LUMOS

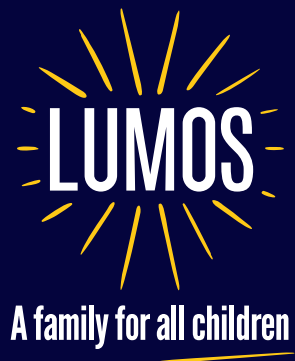# CYCLES OF EXPLOITATION:
THE LINKS BETWEEN CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LUMOS

A family for all children

ABOUT LUMOS

Lumos is fighting for every child's right to a family by transforming care systems around the world. We are an international charity striving for a future where every child is raised in a safe, loving home, supported by family to help them thrive.

80% of children in orphanages have living parents or relatives, and research proves that these institutions can harm a child's growth and development. Yet there are still over 5.4 million children trapped in institutions globally.

Lumos sheds light on the root causes of family separation – poverty, conflict and discrimination – and demonstrates that children can safely be united with families. By pressing governments to reform care systems, and by building global expertise and capacity with partners, we ensure no child is forgotten.

Founded by author J.K. Rowling, we are lighting a path to a brighter future where all children can grow up in a safe and loving family. We are Lumos.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND AUTHORS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decades of research have shown how important it is for children to grow up in safe, loving families rather than in institutions. For children to thrive, they need more than basic health, nutrition and hygiene: they also need individualised, personalised care from a trusted adult – care that institutions, by their very nature, cannot provide.[1,2,3]

Despite this, an estimated 5.4 million children worldwide live in institutions that cannot meet their needs and neglect their rights.[4] This includes so-called orphanages, where on average more than 80% of children are not orphans.[5]

In addition, an estimated 9.965 million children live in modern slavery, encompassing human trafficking for all forms of exploitation, including sexual abuse, criminality and forced labour.[6] According to the internationally recognised definition of child trafficking, a child does not have to have been physically trafficked to be considered a victim: he or she may instead be recruited, received or 'harboured' (ie, accommodated before or at the site of exploitation) in order to be exploited.[7]

This Global Thematic Review examines the growing evidence of the links between the institutionalisation of children and human trafficking. It highlights how the relationship between the two compounds the harmful nature of both phenomena and offers insight into the global response needed. As the case for care reform continues to be made in many parts of the world, it is critical to recognise and understand these links so that interventions, advocacy and policies can be put in place to disrupt the systems and processes that negatively impact children's lives.

The evidence collected in this report aims to appraise, synthesise and build on the current evidence-base on institution-related trafficking in diverse contexts around the world.

This research was conducted by Lumos between July 2019 and November 2020. It identified and prioritised five thematic areas and corresponding research questions in relation to institution-related trafficking:

- **Core concepts:** How can the core concepts around institution-related trafficking be described and defined?

- **Laws, policies and systems:** What laws, policies and systems currently govern institutional care for children and human trafficking in all its forms? How can the term 'orphanage trafficking' be legally defined and what would a model law to tackle it entail?

- **Patterns and dynamics:** How are children trafficked and exploited in different institutional care settings around the world?

- **Scale and prevalence:** What can new and existing evidence tell us about the estimated scale and prevalence of institution-related trafficking?

- **Vulnerabilities, risks and drivers:** Why do certain children become victims of institution-related trafficking? What drives institution-related trafficking?

- **The thematic review used five qualitative methods:**

1. a multilingual literature review focusing on academic and grey literature

2. a global call for evidence on children's institutions and human trafficking, reaching 84 organisations and individuals from 45 countries across all regions of the world

3. interviews with eight international experts working in the anti-trafficking and alternative care fields

4. a series of illustrative country case studies using qualitative methods

5. a Model Law on Institutional Childcare Trafficking for the Purpose of Financial Exploitation, developed using expert roundtables and legal opinion.

AN ESTIMATED 5.4 MILLION CHILDREN WORLDWIDE LIVE IN RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT NEGLECT THEIR RIGHTS

1   Berens, A.E. & Nelson, C.A. (2015). The science of early adversity: is there a role for large institutions in the care of vulnerable children? The Lancet. 386(9991): 388-98. https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)61131-4/fulltext [accessed 1 September 2021].

2   Dozier, M., et al. (2014). Consensus statement on group care for children and young people: A statement of policy of the American Orthopsychiatric Association. The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. 84(3): 219-225. https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/ort-0000005.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].

3   Mulheir, G. (2012). Deinstitutionalisation – A Human Rights Priority for Children with Disabilities. The Equal Rights Review. 9: 117-137. https://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/err9_mulheir.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].

4   Desmond. C., et al. (2020). Prevalence and number of children living in institutional care: global, regional, and country estimates. Lancet Child Adolescent Health. 4(5): 370-377. https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(20)30022-5/fulltext [accessed 1 September 2021].

5   Ibid.

6   International Labour Organization (ILO). (2017). Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021], p18.

7   Article 3(a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, (known as "the Palermo Protocol").

KEY FINDINGS

- Currently, there is no generally accepted definition for the different forms of trafficking in the context of institutional care for children. The term **'institution-related trafficking'** is intended to remedy this and is used in this report. It refers to all manifestations of trafficking in the context of institutional care for children.

- There are a variety of international laws, policies and other mechanisms to **promote and protect the right of children to grow up in a family environment**, particularly in relation to those who are separated from their families or who suffer child abuse and exploitation. Further measures prohibit or criminalise the trafficking and exploitation of children in all its forms.

- Although the link between children's institutions and human trafficking was recognised by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2019 in its Resolution on the Rights of the Child,[8] there are **very few examples of these two critical areas of child protection being formally recognised** and linked in laws, policies and systems. As a result, millions of children worldwide are exposed to institution-related child trafficking.

- Shortcomings in child protection systems, lack of accountability structures in institutional care, insufficient legal recognition of the phenomenon and misdirected financial support to orphanages around the world all **contribute to a system that enables the exploitation of children in vulnerable situations.**

- In order to address the gap in legislation, Lumos worked with Professor Parosha Chandran to develop a **Model Law on Institutional Childcare Trafficking for the Purpose of Financial Exploitation** (see Appendix 2 in the full report). It is hoped that this Model Law can serve as a basis for discussion to enable the application of effective laws to combat this problem and better protect children.

- This report highlights that institutional care systems can in themselves be a driver of child trafficking as well as a destination for children who have already been trafficked. Inadequate data and reporting mechanisms to monitor children in institutional care mean that many institutions are hotbeds for onward trafficking and can act as central components in child trafficking flows. Therefore, **institutional care can be considered both a cause and an outcome of human trafficking.**

- **Orphanage trafficking** is a form of child trafficking described as "the recruitment of children into residential care institutions for the purpose of profit and exploitation".[9,10] Orphanage volunteering – and the industry that has sprung up to support it – has contributed to a global ecosystem that creates a demand for institutions, often run for profit, and for children who can be marketed to foreign donor communities as alone, abandoned and in need of care. Some reports describe children being deliberately left malnourished and in poor conditions in order to raise more money from foreign donors and volunteers.[11]

- Separating children from their families and trafficking them into institutions helps to meet this demand. Trafficking in orphans is often linked to a process known as **'paper orphaning'**, where children are manufactured into orphans with forged identity documents. This can include "the falsification of parental death certificates, the production of new birth certificates, creation of paperwork attesting to abandonment or relinquishment, or children being coached to pose as orphans in the presence of volunteers and visitors".[12]

- Research consistently indicates that orphanage trafficking is more prevalent in countries where there is a significant tourism industry, with orphanages generally being established in key tourist areas.[13] In Cambodia, for example, the number of residential care institutions has increased by 75%, even though the number of orphans has decreased significantly.[14] In Uganda, the number of children in homes increased from just over 1,000 in the late 1990s to 55,000 now – despite a sharp decline in the number of orphans. These **orphanages are being built in tourist hotspots**.[15]

- There are numerous **additional safeguarding risks** specific to children trafficked into institutions such as orphanages. These are usually linked to the exploitation of children for additional financial gain and can include sexual abuse by volunteers or visitors, forced labour, performing shows or making gifts for visitors.

- A 'revolving door' of tourists and volunteers coming and going from an orphanage can also exacerbate psychological problems in children, akin to attachment disorders.[16] Children need long-term stable carers if they are to develop physical, cognitive, and emotional wellbeing throughout their lives. In the absence of their parents or primary caregivers, children in orphanages may form unnaturally quick bonds with visitors and volunteers, only to be followed by a form of grief when the individual leaves.[17] This cycle of attachment and abandonment repeats with every visitor or volunteer that comes along, and the experience can exacerbate existing attachment disorders and expose each child to repeated patterns of emotional and psychological harm.[18,19]

These research findings identify four cycles in which institutional care and human trafficking are linked:

CHILDREN ARE RECRUITED AND TRAFFICKED INTO INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCIAL PROFIT AND OTHER FORMS OF EXPLOITATION – ALSO KNOWN AS 'ORPHANAGE TRAFFICKING'.

CARE LEAVERS ARE MORE AT RISK OF EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING.

CHILDREN ARE TRAFFICKED OUT OF INSTITUTIONS INTO OTHER FORMS OF EXPLOITATION.

CHILD TRAFFICKING VICTIMS AND UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN ARE PLACED IN INSTITUTIONS FOR THEIR 'PROTECTION', WHICH CAN PUT THEM AT RISK OF TRAFFICKING AND RE-TRAFFICKING.

8 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2019). *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2019.* A/RES/74/133.

