are older we will take them back"". A recommendation of one of the leaders: "It is possible to integrate institutionalised Rom children back into their families if social assistance programs were committed to this process"

Same observations and conclusions are found in the document Rroma children in Romania (*15). "During the research we often met with the situation of institutional placement of Roma Children. (According to Hancock, 1992, although the Rroma population represented at the time of the study 5% of the total population, the percentage of Rroma children in orphanages was 80%). Rroma families resort to the institutionalisation of one or several children, sometimes keeping in touch with those children. The main reason for this is the lack of means of maintenance:
Well we gave him away because of our poverty! Since we did not have even a house to live in with him I did not even have what to feed him. Because of that I gave him away (Rroma women, Ocolna)
The tradition of precocious marriage and the refuse of contraception are important CULTURAL factors determining the Rroma overrepresentation in cases of institutionalisation;.

This also leads towards the solution . According to the book Roma Projects (see 9) the wide use of Health Mediators would lead to a considerable reduction in the number of abandoned children". Such a focus would also reduce the child brides (another priority for UNICEF). The Health mediator project , has proven to be successful and is , important, backed by the Roma organisations! Within the Roma the focus should be sharpened towards the problem group, the Radari, a group heavenly criticised by other Roma for having lost their roots.

Special attention for the Rroma is also needed because of the fact that many are third generation institution dwellers.(see (*) 10). The UNICEF Budapest workshop also mentions another important point: "placement of children in institutional care is ordered by the local guardianship authority, while the institutes are managed by the county. **So the local authorities pass the cost to another level while pleasing general public opinion that Rroma children should be educated outside Rroma environment"**

Poverty and others

Recent study shows, finally, drop in poverty rates. (Nine o'clock news, May 21 2002, an update of the Study see (8)). The economic growth had already started earlier but it takes several years to trickle down. With economic growth and a government willing to attack the issue, with support of the EU, poverty should decrease further. However the situation of families with several children continued to decrease, even in 2001. Poverty should become less of a push factor in the future.

Important is to perceive poverty a factor, not THE. As the “Causes for Institutionalisation study” (*2) shows: “Poverty” was the main reason. The children in the institutions are wanted children whose families could not support them anymore. But the real main reasons are the problems compounding poverty. Family disruption, domestic violence or the inability to afford school supplies.”

“In epidemiological terms poverty is neither necessary nor sufficient to cause institutional placement in most cases. Even in those cases where poverty was reported to be the only reason, financial assistance to families could have averted the situation. Thus poverty creates conditions in which institutionalization is more likely to occur in response to other events, especially desertion and family disruption”.

A separate observation is that Romanian poverty studies like to focus on the fact that to have more children causes poverty. This might be true, also partly as a result of the use of the definition income per household member. The Universal relation however is : the Poor have more children”. By repeating the reverse it helps create a negative ambience for having children.

Conclusions and policy recommendations .

If the body that orders the placement should be financially accountable for the costs of institutional care the number of institutionalised children would go down. Besides, if the financial and human resources are in the institutions , that is where the children go.(*10)

The flow model showed a system with a high turnover, with lots of children going IN and OUT the system. With a very limited FLOW through the system. Were the in and out flow to be reduced, then the total number of institutionalised children would also be reduced substantially.

The fact that around 700 children leave the Child Home per year, because they reached age 18, is a big problem. These kids, together with an unidentified number of special school kids will need a lot of attention, because some of them were in the system for their whole life.

How to lower the number of institutionalised children?

- Use an epidemiological approach, focus on the real problems.
- Focus on (potential) families with many children.
- Focus on , certain groups, within Roma population.
- Focus on child brides
- Adapt a flexible social system. Try to stop the view that to institutionalise the child is one step in dealing with the social problems. Show the real cost of institutionalisation.
- Keep contact with parents
- Change the money streams. Funding reflects values.
- Improved statistics will give a reduction of at least 30% in the number.

Related issues are:

- Change the system from supply driven to demand driven! Almost all data suggest that within the whole system the number of children is determined by the number of beds that exist. For many reasons: the importance of the director, the money flow, or jobs. Or as stated, just to pass costs to other level authorities.
- Treat special school children not as problem kids when they are no problem in terms of being without family ties. A boarding school is not a problem in England.
- Try to keep the parking places empty.
- Support the Health Mediator Projects.

