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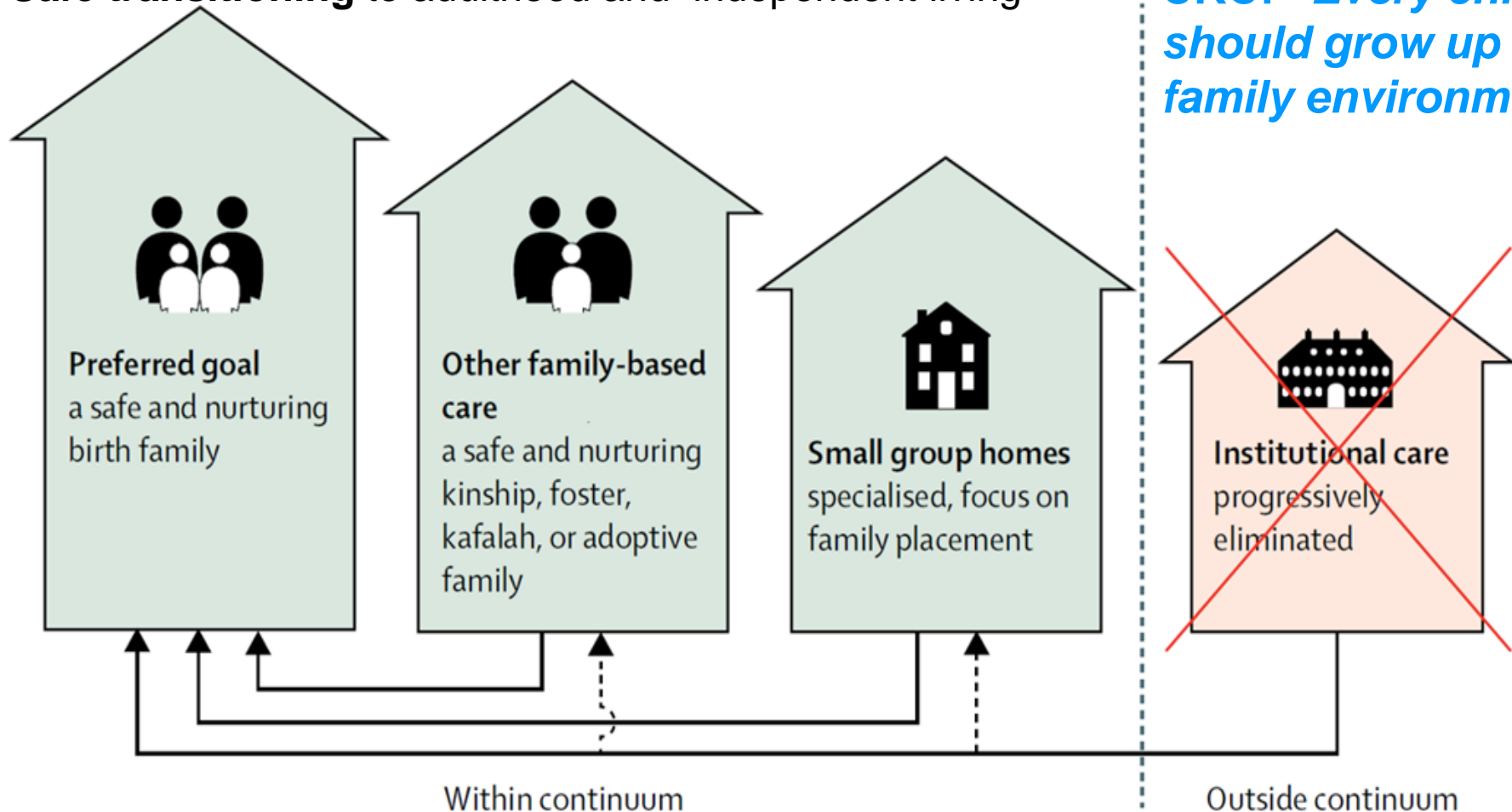
Improving data availability, quality and comparability on children in alternative