9 Van Doore, K. (2016). Paper Orphans: Exploring Child Trafficking for the Purpose of Orphanages. *International Journal of Children's Rights.* 24. https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/handle/10072/99655 [accessed 1 September 2021].
10 Under the UN definition of trafficking, orphanage trafficking would also include the receipt, transfer, transportation and harbouring of a child for the purposes of exploitation.
11 Lumos. (2016). *Orphanage Entrepreneurs: The Trafficking of Haiti's Invisible Children.* https://lumos.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2017/12/Haiti_Trafficking_Report_ENG_WEB_NOV16.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
12 Van Doore, K. (2019). Orphanages as Sites of Modern Slavery. In: Cheer, J.M. et al. (Eds.). *Modern Day Slavery and Orphanage Tourism.* CABI.
13 Punaks, M & Feit, K. (2014). *The Paradox of Orphanage Volunteering: Combatting Child Trafficking Through Ethical Voluntourism.* Next Generation Nepal. https://nextgenerationnepal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/The-Paradox-of-Orphanage-Volunteering.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
14 ReThink Orphanages. (n.d.). *Fact Sheet: The Orphanage Industry.* https://bettercarenetwork.org/bcn-in-action/key-initiatives/rethink-orphanages/resources/fact-sheet-the-orphanage-industry [accessed 1 September 2021].
15 VIVA. (n.d.). *Moses.* http://www.viva.org/moses/ [accessed 1 September 2021].
16 Punaks, M & Feit, K. (2014). O*p. cit.*
17 Richter, L.M. & Norman, A. (2010). AIDS orphan tourism: A threat to young children in residential care. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies.* 5(3): 217-229. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17450128.2010.487124 [accessed 1 September 2021].
18 This is illustrated well in the short film by The Umbrella Foundation & Forget Me Not. (2018). *Dear Volunteer.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=c6NlLnfH3tg [accessed 1 September 2021].
19 It is similarly covered in the campaign by Lumos. (2019). *#HelpingNotHelping.* https://www.helpingnothelping.org/ [accessed 1 September 2021].

- **Trafficking of children out of institutions:** children in institutional care can be easy targets for traffickers seeking to exploit vulnerabilities for their own gain.[20] Children are trafficked out of institutions into other forms of exploitation including sexual abuse, forced labour and forced criminality. There is also global evidence of children in institutions being groomed, coerced and deceived into leaving institutions for what many assume will be a place of safety.[21,22,23,24]

- For traffickers, the lack of quality, consistent care provides an opportunity to exploit a child's need for emotional attachments to others. Traffickers are aware of the added vulnerability of children in institutions and are known to **target potential victims directly in or near institutions**, often taking advantage of the child's desire to run away.[25,26]

- Sometimes, the **institutions themselves are complicit or directly involved** in child trafficking.[27] In cases of sexual or labour exploitation, the institution can operate as a base from which children are made available to perpetrators for several hours or days before being returned to the institution.[28] In these instances, institutions may benefit directly or indirectly from the commercial exploitation of the child victims residing in them.

- Children are sometimes **trafficked out of institutions for the purpose of illegal adoption**, which may subsequently involve other forms of exploitation.[29,30] In some cases, children who are adopted illegally are entangled in two cycles of institution-related trafficking: first, they are trafficked into institutions for the purpose of an illegal adoption in which prospective adoptive parents pay fees, sometimes assuming that this is a normal part of the adoption processes; this may involve the falsification of identifications and documentation. Second, the children are trafficked out of the institution through the illegal adoption process and can end up falling victim to various types of exploitation.

- **Institutionalisation of child trafficking victims:** child victims of trafficking are regularly placed in institutions, either with the intention of protecting them or as a reaction by law enforcement because the child is not treated as a victim. This may be the case where children who have been trafficked and forced into sexual exploitation or gangs are not recognised as victims by law enforcement and criminal justice systems. Consequently, these children are sometimes sentenced to fines or placed in juvenile detention centres. At other times, children are placed in shelters simply because there seems to be no viable alternative.

The model on the following page shows how the four identified **cycles of institution-based trafficking intertwine** and what links to various types of exploitation have been established in this report.

- **Care leavers are particularly at risk of becoming victims of trafficking**, even if they are adequately supported in reintegrating into society after leaving an institution. Meeting the conditions set by social services can be challenging: in some cases, care leavers are required to have a job, complete higher education or have a clean criminal record in order to receive social assistance. The lack of essentials such as food and shelter can leave them at risk of trafficking and crime. In these cases, young men and women may be forced to live a life of sexual exploitation, begging or robbery in order to survive.

- This research highlights the critical data gap on the scale and prevalence of institution-related trafficking. Available data suggests that **children in institutional care appear to be overrepresented as victims of trafficking** compared to the overall child population.

- Although the exact scale of institution-related trafficking is unknown, the report unearths the alarming **global occurrence of trafficking into and out of institutions**. The two maps on pages 10 and 11 show the countries where evidence was found of children being trafficked into and out of institutions, highlighting important regional trends in the documented occurrence of institution-related trafficking.
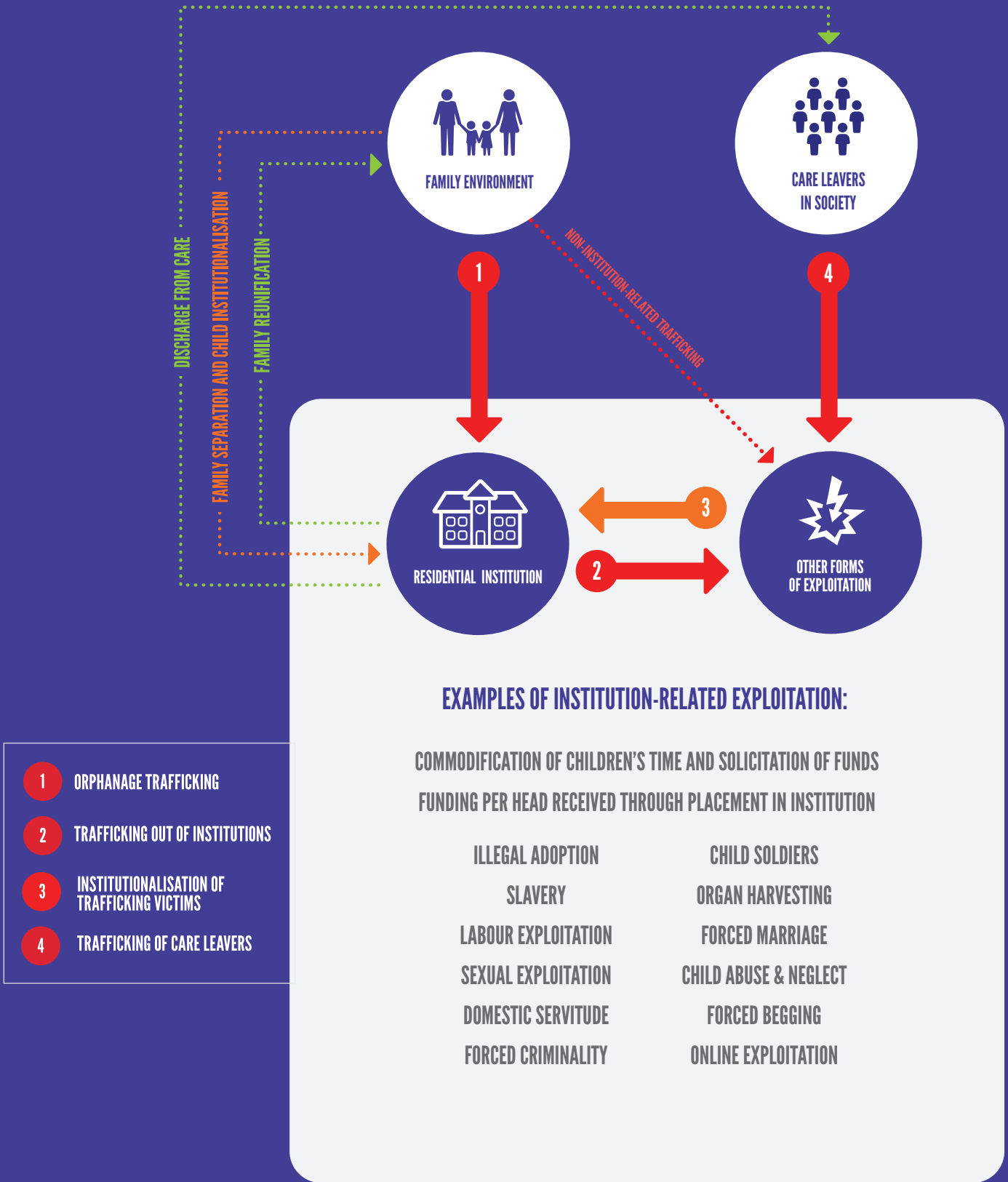
20 U.S. Department of State. (2018). *Trafficking in Persons Report: June 2018*. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/282798.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
21 Lumos. (2020). [Interview with key informant]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
22 U.S. Department of State. (2018). *Op. cit.*
23 U.S. Department of State. (2019). *Trafficking in Persons Report: June 2019*. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
24 U.S. Department of State. (2020). *Trafficking in Persons Report: 20th Edition*. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
25 ECPAT UK. (2014). *On the Safe Side*. https://www.ecpat.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=d61788dc-0969-4134-a1cf-fc7cf494b1a0 [accessed 1 September 2021].
26 U.S. Department of State. (2021). *Trafficking in Persons Report: June 2021*. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TIP_Report_Final_20210701.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
27 Lumos. (2020). [Interview with key informant]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
28 Martin, K. (2018). *Children in Russian Orphanage Allege Rape*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/05/children-russian-orphanage-allege-rape [accessed 1 September 2021].
29 Pierre-Val, E. (2014). *L'expérience vécue par les mères haïtiennes vivant à Port-au-Prince ayant donné leur enfant en adoption internationale [The experience of Haitian mothers living in Port-au-Prince who have given their children up for international adoption]* https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1866/11534/Pierre-Val_Erick_2014_memoire%20pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y [accessed 1 September 2021]
30 Montarsolo, L. (2019). *La recherche des origins et les risques lies a l'adoption internationale: l'exemple du Sri Lanka [The search for origins and the risks relating to international adoption: the example of Sri Lanka]* https://backtotheroots.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/La-recherche-dorigines-et-les-risques-lie%CC%81s-a%CC%80-ladoption-internationale-1.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021], p58-61.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL: THE CYCLES OF INSTITUTION-RELATED TRAFFICKING