FLOW MODEL INSTITUTIONALISED CHILDREN IN ROMANIA

INFORMATION SOURCES:

1. In the first place the "Institutional Census" done in 1997: Childhood Protection Programme, Recensământul Copiilor. Volume 2. Ioana Popa and Vasilie Bogdan.
2. In the second place: The Causes of Institutionalization of Romanian Children, by P. Stephenson, C. Angheliescu and E. Stativa for UNICEF, 1997.
3. The Romanian Statistical Yearbooks 1997,1998,1999 and 2000, National Institute for Statistics
4. Poverty in Romania, June 2001. Catalin Zamfir and the Institute for Quality of Life
5. Children at Risk in Romania, Problems old and New, Zamfir and Zamfir . UNICEF. 1993.
6. Early Warning Report, 2/2001, UNDP
7. Family and Child in Romania, 2001, UNICEF/ NACPA/ National Institute of Statistics
8. Demographic Analysis. 2001. National Institute of Statistics
9. Roma Projects in Romania, 1990-2000. Phare, Romania 2001. Chapter "Mediators in Rroma Communities" by Laura Ardelean.
10. Children deprived of parental care, Rights and Realities. Budapest 2000, UNICEF
11. A decade of transition. Regional Monitoring Report. Monee. No.8. 2001. UNICEF
12. Pleegzorg, een internationale vergelijking. A Ketelaar e.a. Leiden, 2001.
13. An assessment of selected Rom NGO's in Transylvania. 1994. A. Drehsler. UNICEF)
14. Roma and the transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends and challenges. Dena Ringold. Worlbank. 2001.
15. Rroma Children in Romania. S. Cace a.o. Foundation for an open Society. 2000.

Justification.

The flow information is primary based on the results of the 1997 census (source 1) and the 1997 study for the causes of Institutionalization (source 2). Based on the table in the census about the outflow in one year, combined with the information about where the children did come from (variable period), checked with the results from the Causes study it was possible to estimate the flows although this was not an easy process. Lots of trial and error was involved but based on the principle "what comes in ,must go out" the result was achieved. . The flow is based on studies from 1997, 1996 data. Years with little adoption and foster. The adoption and foster numbers have been adjusted, based on five year averages. As a consequence the turnover is somewhat higher (70% in stead of 60%). But the flow model is not meant to be exact, it is meant to bring a life a stagnant situation.

The flow model concentrates on the most important flows. Flows from, for example, Child Home to another Child Home have been excluded. For that reason are the percentages in the flow different from the ones in the mentioned studies, in the flow model the percentages have been recalculated.

The Cohorts since 1991 are on average 240.000 births per year (minus IMR is 235000), so one percent is 2400. However, 1991 experienced a steep drop, before 1991 the number of births was 340.000 in a ten year period. The percentages in the flow model might be lower for that reason, on the other hand, as has been shown over and over again, the system is supply driven and for that reason there seems to be no need for adjustments.

Annex 1

STRUCTURE BY AGE GROUPS OF CHILDREN/ YOUTH INCLUDED IN
THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTIONS ON MAY 19,1997
of which aged

Type of Institutions	Number							
	of children under total 1 year	1 year	2 years	3-5 years	6-11 years	12-18 years	Over 18 years	
Total	98872	2264	2893	2326	6633	29643	49644	5469
Nurseries	9309	2228	2842	2221	1699	318	1	
Centres for under age persons receival				3	29	137	209	1
Hospital type hostels	4473		2	1	287	1703	1731	749
Orphanages without school	23132	16	16	57	2902	9692	9576	873
Orphanages with school	12033			20	909	4965	5784	355
Special kindergartens	1042			1	376	660	5	
Special Schools (I-VIII forms)	26226				106	9580	16459	81
Special Vocational Schools	8855					5	7324	1526
Special HIGH Schools	393				2	137	241	13
Special school groups	1320				11	276	963	70
Special school centres	4452				8	279	3545	620
Reeducation centres	1130						1072	58
School type hostels	2750				4	889	1686	171
Workshop type hostels	939						85	854
Other types	2439	20	33	23	300	1002	963	98