care – towards an international statistical classification of alternative care
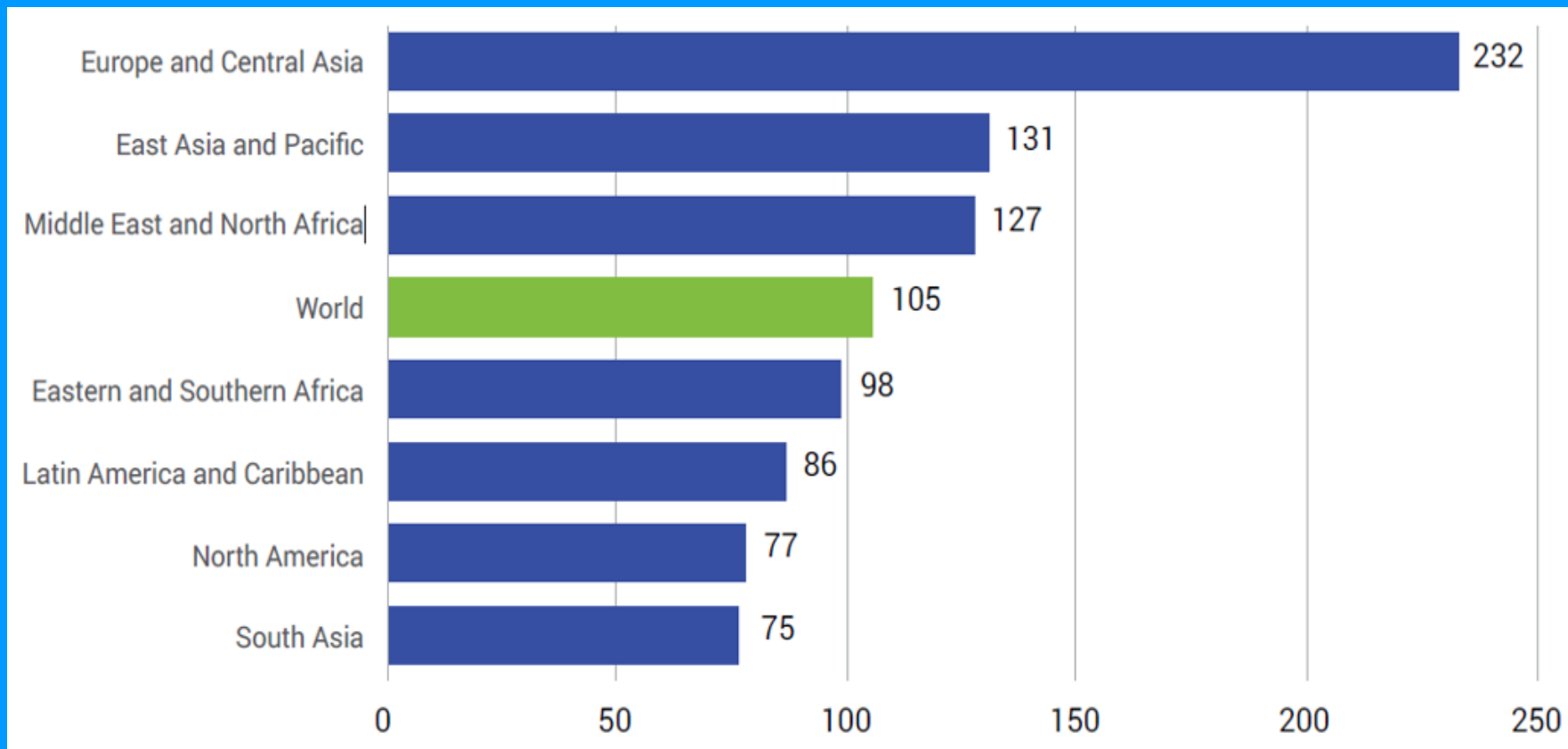
Safe transitioning to adulthood and independent living