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

CARE LEAVERS IN SOCIETY

DISCHARGE FROM CARE

FAMILY SEPARATION AND CHILD INSTITUTIONALISATION

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

NON-INSTITUTION-RELATED TRAFFICKING

RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTION

OTHER FORMS OF EXPLOITATION

1 ORPHANAGE TRAFFICKING

2 TRAFFICKING OUT OF INSTITUTIONS

3 INSTITUTIONALISATION OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

4 TRAFFICKING OF CARE LEAVERS

EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTION-RELATED EXPLOITATION:

COMMODIFICATION OF CHILDREN'S TIME AND SOLICITATION OF FUNDS

FUNDING PER HEAD RECEIVED THROUGH PLACEMENT IN INSTITUTION

ILLEGAL ADOPTION	CHILD SOLDIERS
SLAVERY	ORGAN HARVESTING
LABOUR EXPLOITATION	FORCED MARRIAGE
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
DOMESTIC SERVITUDE	FORCED BEGGING
FORCED CRIMINALITY	ONLINE EXPLOITATION

MAP 1: DOCUMENTED GLOBAL OCCURRENCE OF TRAFFICKING INTO INSTITUTIONS

Country-level evidence from after 2000, including cases of exploitation of children residing in institutions and reports of increased vulnerability to human trafficking (broken down by most relevant evidence category)*
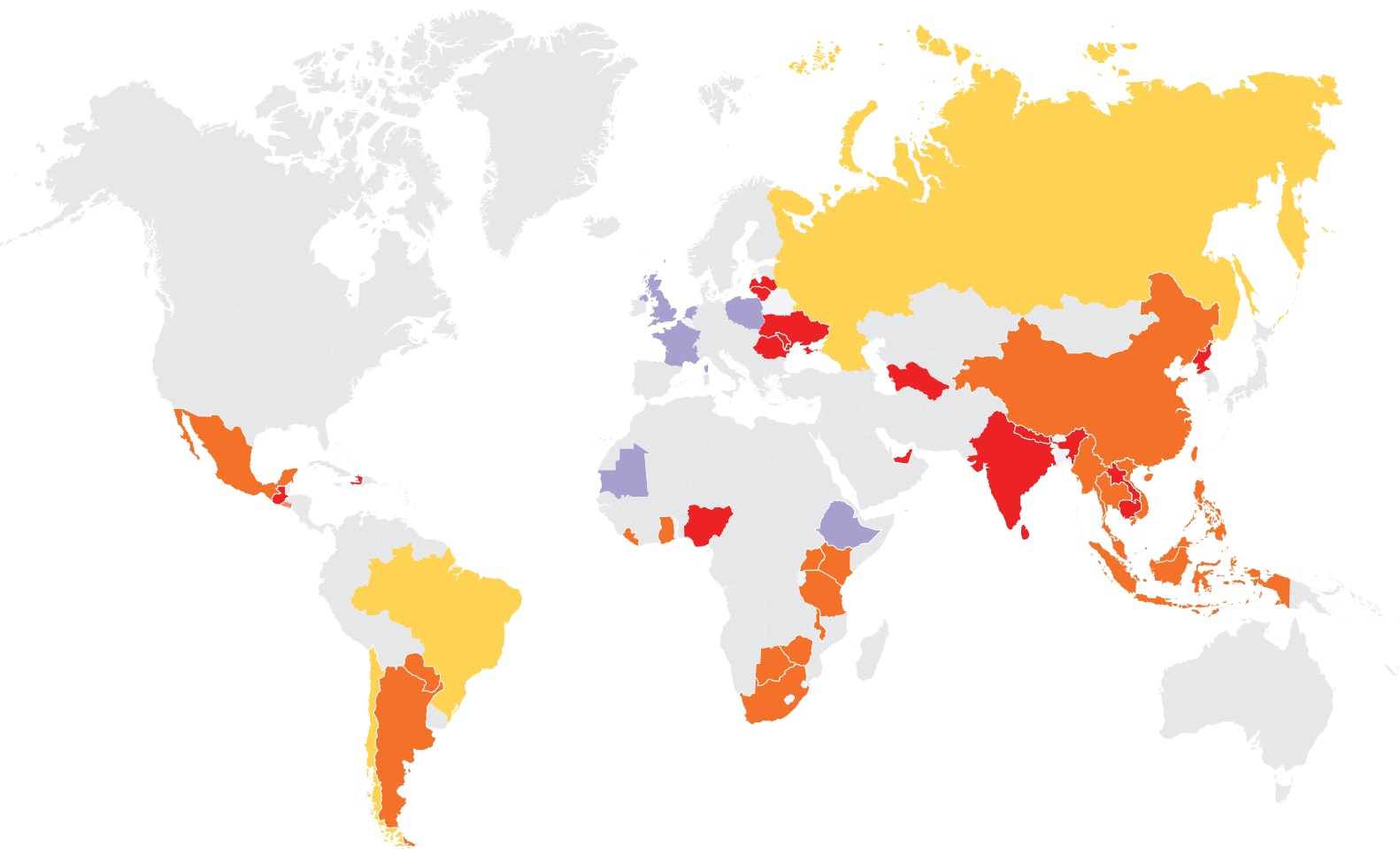
MAP 2: DOCUMENTED GLOBAL OCCURRENCE OF TRAFFICKING OUT OF INSTITUTIONS

Country-level evidence from after 2000, including reports of increased vulnerability of children to trafficking and exploitation outside institutions (broken down by most relevant evidence category)*
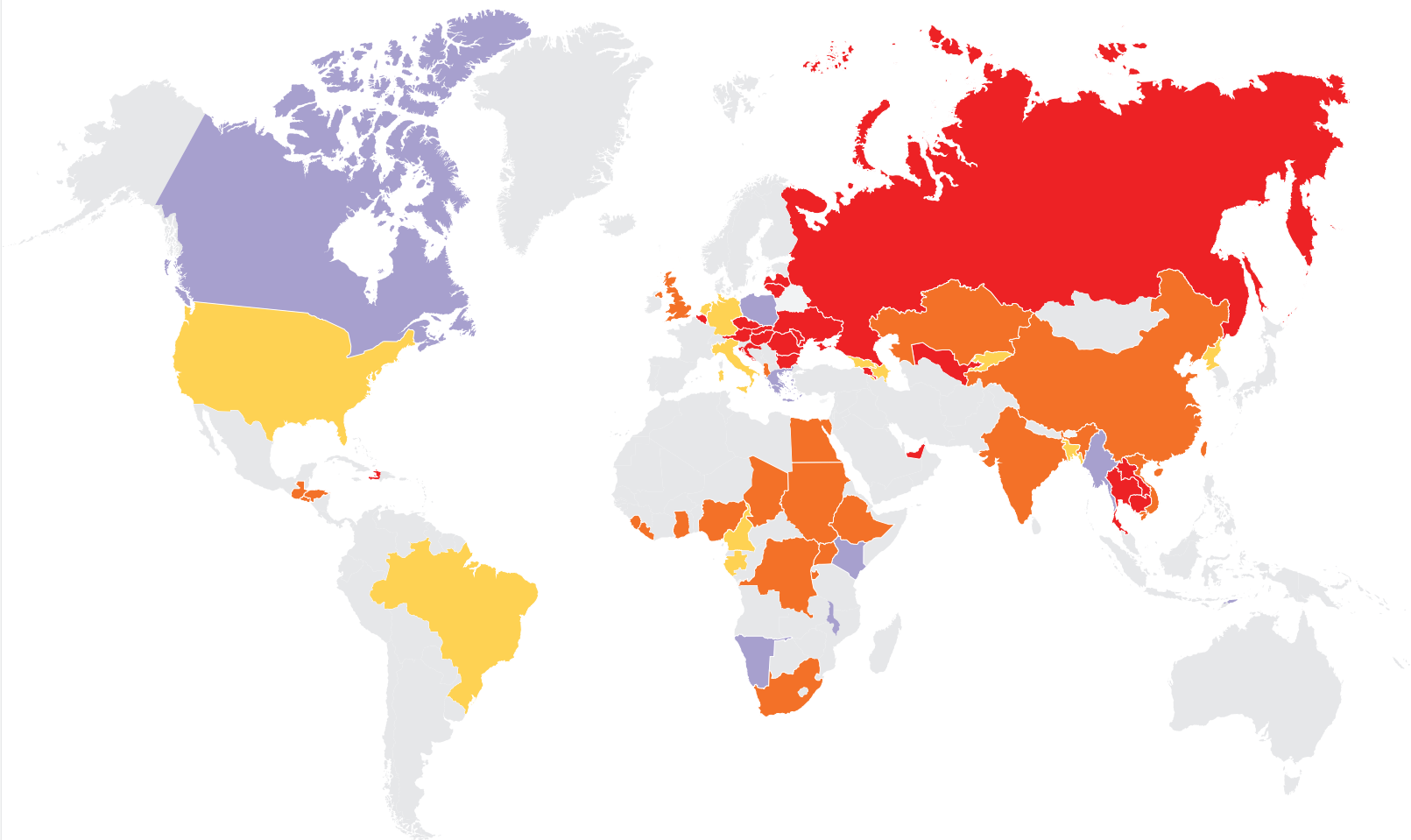
■ US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report or United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report (2017-2021)

■ Academic literature source (2000-2020)

■ Grey literature source (including media articles) (2000-2020)

■ Call for evidence submission or key informant interview (2019-2020)

■ No relevant evidence found

■ US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report or United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report (2017-2021)

■ Academic literature source (2000-2020)

■ Grey literature source (including media articles) (2000-2020)

■ Call for evidence submission or key informant interview (2019-2020)

■ No relevant evidence found

*An overview of the references for each country where relevant documented occurrences were identified as part of this research can be found in the separate methodology appendix.