Annex 2: Residence of children not living with natural family, 1996- 2001

Number of children ,000	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001*
Number of children protected in substitute families (including public and private maternal assistance)	11	11.8	17	23.7	30.6	32.1
Number of children protected in public and private placement centers	41.8	39.6	38.6	33.4	57.2 **	56.5
Total	52.8	51.4	55.6	57.1	87.8	88.6

* Apr-01

** Includes transfers of the institutions from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and the State Department for the Disabled to ANCPA

source Early warning report Romania 2, 2001

special99 Special Education participation rate per 1000	size of yargroup (in 1000)	96/97									97/98			98/99			99/2000		
		Total	Preschool, Vocational Total			Preschool, Vocational Total			Preschool, Vocational Total			Preschool, Vocational Total							
			Primary+ Secondary	15799	55326	Primary+ Secondary	15480	54952	Primary+ Secondary	15007	55237	Primary+ Secondary	14056	53510					
		age	3	202	202	age	3	273	273	age	3	247	247						
1.1	243	3	260	260	4	350	350	4	382	382	4	383	383						
1.8	255	4	447	447	5	555	555	5	548	548	5	515	515						
2.3	248	5	559	559	6	1449	1449	6	1654	1654	6	1624	1624						
4.8	340	6	1635	1635	7	795	795	7	667	667	7	547	547						
2.8	344	7	947	947	8	2080	2080	8	1898	1898	8	1586	1586						
6.8	353	8	2405	2405	9	3468	3468	9	3028	3028	9	2711	2711						
10.0	367	9	3660	3660	10	4401	4401	10	4117	4117	10	3712	3712						
12.9	331	10	4266	4266	11	5008	5008	11	5177	5177	11	4678	4678						
13.8	341	11	4715	4715	12	6389	6389	12	6726	6726	12	6773	6773						
19.9	308	12	6124	6124	13	4622	4622	13	4694	4694	13	5021	5021						
15.2	303	13	4606	4606	14	4663	937 5600	14	5048	959 6007	14	5295	746 6041						
17.8	341	14	4807	1275 6082	15	3301	2390 5691	15	3379	2691 6070	15	3828	2243 6071						
15.9	368	15	3097	2743 5840	16	2189	4089 6278	16	2639	3397 6036	16	2534	3320 5854						
14.8	381	16	1999	3642 5641	17	3949	3949	17	3657	3657	17	3364	3364						
		17		3946 3946	18		4115 4115	18		4303 4303	18		4383 4383						
		18		4193 4193															

Source: Statistical Yearbooks

(Note that the definitions used are different from the census, so totals are also different)

Dirk Westhof

**National and International ADOPTION Cases in ROMANIA
1990- 2000**

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	TOTAL	Yearly Average 1990-2000	Yearly Average 1995-1999		
National Adoption Cases			3200	2792	2389	1538	662	197	840	1710	1291	14619	1329	National	1208.2	6041
Internatio	2951	7328	891	2038	1789	1057	1658	851	2017	2575	3035	26190	2381	Internation.	2068.4	10342
TOTAL	2951	7328	4091	4830	4178	2595	2320	1048	2857	4285	4326	40809	3710	Total	3276.6	16383
Gross Adoption Rate				484	420	273	244	110	301	451	455		391			
International cases as % of total			22%	42%	43%	41%	71%	81%	71%	60%	70%		64%			

Sources: Zamfir and Zamfir, Children at Risk in Romania
 Unicef, Nat. Inst. Of Statistics: Family and Child in Romania
 UNDP, Early Warning Report
 Unicef, Monee Report.

Remarks: Romania had in the Nineties almost 10% of the World Market of International Adoption Cases.
 On average almost ONE percent of every birth cohort has been "exported" to other countries.
 Romanian Gross Adoption Rate is among the highste in Central and Eastern Europe, however half the Bulgarian.
 Romanian Gross Adoption Rate is half the Infant Home Rate

The Gross Adoption Rate is the number of adoptions divided by the 0-3 population multiplied by 10000
 The average number 400 per 10000 means 0,4%. However it is 1,6% of a birth cohort!