CRC: "*Every child should grow up in a family environment*"

Preferred goal
a safe and nurturing birth family

Other family-based care
a safe and nurturing kinship, foster, kafalah, or adoptive family

Small group homes
specialised, focus on family placement

Institutional care
progressively eliminated

Within continuum

Outside continuum

Adapted by authors from: The Lancet, 2020

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Rate of children in residential care
(2010-2022 data, per 100,000 population aged 0-17 years)

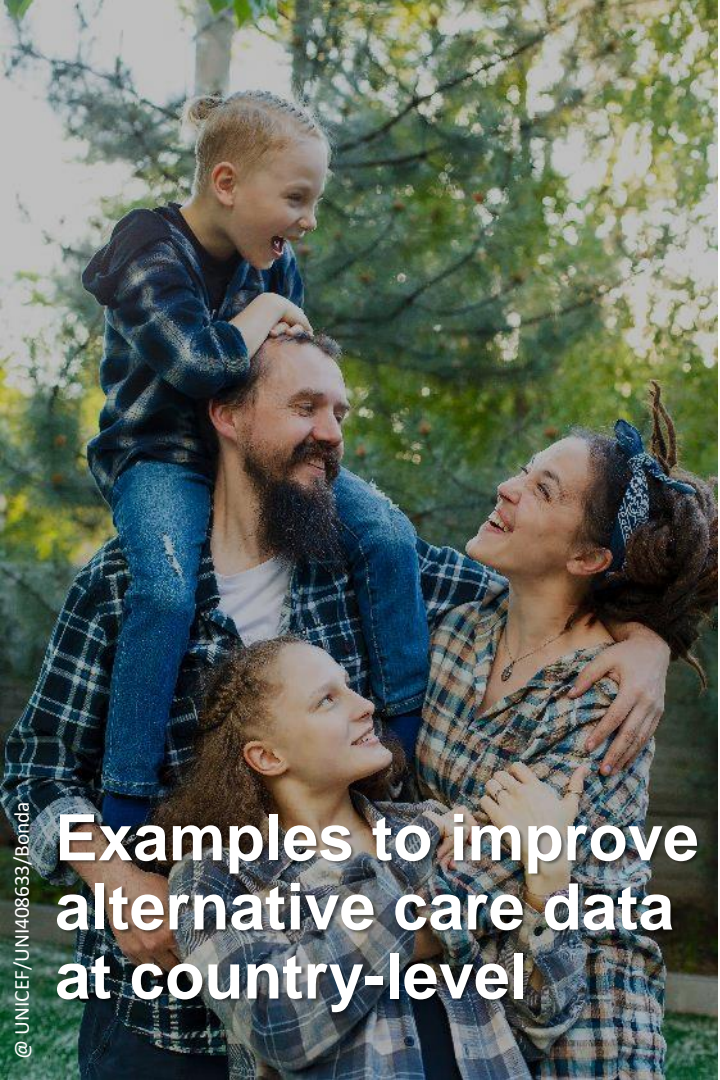| Region	Rate
Europe and Central Asia	232
East Asia and Pacific	131
Middle East and North Africa	127
World	105
Eastern and Southern Africa	98
Latin America and Caribbean	86
North America	77
South Asia	75

Current data landscape – key findings

- Most countries collect some data, **largely statistics on stock and flow** by type of alternative care (residential, family-based), sex and age

- **Different definitions and categorizations** of alternative care used (administrative data, surveys)

- **Differences in acceptance** of different types of care facilities as residential care at country level

- Distinction between residential **institutional care** and residential care provided in **small-group homes** and between different **categories of family-based care**

- Lack of data on **children in informal alternative care**

2022 Guidance: key recommendations for countries

- Minimum requirement: **measuring stock and flow**, adopt standard **disaggregation** variables (age, sex, disability)

- **Assess the quality** of national statistical surveys and administrative data for **coverage** of children in alternative care

- **Clarify roles** of national statistical offices and line ministries in data management and the production of statistics on children in alternative care

- **Adopt standardized definitions and classifications** for alternative care, for residential and family-based care (incl. subtypes)

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Examples to improve alternative care data at country-level

- **TransMonEE:** up to 30 national statistical offices produce a set of statistics based on agreed indicators, standard definitions and other harmonized metadata

- **Alternative care data improvement initiative** with selected countries (UNICEF)

- **European Commission's Technical Support Instrument:** e.g., strengthening national Child Guarantee monitoring frameworks

- Alternative care data improvement within the **humanitarian context** (UNICEF)

The crucial role of national statistical offices in alternative care data improvement – lessons learned

- Requires a mandate and dedicated resources for the national statistical office

- Close collaboration with line ministry and inter-sectoral effort

- An understanding of the legal framework, ethical issues and definitions applied

- Establishing a baseline for continuous data improvement

- Identifying root causes of poor data quality and engaging data providers

- Embedding efforts into national child welfare reforms and e-government

No internationally accepted standard definitions or classifications for alternative care exist

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Towards an International Classification of Alternative Care for Children: Scope

- **Introduction of standard elements** of the two main types of alternative care: residential and family-based care

- Include **an illustrative list of the types** of facilities providing residential care for children, and of the various types of arrangements constituting family-based and family-type care

- **Applicable to all types of data** on alternative care for children

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Process: way forward

UNICEF to form a task force composed of representatives from national statistical offices and government entities, as well as academia, civil society and international organizations

- The task force will **produce a first draft** that will then be shared for **technical review** among key experts and revised accordingly

- Further review of the advanced draft through **expert meetings**, an online **country consultation** process and a **multi-country testing**

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Thank You

Questions?

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