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- The cycles of institution-related trafficking do not occur in isolation, but are underpinned by complex social, cultural, economic and environmental risk factors and drivers that occur across all four cycles. The study highlights how these **vulnerabilities drive the institutionalisation of children and increase the risk of institution-related trafficking for certain individuals and communities**. These include: gender, disability, abuse and neglect, poverty, armed conflict and community violence, illness, discrimination, and involvement with law enforcement. Each of these factors is explored through a detailed vulnerability model (see below).

- Many of these vulnerabilities are commonly experienced and can affect a child's life in multiple ways. This research identifies three vulnerabilities that are uniquely linked to institution-based child trafficking: **funding, orphanage volunteering and tourism,** and **unaccompanied migrant and refugee children.** Each of these is dealt with in the 'Spotlight' chapter.

VULNERABILITY MODEL: RISKS AND DRIVERS OF INSTITUTION-RELATED TRAFFICKING

- **Funding:** Around the world, faith-based and other organisations and individuals are known to contribute substantial resources – financial, technical, human, and in-kind donations – to alleviate poverty, support healthcare, and provide emergency relief, often including children's institutions.[31] Lumos documented financial support to just over one-third of known Haitian orphanages and found that at least US$70 million was donated to them annually, primarily by Christian donors from North America.[32] This extraordinary investment did not result in quality care and well-being for the children. At least 140 institutions were found to have extremely harmful living conditions where children were at high risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and preventable death.[33]

- Although investments in orphanages are largely well-intentioned, they reflect the short-term thinking of foreign donors. Understanding how this funding adversely affects children is an important part of dismantling a misguided industry that, at best, **exploits the good intentions of large numbers of people** while perpetuating an outdated model of care, and, at worst, **fuels child trafficking and abuse**.

- **Orphanage volunteering** is a popular choice for school leavers and university students who have a desire to travel with a 'purpose' and demonstrate their altruism for the benefit of future academic or professional applications. The idea that there are millions of orphans worldwide in need of support (the 'orphan myth') is a driving force among prospective volunteers.[34] In addition, volunteering in orphanages is often facilitated and promoted by educational institutions, reputable travel and tourism companies and religious institutions around the world, further legitimising the activity and precluding critical evaluation of its impact on communities, families and children.[35,36]

- **Migration** is an important driver of both trafficking and institutionalisation, especially for unaccompanied children. Unaccompanied children are often placed in institutions both during the journey and after arrival in the destination country, which often do not protect the children from trafficking and in some cases even facilitate their exploitation.

This report also benefits from Ruth Wacuka's first-hand reflections on her experience of living in an orphanage. Her recollections can be found on page 30.

WHO IS THIS REPORT FOR?

It is hoped this report will be of use to:

- ✓ **Governments and policy makers across the world:** by highlighting the extent and nature of institution-related trafficking and providing evidence-based recommendations for practical and policy action, including through a Model Law.

- ✓ **Service providers, including those in the child protection and care sectors:** by identifying key vulnerabilities that increase the risk of children becoming victims of institution-related trafficking.

- ✓ **Law enforcement and anti-trafficking actors:** by highlighting a form of trafficking that is seldom prosecuted and requires urgent attention, including through a Model Law.

- ✓ **Civil society organisations and movements working on this issue:** by providing extensive international evidence on this phenomenon to improve advocacy efforts around the world.

- ✓ **Stakeholders supporting institutional care such as philanthropists, those involved in orphanage tourism, and charities:** by highlighting the harms and consequences of supporting institutional care for children and the need for family and community-based alternatives.

31   Lumos. (2017). *Funding Haitian Orphanages at the Cost of Children's Rights*. https://www.wearelumos.org/resources/funding-haitian-orphanages-cost-childrens-rights/ [accessed 1 September 2021].
32   *Ibid.*
33   *Ibid.*
34   Cheney, K.E. & Rotabi, K.S. (2014). Addicted to Orphans: How the Global Orphan Industrial Complex Jeopardizes Local Child Protection Systems. In: Harker, C. et al. (Eds.). *Conflict, Violence and Peace. Geographies of Children and Young People*. 11. https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-981-4585-98-9_3-1#citeas [accessed 1 September 2021].
35   Hickel, J. (2013). The 'Real Experience' industry: Student development projects and the depoliticisation of poverty. *Learning and Teaching*. 6(2): 11-32. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270099374_The_%27Real_Experience%27_industry_Student_development_projects_and_the_depoliticisation_of_poverty [accessed 1 September 2021].
36   Georgeou, N. & McGloin, C. (2015). Looks Good on Your CV: The Sociology of Voluntourism Recruitment in Higher Education. *Journal of Sociology*. 52(2): 403-417. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1440783314562416 [accessed 1 September 2021].

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

See the recommendations section at the end of the full report for more detail.

FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Implement Care Reform:

• Ensure family and community-based care is prioritised in all policies relating to the care and protection of children.

• Prioritise support for families.

• Ensure availability of family and community-based alternative care for those who need it.

• Assess and address spending on institutional care as part of a process of care reform.

• Engage care-experienced children and young people in care reform.

Model Law:

• Adopt laws on institution-related child trafficking for the purpose of financial exploitation.

Data collection and monitoring:

• Improve data collection and disaggregation so that all children are represented in systems that monitor the number and profile of children in institutional care.

• Ensure institution-related trafficking is recorded and included in national referral mechanisms.

• Ensure that there are effective regulations, control, and inspection of all residential care providers regardless of their nature (public or private).

• Implement systems that monitor and regulate funding.

Orphanage tourism:

• All Governments should develop national policies that outlaw the practice of unskilled volunteering in children's institutions.

• All Governments should issue travel advice for citizens, warning against orphanage volunteering and visits.

FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, CHILD PROTECTION ACTORS AND CARE PROVIDERS

Specialist support for children in care

• Ensure child-centric, integrated, individualised and trauma-informed support for suspected and identified child victims of trafficking.

• Provide children in residential care and care leavers with appropriate information and advice to equip them with the knowledge to stay safe.

• Provide care leavers with vocational training and work opportunities.

• Inform all children about their right to issue complaints and report abuse.

Training for professionals:

• Provide accessible and regular training for child protection actors.

• Issue practical guidance to care providers.

FOR VOLUNTEERS, TOURISTS AND AGENCIES

• Volunteering agencies and tourism companies should stop offering trips to children's institutions.

• Volunteers should not volunteer in children's institutions.

• Volunteers should reflect on the skills they have and how they could be used most effectively to support local needs.

• Volunteers should ask the agency informed questions and only accept trips where they can ensure their participation is ethical.

• Anyone currently volunteering in an orphanage who is concerned about harmful practices to children should contact the relevant local authorities.

• Private companies, universities and other organisations should ensure that they do not promote or engage with orphanage volunteering trips or visits.

FOR PRIVATE FUNDERS

• Private funders should implement policies/guidelines clearly stating that they do not support the institutionalisation of children and underlining their commitment to care reform.

• Private funders/donors should ensure that the projects they support are not engaged in the trafficking of children.

• Private funders/donors should ensure that the projects they support link into a long-term vision and strategy of sustainable care transformation.

• Funders with an established relationship with an institution(s) should ensure a phased approach to ceasing support.

SPOTLIGHTS

This research identifies three factors as playing key roles in exacerbating the problem of institution-related trafficking. They are:

Both create and sustain a demand for 'orphans in orphanages' who can be marketed to overseas donor communities as alone, abandoned and in need of care.

FUNDING FOR INSTITUTIONS

ORPHANAGE TOURISM AND VOLUNTEERING ('VOLUNTOURISM')

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN BEING LEFT UNACCOMPANIED

Migration is a significant driver of both trafficking and institutionalisation. Unaccompanied children are commonly placed in institutional settings both along the journey and at their destination country. These institutions often fail to protect children from trafficking, and in some cases facilitate their exploitation.

THE ECONOMIC PARADIGM

Analysing the institutionalisation of children through an economic lens of supply and demand can help to illustrate the broader factors that drive family separation.[37]

DEMAND:
THE APPETITE FOR A PRODUCT

SUPPLY:
HOW MUCH THE MARKET CAN OFFER

37   Van Doore, K. (2019). *Op. cit.*

SPOTLIGHT 1: FUNDING

Funding as an emergency response: creating markets for institutions

In the wake of disaster – with tragic stories circulating globally of families torn apart by natural disasters or conflicts – support for orphanages is a popular response for overseas audiences wanting to contribute to relief efforts.[38]

The subject of relief funding can be contentious, with many arguing that funds channelled through a 'top-down' approach can easily be misallocated, wasted, or fall into the hands of corrupt governments or individuals.[39] This is further rooted in the idea that resources can be most efficiently allocated and used by those who are directly connected to a particular issue, and that increasing personal and economic freedom is a powerful force for growth.[40]

The UNICEF Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action state that in situations of crisis, institutions or residential care services "should only be considered as an alternative care option for the shortest possible time".[41] The standards call for preserving family unity, understanding that residential care facilities are often a 'pull' factor that leads to family separation.

Despite this, the initial response of private philanthropy has led to a proliferation of orphanages and other residential facilities for children in the context of numerous high-profile humanitarian crises. In reality, the number of children who have lost both parents in disaster situations is usually greatly overestimated, while the ability of communities to respond to children's needs is underestimated.[42] This was seen in the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal Earthquake, when institutions were able to garner financial support from foreign donors to support 'earthquake orphans', despite the fact that only 176 children were recorded as being fully orphaned by the earthquakes. This relatively small number of children could have been assessed on an individual basis to find a long-term family solution.[43]

THE SHEER SIZE AND FRAGMENTED NATURE OF DONATIONS THAT CAN FLOW INTO A COUNTRY FOLLOWING A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS – FROM INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS FAITH-BASED GROUPS, CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS AND BUSINESSES – CAN LEAD TO A LACK OF OFFICIAL OVERSIGHT OF ALLOCATION. THIS CREATES AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR UNSCRUPULOUS INDIVIDUALS AND CRIMINAL GROUPS TO PROFIT FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BOGUS ORPHANAGES AND CAN UNDERMINE NATIONAL EFFORTS TO SUPPORT BROADER CHILD PROTECTION AND SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEMS.