SUMMARY SHEET - SITUATION OF THE RROMA IN ROMANIA SOCIAL (?) INDICATORS

Made by Dirk Westhof

Many reasons for paying more attention towards the Roma:

Population	<p>Their total population is an estimated 1,3 million in 2001, almost 6% of the total population</p> <p>Source: Westhof based on Zamfir (2), (7) and (12)</p> <p>But their births represent an estimated 14% of all births</p> <p>Their population younger than 15 years is 42% versus 19% for the total population</p>
Fertility	<p>Although their Total Fertility Rate did decrease from 4,35 in 1991 to 2,6 in 1999 their population growth is still an estimated 2%</p> <p>If trends continue, the Roma might be around 16% of the total population in 2045, with 50% of all births in 2045</p> <p>source: (1) Zamfir and (4) RHS</p>
Mortality	<p>Their Infant deaths represent 37% of all infant deaths</p> <p>Source: based on (2) Zamfir IMR is 63 versus 21 total population</p> <p>A 1-4 year old Roma child has 7 times more chance to die</p> <p>source: (4) RHS, 1999. Table 6.8</p>
Education	<p>Education status of Roma has always been low. After a long period of forced education Roma participation has collapsed in the nineties</p> <p>The risk that a Roma child (7-14) does not attend school is 6 times the average</p> <p>Source: (5) Worldbank, page 19, data 1994 Roma children are increasingly not starting and not finishing</p> <p>As a result the number of Roma with no education was 36% in 1994 and 42% in 1997</p> <p>Source: (5) Worldbank, RIHS, 1994 and 1997</p> <p>The chance that a Roma will do University is miniscule</p> <p>Positive news, legacy of the past, is that those few who study, continue longer 7.10% has at least secondary in 1997, was 5% in 1994</p> <p>Source: (5) Worldbank, RIHS, 1994 and 1997, p.53</p>
Education/gender	<p>The illiteracy level for Roma women is almost double that of the man. 35% versus 18,6% for the men</p> <p>Source: (1) Zamfir</p> <p>Roma parents do not seem to care that much about education, in 1993 81% were satisfied with the schools</p> <p>Source: (2) Zamfir</p>
Education/comparison	<p>The educational situation of the Rroma in Romania is better than that in Italy. There 35% of school age Rroma attend school.</p> <p>source: (9) Unicef</p> <p>And in Spain, Roma illiteracy is double, 50%, the Romanian Roma rate.</p>
Child labour	<p>Roma children (7-14 year) not attending school 41% of all Roma children</p> <p>Roma Child Labour is an alarming, estimated, 75% of all cases</p> <p>Source: Westhof based on (5) Worldbank Report</p>
Crime	<p>Roma youth as percent of total juvenil prison population 40%</p> <p>Change that Roma youth will be in prison is 3 times higher than the average</p> <p>Source: MOJ 2001</p>
Girl Brides	<p>For some Roma girls marriage starts already at age 12</p> <p>Roma girl married before age 16 40%</p> <p>Roma girl married before age 18 80% THE second HIGHEST IN THE WORLD!</p>
Early Marriage	<p>As a consequence, the Roma average marriage age is 17 years compared with 22,2 years for the population as a whole</p> <p>Source: (1) Zamfir, (5) Worldbank and (8) Unicef</p>
Early Childbirth	<p>Children per female age <15 Roma 0.7 versus 0 for the rest</p> <p>Percentage of Roma among mothers younger than 15, almost 100%</p> <p>Source: (3) Zamfir (1993)</p> <p>The age specific fertility rate for women 15-19 years old is 5.2 times the average</p> <p>source: (4) RHS, 1999. Table 6.8</p>
Abortion	<p>The abortion rate for 15-19 years old Roma girls is, also 5 time the average</p> <p>One out of two Roma girls (15-19) will have an abortion in that age group.</p> <p>A Roma women will on average have 4.6 abortions in her life.</p> <p>source: (4) RHS The total abortion rate is almost twice the total fertility rate</p>
Health service	<p>The risk that a pregnant Roma women does not undergo prenatal visit is 3 times higher than for Romanian women</p> <p>source: (4) RHS, 1999. Table 6,11, 30,8% versus 9,9%</p> <p>Besides less access, they also get less information: If they go 38% will go for 1-3 visits WORSE than average 27% for Romanian women.</p> <p>The percentage of the Roma women stated to have received information about family planning 34% versus 45% on average</p> <p>Source: (4) RHS page 97. Information received during postnatal care.</p>
Abuse	<p>Partner violence is much more common among Roma, an average 3 times more</p> <p>source: (4) RHS, 1999. Table 18.3.2 27% of Roma women suffered physical abuse in one year.</p> <p>Relative most frequent is sexual abuse, more than 5 times more Roma women are victim (of their spouse, family member)</p>
Abandonment	<p>Of the institutionalized 0-3 year old children 46% were Roma</p> <p>Source: (3) Zamfir, page 36, 1991 data</p> <p>Of the young mothers leaving their child behind in Calarasi 90% are Roma</p> <p>Source: Westhof, 2001, field visit.</p>
Poverty	<p>The Roma family is on average far poorer than the average family 79% is poor compared with national average of 31%</p> <p>Source: (5) Worldbank based on RIHS 1997, page 11</p> <p>But compared with families with 4 and more children there is no difference 83.60% of all families with 4 and more children are poor</p> <p>Source: (6) Monee B. 1998 figures, Roma ofcourse important % of those families</p> <p>Still the change of finding a television in a Roma house is half 48% compared with the national average of 96%</p> <p>Source: (1) Zamfir and (4) RHS This also means that the Roma are the only ones without TV</p> <p>And a refrigerator, normal in Romania (90% of the households) is still rare with the Roma (20%)</p>