Moreover, in situations where government services and the wider infrastructure have been badly affected, it can become almost impossible to verify children's family situations immediately, increasing the risk of them being incorrectly categorised as orphans and leaving them vulnerable to permanent separation from their families and communities.[44]

In the aftermath of Haiti's devastating earthquake in January 2010, the generosity of private citizens from around the world was unprecedented. Americans alone contributed $1.4 billion to the relief and recovery efforts within the first year following the disaster.[45] However, the initial response did not include a focus on sustainable solutions to strengthen families and communities. Instead, as the result of a perceived 'orphan' crisis, Haiti saw at least a 150% increase in the number of orphanages.[46] Similarly, in the aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia, 17 new orphanages were built, despite 85% of the victims of the tsunami in these orphanages still having at least one living parent.[47]

Despite good intentions, support for these orphanages and other forms of institutional care in emergencies can increase the number of separated children. The proliferation of orphanages following displacement and disaster can act as a 'pull factor' to vulnerable communities, where parents give their children up so that they can access basic services and provisions that they may not be able to provide themselves. For example, 97.5% of the children placed in residential care in the aftermath of the Aceh tsunami had been placed there by their families so that they could receive an education. If funding had been directed at helping families and communities rather than institutions, these children could have remained at home.[48]

Following the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal, an increase in child trafficking and of children being placed in institutions led to immediate child safeguarding concerns.[49] Officials at the District Child Welfare Committee recorded several cases of traffickers posing as either aid workers or as representatives from religious sects, using various enticements to take children away from poor and vulnerable parents to place them in institutions.[50]

FAITH-BASED FUNDING

Around the world, faith-based organisations and individuals are known to contribute substantial resources – financial, technical, human, and in-kind donations – to help alleviate poverty, support health care, and provide emergency relief.[51] Governments and global financial organisations support faith-based organisations as crucial partners in development and humanitarian programmes.[52]

Data shows that the faith-based sector contributes significantly to the support of residential care for children overseas and is generally less bound by reporting requirements.[53,54] Faith-based funders constitute a somewhat hybrid category, as they may include not only churches, mosques and other religious bodies but also faith-affiliated charitable organisations and religious individuals, including 'voluntourists'. This sector is particularly complex in the flows of money, resources and people and warrants further research and analysis into how faith-based organisations contribute to the institutionalisation of children overseas.

Research from *Changing the Way We Care* led by Lumos, a forthcoming report which aims to deconstruct the complex financial systems that support institutions in Kenya, found that across 168 children's residential institutions that provided detailed financial information for the study, the approximate proportion of income from foreign churches and other faith-based organisations was 14.4% on average. Moreover, it appears that religion is a significant motivator for individuals who create online fundraisers for children's institutions. It was found that 64.3% of the 56 US charitable organisations supporting children's institutions in Kenya had an explicit faith-based affiliation.[55]

Though not all the Haiti earthquake-related relief came from faith-based communities, part of the faith-based response came from American Catholics who gave over $85 million to relief efforts in a single weekend.[56] Comparable amounts could also have come from other denominations.

Given the commitment to children's issues that is often central to religion, it is clear that the faith community has a significant role to play in the transformation of care; there is some evidence to show that this is already being initiated.[57]

DATA SHOWS THAT THE FAITH-BASED SECTOR CONTRIBUTES SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE SUPPORT OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN OVERSEAS AND IS GENERALLY LESS BOUND BY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

38   Doyle, J. (2010). *Op. cit.*
39   Kolm, S.-C. et al. (Eds.). *Handbook of the Economics of Giving, Altruism and Reciprocity.*
     https://www.sciencedirect.com/handbook/handbook-of-the-economics-of-giving-altruism-and-reciprocity/vol/2/suppl/C [accessed 1 September 2021].
40   *Ibid.*
41   UNICEF Child Protection Working Group. (2012). *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.*
     https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5211dc124.pdf [accessed 19 November 2021zz], p125.
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46   Lumos. (2017). *Op. cit.*
47   Save the Children. (n.d.). *Op. cit.*

48   Martin, F. & Sudrajat, T. (2006) *A Rapid Assessment of Children's Homes in Post-Tsunami Aceh.* Save the Children UK & Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs.
     https://bettercarenetwork.org/library/the-continuum-of-care/residential-care/a-rapid-assessment-of-childrens-homes-in-post-tsunami-aceh [accessed 1 September 2021].
49   Better Care Network. (2015). Better Volunteering, Better Care Initiative Response to Earthquake in Nepal.
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     Bennett, C. (2015). Does this 'Nepal' image Make You Want to Build These Children a Home? Think Again. The Guardian.
     http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/07/nepal-children-image-orphanages-donate [Accessed 15 March 2017].
50   Manandhar, R. (2016). Many Dolakha Children Missing After Earthquake.
     http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-01-27/many-dolakha-children-missing-after-earthquake.html [Accessed 15 March 2021]=
51   Hudson Institute. (2013). *The Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances, With a Special Report on Emerging Economies.*
     http://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1229/2013_indexof_global_philanthropyand_remittances.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
52   Heist, D. & Cnaan, R.A. (2016). Faith-Based International Development Work: A Review. *Religions.* 7(3): 19.
53   Van Doore et al. (2016). *Mapping Australia's support for the institutionalisation of children overseas.* ReThink Orphanages.
     https://bettercarenetwork.org/library/particular-threats-to-childrens-care-and-protection/effects-of-institutional-care/mapping-australia%E2%80%99s-support-for-the-institutionalisation-of-children-overseas [accessed 1 September 2021].
54   Barna. (n.d.). *Residential Care: U.S. Christian Giving and Missions*
     https://www.faithtoaction.org/wp-content/uploads/F2A_Residential-Care_Report_Final.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
55   Changing The Way We Care. (forthcoming). *Funding Analysis of Children's Institutions in Kenya.* Unpublished document: on file with Lumos.
56   United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2014). *Current Situation in Haiti After the 2010 Earthquake.*
     http://www.usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/latin-america/reconstruction-of-the-church-in-haiti.cfm [accessed 1 November 2020].
57   Lumos. (2017). *Op. cit.*

CASE STUDY – HAITI

To understand why orphanages continue to flourish in Haiti, and how they affect children, Lumos investigated patterns in funding as well as the ramifications of orphanage life for children raised within their walls. At the time of reporting in 2017, an estimated 30,000 children lived in approximately 750 mostly privately-run and financed orphanages in Haiti – only 15% were registered with the Government.[58] The Government of Haiti estimated that 80% of children in orphanages have at least one living parent, and almost all have other family members.[59] Poverty, lack of access to basic services, and the desire to provide an education drive parents and caregivers to place their children in orphanages. With adequate support, many children could return to family and community-based care, and at-risk families could be strengthened to prevent separation in the first instance.[60]

Lumos documented financial support to just over one-third of known Haitian orphanages and found that at least US$70 million was donated to them annually, predominantly from North American, Christian funders.[61] This means that funding to the orphanage sector in Haiti is one of the most significant forms of any kind of international aid to Haiti, greater than most official development assistance to Haiti by donor countries. It also means that this is just the tip of the iceberg of financial and other forms of support to all the orphanages in the country. A conservative estimate of the total funding to all Haitian orphanages ranges upwards of US$100 million per year.[62]

This extraordinary investment did not translate to quality care and the best interest of children. At least 140 were believed to have extremely detrimental living conditions where children are at severe risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and avoidable death.[63] Though for the most part well-intentioned, investment in orphanages reflects the short-term thinking of foreign funders.

US$100 MILLION

- **could support 770,000 Haitian children to go to school**

- **is more than 130 times the reported annual budget of the Haitian child protection agency**

- **is nearly 5 times the annual budget of the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs**

- **could enable all 30,000 children currently in orphanages to be reunited with their families or supported in alternative care.**

58   Institut du Bien Être Social et de Recherches (IBESR). (2013). *Annuaire des Maisons d'Enfants en Haïti 2013*. Data on file with Lumos.
59   *ibid.*
60   Lumos. (2017). *Op. cit.*
61   *ibid.*
62   *ibid.*
63   *ibid.*

SPOTLIGHT 2: ORPHANAGE TOURISM AND VOLUNTEERING

Volunteer tourism or 'voluntourism' is defined as "a type of holiday in which you work as a volunteer (= without being paid) to 'help' people in the places you visit."[64] Voluntourism has now grown into a billion-dollar industry, designed to cater to people's desire to do good and 'give back', while "occupying an ethically questionable grey area between the commercial tourism and international development sectors".[65] In the context of orphanages and other types of institutional care, voluntourism represents a spectrum of activities related to the support of institutions through financial or material resources or volunteering one's time.[66]

The voluntourism industry has seen rapid growth in recent years, with reports predicting an annual worth of $2 billion generated from the 10 million tourists seeking this type of experience.[67] The vast amounts of people, money and resources being funnelled from the Global North into countries in the Global South has created an industry that is consumer-driven as opposed to being driven by the needs of the local communities and individuals themselves.[68] Moreover, the industry displays little oversight, regulation or linkages to defined development goals or national policies for the care of children.[69]

Ironically, in the case of orphanage volunteering, the volunteers themselves are often exploited in fulfilling their altruistic motives while at the same time engaging in potential exploitation of the very children they aim to help.

ORPHANAGE VOLUNTOURISM: SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Participation in voluntourism, or donating time, money and resources to 'good causes' can invoke a sense of self-worth in those who do it, which further legitimises the activity itself. In this context, the desire to 'do good' and 'give back' has also been theorised as "manifestations arising from colonialism, internalised racism and the guilt of privilege".[70]

The perception that there are millions of orphans across the world in need of support (the 'orphan myth'), is a driving force among prospective volunteers.[71] Moreover, orphanage volunteering trips are often facilitated and encouraged by educational settings, reputable travel and tourism companies and religious institutions the world over – further legitimising the activity, and by proxy, negating the undertaking of critical evaluation of the impact on communities, families and children.[72]

Orphanage volunteering is a popular choice for school leavers and university students who have a desire to travel with a 'purpose' and illustrate their altruism for the benefit of future academic or professional applications.[73] A recent YouGov survey[74] commissioned by Lumos, targeting 1,004 full-time UK students aged 17-22, revealed the following results:

64   Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). *Voluntourism*. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/voluntourism [accessed 4 June 2020].
65   Van Doore, K. (2019). *Op. cit.*
66   ReThink Orphanages. (2019). *Mapping the European Contribution to the Institutionalisation of Children Overseas*.
      https://rethinkorphanages.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/RO%20European%20Mapping%20FINAL.pdf [accessed 26 May 2020], p4.
67   Popham, G. (2015). *Boom in 'Voluntourism' Sparks Concerns Over Whether Industry is Doing Good*, Reuters.
      http://www.reuters.com/article/us-travel-volunteers-charities-idUSKCN0P91AX20150629 [accessed 12 April 2017].
68   *Ibid.*
69   Rotabi et al. (2017). Altruistic Exploitation: Orphan Tourism and Global Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*. 47: 648-665.
70   Van Doore, K. (2019). Op. cit., p46.
71   Cheney, K.E. & Rotabi, K.S. (2014).
72   Hickel. (2013). *Op. cit.*
73   Georgeou, N & McGloin, C. (2015). *Op. cit.*
74   Lumos. (2021). [Online survey commissioned by Lumos through YouGov]. Unpublished internal data.

LUMOS ORPHANAGE VOLUNTOURISM SURVEY[75]

PREVALENCE OF ORPHANAGE VOLUNTOURISM:

- 23% of UK students surveyed aged 17-22 are currently volunteering or actively considering volunteering overseas.

- 22% have either visited or volunteered at an orphanage or know someone who has.

- The most common countries for visiting or volunteering at orphanages are Tanzania (14%) and Uganda (7%).

- 71% said their visits or volunteering experiences were organised by schools, universities or other organisations, with just 4% organised by students themselves. **This finding shows that public and private bodies that source orphanage volunteering opportunities are at the root of the problem.**

- Over a third (34%) who had visited or volunteered at an orphanage paid for the experience.

MOTIVATIONS FOR ORPHANAGE VOLUNTOURISM:

- 81% of students who would be likely to visit or volunteer at an orphanage if offered the opportunity, say they'd do it to 'do something good/give something back' with 70% saying 'for life experience'.

- 66% think that volunteering at an orphanage would be useful in enhancing CV and career prospects, and 65% think this would be useful in enhancing a college/university application.

- 46% of students who have been to orphanages are also (considering undertaking) volunteering in the UK.

INTENT TO VOLUNTEER AT AN ORPHANAGE:

- 22% of students who haven't visited or volunteered at an orphanage say they would be likely to volunteer at one if offered the opportunity.

- 45% of those actively considering undertaking volunteering overseas say they are likely to volunteer at an orphanage if offered the opportunity.

KNOWLEDGE OF ORPHANAGE VOLUNTOURISM

- Almost half (47%) of students surveyed believe there are robust safeguarding measures for volunteers going overseas to work with children in orphanages.

- Most (78%) weren't aware that around 8/10 children in orphanages have living parents.

- 54% of all respondents know that children are sometimes trafficked to make money for those running the orphanage.

ORPHANAGE VOLUNTOURISM AND CHILD TRAFFICKING

There is growing awareness that the flow of international volunteers to orphanages causes children to be separated unnecessarily from their families and increases institutionalisation, creating opportunities for traffickers to *supply* children to feed the business model. Research consistently demonstrates that orphanage trafficking is more prolific in countries where there is a significant tourist industry, with orphanages generally being set up in the main tourist areas.[76,77] For example, Cambodia has experienced a 75% increase in the number of residential care institutions, despite a significant reduction in the number of orphans.[78] In Uganda, the number of children in institutions increased from just over 1,000 in the late 90s to 55,000 now – despite large decreases in the number of orphans. These orphanages are being built in tourist hotspots.[79]

"The profits made through volunteer-paid program fees or donations to orphanages from tourists incentivize nefarious orphanage owners to increase revenue by expanding child recruitment operations in order to open more facilities. These orphanages facilitate child trafficking rings by using false promises to recruit children and exploit them to profit from donations. This practice has been well-documented in several countries, including Nepal, Cambodia, and Haiti."

US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report, 2018.

In some cases, children's biological parents are not encouraged to visit their children, and they may even be told that they have lost their custodial rights.[80] In some countries, such as Nepal and Cambodia, children's papers are known to be falsified to falsely legitimise their 'orphan' status.[81] There are also examples where children in childcare institutions are further exploited for profit through forced 'cultural' performances for tourists, forced begging, and forced interaction and play with visitors.[82] There is evidence of children being kept in extremely poor conditions and being deliberately malnourished in order to elicit more support in the form of donations and gifts.[83] This points to an inverse business model, where investing less can equate to profiting more. In addition, donated items are known to be sold on at local markets, with one key informant stating that "toys, blankets and gifts to the children were never seen again after those who had donated them had left the orphanage".[84]

Volunteers also contribute to an onward chain of causation when they finish their placements, as they often continue to fundraise for the orphanage once home.[85]

76 Punaks, M & Feit, K. (2014). *Op. cit.*
77 Changing The Way We Care. (forthcoming). *Op. cit.*
78 ReThink Orphanages. (n.d.). *Op. cit.*
79 VIVA. (n.d.). *Moses.* http://www.viva.org/moses/ [accessed 1 September 2021].
80 Van Doore, K. (2016). *Op. cit.*
81 *ibid.*
82 Van Doore, K. (2019). *Op. cit.*
83 ReThink Orphanages. (2019). *Op. cit.*
84 Lumos. (2019). [Anonymous call for evidence submission from Cambodia]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
85 Lumos. (2020). [Interview with key informant]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.

75 See the separately published 'Methodology Annex' for more information about the methodology used for the Lumos orphanage voluntourism survey.

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WIDER ISSUES RELATED TO ORPHANAGE VOLUNTOURISM

In many countries where orphanages flourish, regulatory systems and oversight of residential care facilities are inadequate or do not exist.[86] There are often no regulations regarding child protection policies or codes of conduct for staff and volunteers.[87] Throughout the information collected in the Call for Evidence for this report, there are examples of orphanages lacking any policies in relation to child protection and safeguarding, including for vetting volunteers. Some reveal that tourists can arrive unannounced and take a child outside the facility for an unspecified time period.[88]

This creates an environment in which children are extremely vulnerable to sexual exploitation. There is significant evidence of sexual abusers posing as well-intended volunteers in order to gain access to vulnerable children, taking advantage of often unregulated and unsupervised access. Children's rights organisation ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking) UK has documented hundreds of cases of sex offenders travelling abroad to abuse children.[89] Some countries report that foreign perpetrators commit extraterritorial commercial child sexual exploitation and abuse in their country by offering to pay for children's school fees or financially support orphanages to gain access to children.[90] If cases are reported, let alone investigated, they rarely result in justice for victims.[91] Evidence collected for the purpose of this report reveals shocking examples of orphanage directors making children available to certain volunteers for sexual exploitation.[92]

The revolving door of tourists and volunteers coming and going from an orphanage can also exacerbate psychological problems in children, akin to attachment disorders.[93] Children need long-term stable carers if they are to develop life-long physical, cognitive and emotional and wellbeing. In the absence of their parents or primary caregivers, children in orphanages may form unnaturally quick bonds with visitors and volunteers, only to be followed by a form of grief when the individual leaves.[94] This cycle of attachment and abandonment repeats with every visitor or volunteer that comes along, and the experience can exacerbate existing attachment disorders and expose each child to repeated patterns of emotional and psychological harm.[95,96]

In a recent study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children in institutions, it was found that the roles and activities conducted by international volunteers and visitors were largely unnecessary and superfluous to the actual operation of residential care institutions. Their primary use was fundraising. Volunteers and visitors' roles were aimed at increasing emotional attachment between them and children as a means of capitalising on their potential to become longer-term advocates and fundraisers for the institution upon returning home. As such, the majority of institutions involved in the study noted that most functions had not been affected by the loss of volunteers and visitors brought about by the pandemic.[97]

SPOTLIGHT 3: UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN

Conflict, natural disasters, violence and discrimination force millions of people to flee their homes every year.

Without the protection provided by parents and guardians, children who travel alone or have been separated from their families are at heightened risk of trafficking and exploitation both in transit and on arrival in their destination country.[98,99,100,101] For example, as Europe saw a dramatic increase in the number of refugees and migrants arriving via land and sea in 2015-16, it also saw increases in child trafficking levels.[102]

At the end of 2019, 153,300 refugees globally were reported to be unaccompanied and separated children.[103] But the lack of available data means that this figure is likely to be a significant underestimate, and this number also only includes those who are recognised as refugees. Many children are also at risk because they do not self-identify as children on their arrival in their destination country, and are therefore not afforded the protections to which unaccompanied children are entitled.[104]

Migrant and refugee children can face huge risks. According to IOM, around 1,600 children in migration were reported dead or missing between 2014 and 2018,[105] an average of almost one every day. But these numbers are vastly under representative, as data on missing children is very limited. In Europe alone, Europol has estimated that 10,000 migrant children went missing in 2014-2016, with many feared to have been trafficked.[106,107] The discrepancies between these two numbers demonstrates the lack of data on, and monitoring of, children in migration.