Work The proportion of jobless persons is extremely high. The unemployed account for 52% of the entire Roma population.
Source: (2) Zamfir, page 143. But only 2,8% receive unemployment benefits
International perspective: In the Netherlands, low unemployment, 84% of the Roma are not working! (receiving social benefits)
Source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek and Elsevier

Health Habits Up in smoke: despite their poverty the Roma are fanatic smokers. Of the Roma women (15-49) 47% were currently smokers
Source: (4) RHS, page 255 Of the men versus 28% for the Romanian women
75% are smokers, versus 53%

Slavery It seems that slavery, based on usury, is a fairly common practice among Roma. It needs more investigation.
Source : (10) page 23 and (11)

Summary RROMA-NIA in Romania Nation without a state, with indicators close to India
In terms of the Human Development Index, the best estimate indicates a value of 0,5. Rank 140.

SOURCES

- 1 Elena Zamfir and Catalin Zamfir.
Tigani, intre ignorare si ingrijorare
1993
- 2 Unicef, Elena Zamfir
The situation of Child and Family in Romania
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- 4 Reproductive Health Survey Romania, 1999
CDC, ARSPMS
- 5 Roma and the transition in Central and Eastern Europe
Dena Ringold, Worldbank, 2000
- 6 Trends and indicators on Child and family well-being in Romania
National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies
Unicef, Monee Regional Monitoring Report, 2001
- 7 The State of the World Children
Unicef, 2000
- 8 Early Marriage
Unicef, 2001
- 9 After the Fall
Unicef, Monee Project, 1999
- 10 Breaking the vicious circle
Cega, Spolu, Novib. 2000
- 11 Tsiganes
B. Houliat, 2000
- 12 Population Projections
Populatie & Societate . Scenario 2

International comparison

Foster care, "pleegzorg", a Dutch study about Foster Care in five countries : Finland, Ireland, USA, Israel, UK and Netherlands.
October 2001 information.

A very interesting document,

Children involved in Foster Care: Total, by foster parents, in small institutes. Per 1000

Finland: 15 - 6- 9
Israel : 5 -0 -5
Ireland : 5 - 4,5-0,5
VS : 9 - 7 - 2
GB : 6- 3 - 3
Neth. : 6 - 3 - 3

The situation regarding handicapped children is unclear.

My information for Romania: children in leagana/ casa de copii is 7 per 1000.

In that sense the number is not that different from other countries.

Dirk