Under the CRC, all children, regardless of their nationality, migration or asylum status, have the right to care and protection.[108] The Council of Europe decreed that unaccompanied migrant and refugee children should receive appropriate care, preferably foster care.[109]

Children arriving without a parent or other caregiver are often placed in reception facilities, which are often institutional in nature,[110] or in some form of alternative care, such as emergency foster care. Recent research has identified an "over-reliance on institutional care" for unaccompanied children, [111] and these settings do little to recognise and support their individual needs.[112] Children often spend long periods of time in institutions, both along their journey and once reaching their destination. However, many children subsequently go missing, with many feared to be trafficked.

Racial discrimination can also lead to migrant and refugee children being targeted for exploitation, including forced labour or sexual servitude. Research suggests that children from sub-Saharan Africa experienced higher rates of victimisation along the central Mediterranean route to Europe than children from other regions.[113,114] Women and girls on the move are especially at risk of trafficking for sexual abuse or other forms of gender-based violence.[115]

On the Colombia-Venezuela border, there are issues with trafficking, prostitution, gender-based violence, and children being abandoned. The migrant flow is so high that the organisations that work to protect children are often overwhelmed.[116,117]

86   Van Doore, K. et al. (2016). *Expert Paper: International Volunteering and Child Sexual Abuse*, Better Care Network
87   Better Volunteering Better Care. (2014). *Collected Viewpoints on International Volunteering in Residential Care Centres: Country Focus: Cambodia* p11.
88   Lumos. (2019). [Anonymous call for evidence submission from Cambodia]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
89   ECPAT UK. (2017). *British Child Abuser Guilty of 45 Crimes Against Thai and UK Children*
      https://www.ecpat.org.uk/news/markfrost [accessed 19 November 2021]
90   U.S. Department of State. (2020). *Op. cit.*
91   United Nations. (2006).*Violence against Children in Care and Justice Institutions*, p182.
92   Lumos. (2019). [Anonymous call for evidence submission from Cambodia]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
93   Punaks, M & Feit, K. (2014). Op. cit.
94   Richter, L.M. & Norman, A. (2010). *Op. Cit.*
95   This is illustrated well in the short film by The Umbrella Foundation & Forget Me Not. (2018). *Dear Volunteer.*
      YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=c6NlLnfH3tg [accessed 1 September 2021].
96   It is similarly covered in the campaign by Lumos. (2019). *#HelpingNotHelping.* https://www.helpingnothelping.org/ [accessed 1 September 2021].
97   Nhep, R & Van Doore, K. *Impact of Covid-19 on Privately Run Residential Care Institutions: Insights and Implications for Advocacy and Awareness Raising.*
      http://barnhemskollen.se/wp-content/uploads/Impact-of-COVID-19-FULL-FINAL-V7.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].

98   UNICEF-INNOCENTI. (n.d.). *Migration and Children.* https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/606-migration-and-children.html [accessed 20 July 2021];
99   Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from the Minderoo Foundation in Australia]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
100   David, F. et al. (2019). *Migrants and their vulnerability to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour* https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migrants_and_their_vulnerability.pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
101   International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2017). *Flow Monitoring Surveys: The Human Trafficking And Other Exploitative Practices Indication Survey.* (2017).
      https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/dtm/Mediterranean_DTM_201801.pdf [accessed 1 September 2020].
102   European Commission. (2016). *Report on the Progress Made in the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings*
      https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/first-report-progress-made-fight-against-trafficking-human-beings_en [Accessed 18 November 2020], p9.
103   UNHCR. (2020). *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019.* https://www.unhcr.org/uk/statistics/unhcrstats/5ee200e37/unhcr-global-trends-2019.html [accessed 8 October 2020], p9.
104   Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from ECPAT International in Thailand]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
105   International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2019). *Fatal Journeys Volume 4: Missing Migrant Children.* https://publications.iom.int/books/fatal-journeys-volume-4-missing-migrant-children [Accessed 7 December 2020].
106   Townsend, M. (2016). *10,000 refugee children are missing, says Europol.* The Guardian https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/30/fears-for-missing-child-refugees [accessed 8 February 2021]
107   BBC News. (2016). *Migrant crisis: More than 10,000 children 'missing'.* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35453589 [accessed 8 February 2021].
108   United Nations Committee on the Rights Of the Child (CRC). (2005). *General comment No. 6 (2005): Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin.* (1 September 2005).
109   Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. (2011). *Unaccompanied children in Europe: issues of arrival, stay and return.* Doc. 12539. https://www.refworld.org/docid/4d8b1e002.html [accessed 22 May 2020].
110   Lumos. (2020). *Rethinking Care: Improving Support for Unaccompanied Migrant, Asylum Seeking and Refugee in the European Union.* https://www.wearelumos.org/resources/rethinking-care/ [accessed 1 September 2021].
111   *Ibid.*, p45.
112   *Ibid.*, p10.
113   UNICEF & International Organization for Migration (IMO). (2017). *Harrowing Journeys - Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea.* https://data.unicef.org/resources/harrowing-journeys/ [accessed 1 September 2021].
114   *"An adolescent boy from sub-Saharan Africa, who has secondary education and travels in a group along the Central Mediterranean route, faces a 73 per cent risk of being exploited. If he came from another region, the risk would drop to 38 per cent."* From Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from the Minderoo Foundation in Australia]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
115   European Commission. (2016). *Op. cit.*
116   Lumos. (2021). *In the Name of Care and Protection: Child Institutionalisation in Latin America and the Caribbean.*
      https://www.wearelumos.org/resources/name-care-and-protection-child-institutionalisation-latin-america-and-caribbean/ [accessed 20 July 2021].
117   RELAF. (2019). *Poner Fin al Encierro para el cumplimiento del derecho a la vida familiar de niñas y niños. [Ending Confinement for the fulfilment of the right to family life of children.* [accessed 29 November 2019].
      https://www.relaf.org/biblioteca/Sem_RELAF_2019_Esp.pdf

DETENTION OF CHILDREN

Despite the detention of children for immigration reasons being widely condemned, more than 100 countries detain children based on their or their families' immigration status.[118] For example, Mexican immigration authorities apprehended more than 20,000 unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in 2015 and more than 14,000 in the first 10 months of 2016; and most of them were detained.[119]

The Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty notes that some authorities believe that detention facilities can also protect children from trafficking. But, as the report rightly states, "detention is not a form of child protection and in fact can facilitate recruitment by human traffickers".[120] However, alternative options such as family and community-based care with appropriate support services would better meet the needs and best interests of these children and are more effective at preventing trafficking.

SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING

Legal migration routes are often not possible or require lengthy waits.[121,122] However, barriers to legal migration do not stop the movement of people: instead, they can lead migrants, including children, to rely on smugglers, which can often lead to trafficking and other forms of exploitation.[123]

In some cases, families pay for a smuggler to help their child who is travelling alone; in others, the child leaves home without the knowledge or approval of family, or they become separated from their family at some point along the journey.

It is usually only once the child has travelled some way with the aid of a smuggler that they will realise they have become a victim of trafficking. At this point, they are in a foreign country and often unable to escape easily. Traffickers may physically or sexually abuse their victims, force them into prostitution or labour to pay for their journey, or sell them on to other traffickers.[124]

Children can also be at risk of modern slavery within refugee or Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps, through practices such as child marriage and child labour.[125]

USE OF PROTECTIVE SHELTERS FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

Some migrant or refugee children are placed in institutional facilities as a protective measure when they are identified as victims of, or at risk of, trafficking. In the Netherlands, for example, these shelters have a capacity of up to 24 children with high levels of supervision and security.[126] However, a 2019 report claimed that, in five years, 60 Vietnamese children have disappeared from these protective shelters.[127] This demonstrates that children are not necessarily protected by the institutional response.

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN BEING TRAFFICKED OUT OF INSTITUTIONS

In many countries around the world, migrant and refugee children go missing from camps and shelters, which are not closed environments, on a regular basis. They either leave of their own accord, hoping to reach other countries to join family members or to seek perceived better opportunities, or they leave because they have been targeted by traffickers.[128] There is a lack of substantial data on this, as camps and shelters can be chaotic environments without the capacity to monitor the movement of individuals. There is also insufficient action by authorities to trace them, with only four countries in the EU having legal or procedural recourse to investigate disappearances of children.[129]

While it is very difficult to obtain data on the numbers of children who are trafficked or go missing from care around the world, the numbers of migrant and refugee children going missing from care in some European countries indicates a high risk of exposure to trafficking:

- In Italy in 2017, 5,000 unaccompanied children were reported missing, out of 16,000 registered in the country.[130]

- In the Netherlands 1,600 children were reported missing from the Dutch asylum system over 4.5 years until mid-2019.[131]

- In the UK, 15% of all unaccompanied children went missing from care (742 of 4,963) in 2017.[132]

However, it should be noted that while more data may be collected on missing children in Europe than in other regions, this data is still likely to be under-representative of the whole picture.

While institutions are often used to provide protection from traffickers, trafficking often occurs directly from these institutions. The European Commission recognised that "Trafficking networks abuse asylum procedures and use reception centres to identify potential victims."[133]

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN BEING TRAFFICKED INTO INSTITUTIONS

There are also reports of traffickers exploiting child protection shelters to facilitate the movement of children across borders in an organised way. One report in 2009 outlined how traffickers facilitated children's flights to the UK and then ensured that they would be placed in a facility near Heathrow airport which houses unaccompanied children. Once the children had passed border controls and were placed in the facility, traffickers were able to easily take the children from the house.[134,135] This is an example of trafficking into and then quickly out of an institution, with traffickers using residential care home systems to target unaccompanied children who are often placed in "holding pens".[136]

118 UNICEF. (2018). *UNICEF Working Paper: Alternatives to Immigration Detention of Children.*
     https://www.unicef.org/media/58351/file/Alternatives%20to%20Immigration%20Detention%20of%20Children%20(ENG).pdf [accessed 1 September 2021].
119 Human Rights Watch. (2017). *Mexico Events.* https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/mexico# [accessed 1 September 2021].
120 Nowak, M. (2019). *United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty*, p481. https://omnibook.com/view/e0623280-5656-42f8-9edf-5872f8f08562 [accessed 8 October 2020].
121 UNICEF & International Organization for Migration (IMO). (2017), p46.David, F, Bryant, K & Joudo Larsen, J 2019, *op. cit.*
122 David, F. et al. (2019). *Op. cit.*
123 Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from the Minderoo Foundation in Australia]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
124 UNHCR. (n.d.). *Telling the Real Story.* https://www.tellingtherealstory.org/en/stories/video/deborahs-story/ [accessed 1 September 2021]
125 Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from the Minderoo Foundation in Australia]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
126 Lumos Foundation (2020), op. cit. pp. 56-57
127 Einashe, I & Terlingen, S (2019) *Revealed: Vietnamese children vanish from Dutch shelters to be trafficked into Britain*, The Guardian 30 March
     https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/mar/30/trafficked-vietnamese-children-at-risk-in-dutch-shelters-sent-to-uk [accessed 25 September 2020]

128 Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from RENATE Europe in the Netherlands]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
129 Missing Children Europe (n.d.). *Missing Children in Migration* https://missingchildreneurope.eu/Missingchildreninmigration [accessed 26 October 2020]
130 Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from RENATE Europe in the Netherlands]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
131 Lumos. (2020). *Op. cit.,* pp.56-57.
132 Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from Missing People in the United Kingdom]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
133 Europol (2020). *European Migrant Smuggling Centre 4th Annual report – 2019.* Cited in: European Commission. (2020). *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament,
     The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions On A New Pact On Migration And Asylum.* 23/9/2020,
     https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/1_en_act_part1_v7_1.pdf [accessed 8 October 2020], p7.
134 Booth, R. (2009). *Revealed: 77 trafficked Chinese children lost by home.*
     The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/may/05/trafficked-chinese-children-crime [accessed 1 September 2021].
135 UK Home Affairs Committee. (2009). *Update Report (for 2008-09) on Young People at Risk of Trafficking for the Hillingdon Safeguarding Children Board.*
     https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhaff/729/09070708.htm [accessed 1 September 2021]
136 ECPAT UK. (2014). *Op. cit.* p6.

PARALLEL SYSTEMS

Along the journey and on arrival in Europe or other destination regions such as the US, migrant and refugee children are often cared for under a separate system to the children who already live in that country.[137] These parallel systems of care can lead to higher levels of institutionalisation and prohibit children's integration into the community.[138] When a potential victim of trafficking is identified and they are a foreign national, sometimes the only option to receive support is through the asylum and migration system, where they are then referred to a specific shelter for unaccompanied migrant children.[139]

CARE LEAVERS AT INCREASED RISK OF BEING TRAFFICKED

When young refugees turn 18, their access to support services and care often ends abruptly, leaving them exposed to situations of abuse or exploitation.[140] Some are transferred to adult reception centres that lack the same level of support and protection, while others are required to arrange their own housing or end up homeless.[141,142] The lack of integration of migration systems into domestic child protection processes heightens the risk of trafficking for young people when they are discharged from care aged 18, as they are less likely to have links with community support systems.[143]

The difficulty many young migrants and refugees face in securing financial aid or employment also makes them more vulnerable.[144] As is often the case, gender plays a significant role here, and unaccompanied migrant and refugee girls are more likely to be trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.[145] Boys are also at risk, however, and there have been reports in Greece of sexual abuse of unaccompanied refugee boys linked to inadequate care in the accommodation facilities provided for them.[146]

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

A number of initiatives have been put in place to prevent the trafficking of migrant and refugee children. One example is *Telling the Real Story,* an initiative by UNHCR which aims to spread awareness of the dangers of the Mediterranean migration routes to Europe by providing first-hand stories from refugees and asylum-seekers who have faced abuse, exploitation and danger along the journey.[147] The stories are promoted through a range of media in refugee camps in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan,[148] with the aim of combatting misinformation spread by traffickers and informing refugees of the dangers prior to onward movement.

137 Lumos. (2020). *Op. cit.*
138 *Ibid.*
139 Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from "Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center in Cyprus]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
140 European Website on Integration. (2019). *Council of Europe adopts recommendation to support young refugees.*
      https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/council-of-europe-adopts-recommendation-to-support-young-refugees [accessed 8 October 2020].
141 Burnett, J. (2019). *Migrant Youth go from a Children's Shelter to Adult Detention on their 18th Birthday.* NPR
      https://www.npr.org/2019/02/22/696834560/migrant-youth-go-from-a-childrens-shelter-to-adult-detention-on-their-18th-birth?t=1626786468340 [accessed 1 September 2021].
142 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2019). *Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges,*
      https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2019/integration-young-refugees-eu-good-practices-and-challenges [accessed 8 October 2020], pp. 59-60.
143 *Ibid.*
144 Lumos. (2019). [Call for evidence submission from "Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center in Cyprus]. Unpublished data: on file with Lumos.
145 ŽUPARIĆ-ILJIĆ, D. (2018). Care for Unaccompanied Children in Croatia: The Roles and Experiences of Special Guardians. *Revija za sociologiju.* 48(3): 297–327.
146 Freccero, J. et al. (2017). *Op. cit.*
147 UNHCR. (n.d.). *Op. cit.*
148 Transcultural Campaigning. (2020). *We Didn't Think it Would Happen to Us: Mapping of CwC Activities along the Central Mediterranean Route.*
      https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/79043 [accessed 8 October 2020].

AT THE END OF 2019, 153,300 REFUGEES GLOBALLY WERE REPORTED TO BE UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN. THIS IS LIKELY TO BE A SIGNIFICANT UNDERESTIMATE.

REAL LIVES ARE BEING RUINED:
A FIRST-HAND REFLECTION BY RUTH WACUKA

Ruth Wacuka is an accomplished speaker, contributing author and advocacy and communications consultant in the orphanage trafficking, youth participation and care reform sectors. She is the founder of Reroot Africa, an organisation working to raise awareness of orphanage trafficking and to improve the lives of vulnerable children. Her work has had a significant impact on care reform in Kenya and across the globe. Ruth is passionate about social justice, culture and identity, and is always proud to call Kenya home.

Human trafficking has a new face: the face of charity. Modern-day traffickers wear suits and speak a polished language, but human trafficking has no dignity: they prey on families weighed down by the deepest poverty and burdened by the toughest of problems. Traffickers don't care about their victims. They abuse them and violate their basic human rights.

What drives human trafficking? Just like any other business, it comes down to the law of supply and demand. Businesses thrive where a need is identified and can be fulfilled. Many entrepreneurs will tell you that they saw a gap in the market, that there was a need that was not being met.

The orphanage trafficking equation – that balance of supply and demand – is incomplete without voluntourism. Tourists often visit orphanages as part of sightseeing or volunteer projects. For some students, volunteering is even part of their education. Visiting an orphanage involves playing games, holding babies, teaching or bathing children. Not all volunteers do these activities in all orphanages of course, but in the orphanage in Kenya where I lived, they did.

The day before my orphanage received visitors was like a festival. In an orphanage that doubled as a school, classes were suspended as we prepared. The children were excited, and everyone tried to guess who was coming. You see, we knew most of the groups, especially those from Australia and the United States. We even knew what they would do when they arrived and what gifts they would bring. We sang religious songs especially reserved for these occasions, and we recited the most sentimental poems. "What gifted, beautiful and precious orphaned babies," volunteers would say while they made donations. There would be a speech from the management before everyone dispersed. Sometimes children would be driven off, maybe to a hotel in the neighbourhood. It was a time for the teachers to mark assignments, for the house mothers to rest.

VOLUNTOURISM DRIVES ORPHANAGE TRAFFICKING, WHICH IN TURN FUELS THE COMMODIFICATION OF CHILDREN FOR THE PURPOSE OF ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION.

An observer might take this scene at face value: happy faces equal happy people. Most of the children felt they should build up close relationships – "friendships" – with the tourists from the volunteer groups. But how many parents would allow their children to spend this time unsupervised with a stranger? My heart goes cold for the children whose stories have yet to be told. If you looked closer, you could see children in tattered clothes while the director ate in fancy restaurants. The children's conditions remained poor, but while our needs were not met, the orphanage kept taking in new children and collecting more funds.

Tourists usually believe they're doing good; that by visiting and donating to orphanages, they're helping children get the best care. But many orphanages are less concerned with caring for children than they are with the revenue the institution can generate. And families are deceived. During my time at the orphanage, some peers and I spent the night in a lodge where the owners had children in the orphanage themselves. The father believed he was sending his children to a boarding school.

If there is no revenue, there is no economic incentive to recruit children away from their families. Voluntourism drives orphanage trafficking, which in turn fuels the commodification of children for the purposes of abuse and exploitation. Children are often seen not as human beings with rights, but as vehicles of charity: money-making machines. The demand for volunteering equals the demand for children. Beyond the statistics, there are real people being deprived of their families and communities: real lives are being ruined.

Most people with care experience continue to struggle with a lack of social contacts, mentors, friendships, identity and a sense of belonging. Yet they are often asked: "Didn't you make friends when you were in the orphanage? Haven't you made friends since you left?" This lack is not due to an absence of people while growing up, but instead due to the impermanence of the thousand footprints passing through their lives. The skill of making social bonds is one you learn in a community, not in an orphanage.

Some may argue that the children got what they needed: food, clothing, education. But at what price? What is their quality of life? And what other, better options are there? The resources ploughed into orphanage tourism are fuelling child abuse and exploitation. Imagine what could be achieved if they were redirected to family-based care instead.

Reroot Africa, which grew out of my own experience, works with volunteer groups to make sure they have enough information to decide where their money and efforts will go. We wish we could do even more. Imagine what we could do if we all joined forces – the government, the church, tourism agencies, policy makers, care reform advocates, prospective travellers and volunteers – and worked together to improve the lives of vulnerable children.

For more information visit our website wearelumos.org

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