

RECOMMENDATIONS



FOR GOVERNMENTS

IMPLEMENT CARE REFORM:

- **Ensure family and community-based care is prioritised in all policies relating to the care and protection of children.** This is key to enabling the safe, nurturing, and healthy development of children.
- **Prioritise support for families.** Ensure that services and programmes support and strengthen vulnerable families to care for their children. Develop and strengthen family support mechanisms, social work interventions, employment schemes, immigration policies and broader policy measures to keep families together.
- **Ensure availability of family and community-based alternative care for those who need it.** Children who cannot live with their birth family should be placed in high-quality family and community-based care. Ensure that all placements are based on identified needs and are in the best interests of the child.
- **Assess and address spending on institutional care as part of a process of care reform.** Commit to ringfencing those resources so that they can be redirected towards a range of family and community-based care services.
- **Engage care-experienced children and young people in care reform.** Ensure they have opportunities to participate fully at all stages of the process.

MODEL LAW:

- **Adopt a law on institution-related child trafficking for the purpose of financial exploitation.** Criminalise the act of trafficking children into orphanages and other residential childcare institutions, and the ownership, directorship and management of such exploitative institutions, including liability for those who may otherwise knowingly profit from them. Require compensation for victims. This can be achieved by adopting the Model Law contained in this report.

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.** Improved monitoring systems are essential to accurately map children's institutions, identify existing needs, ensure safeguarding, and improve planning for care reform.
- **Ensure institution-related trafficking is recorded and included in national referral mechanisms** or equivalent mechanisms for the identification of child victims of trafficking.
- **Ensure that there are effective regulations, control and inspection of all residential care providers regardless of their nature (public or private).** This should include mandating that child protection and safeguarding policies are implemented. Everyone who has contact with children, including staff, volunteers and visitors, should understand the policy and have restricted access to the children.
- **Implement systems that monitor and regulate funding.** Ensure oversight of funds that flow into orphanages to ensure accountability.

ORPHANAGE TOURISM:

- **All Governments should develop a national policy that outlaws the practice of unskilled volunteering in children's institutions.** In recognition of the harms of orphanage volunteering and its links to child exploitation, adopt a policy that prevents national volunteering agencies and tourism companies from providing such experiences to citizens.¹
- **All Governments should issue travel advice for citizens warning against orphanage volunteering and visits.** Ensure that the public is aware of the national stance against orphanage tourism.



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.** A 'best interests' determination of individual needs is essential, as well as prioritising family-based care.
- **Provide children in residential care and care leavers with appropriate information and advice to equip them with the knowledge to stay safe.** This should cover themes of exploitation risks, including institution-related trafficking.
- **Provide care leavers with vocational training and work opportunities.** As part of an approach to prevent the risk of (re)trafficking, care leavers should be empowered and adequately prepared for life beyond institutional care.
- **Inform all children about their right to issue complaints and report abuse.** Develop accessible, confidential and child-friendly reporting procedures in relevant languages.

TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS:

- **Provide accessible and regular training for child protection actors.** This should include a focus on the specific risks of child trafficking and exploitation that are linked to these types of care arrangements.
- **Issue practical guidance to care providers.** This should highlight the risk of child exploitation to children deprived of parental care, including how to prevent, identify and respond to instances of trafficking.

¹ The International Forum for Volunteering in Development have produced a Global Standard for good practice in international volunteering, including specific indicators on the harms of orphanage volunteering: <https://forum-ids.org/download-the-global-standard/> [accessed 1 September 2021].



FOR VOLUNTEERS, TOURISTS AND AGENCIES

- **Volunteering agencies and tourism companies should stop offering trips to children's institutions.** Those that currently offer such trips should consider organising ethical volunteering trips as an alternative. Wherever possible, volunteering placements should directly or indirectly support families and communities to remain together. Volunteering agencies and tourism companies should consider using their platforms to play an active role in raising awareness about the harm caused by volunteering in orphanages, highlighting the separation of families and the exploitation of children that it facilitates.
- **Volunteers should not volunteer in children's institutions.** Orphanage volunteering is harmful to children and fuels a system that drives family separation.
- **Volunteers should reflect on the skills they have and how they could be used most effectively to support local needs.** Volunteers should approach their placement with a 'learning mindset'; remaining open to learning from the people they are working with, their culture and their unique contexts.
- **Volunteers should ask the agency informed questions and only accept trips where they can ensure their participation is ethical.** This will create a market demand for a more ethical volunteering industry.
- **Anyone currently volunteering in an orphanage who is concerned about harmful practices to children should contact the relevant local authorities as soon as possible.** Volunteers should consider ending the volunteer placement early to minimise risk to themselves and others.
- **Private companies, universities and other organisations should ensure that they do not promote or engage with orphanage volunteering trips or visits.** This should include an assessment of their Corporate Social Responsibility policies (or equivalent) to ensure a focus on family and community strengthening as opposed to funding children's institutions.



FOR PRIVATE FUNDERS

- **Private funders should implement policies and guidelines clearly stating that they do not support the institutionalisation of children and underlining their commitment to care reform.** In practice, these policies should ensure that funders do not support children's institutions either directly or indirectly. This includes one-off donations as well as non-financial support, such as in-kind contributions, volunteering or mission trips by members. Funders' policies and regulations should restrict the use of funds for renovating and building institutions. Moreover, guidelines should include plans to redirect current funding towards family and community-based care. Donors should ensure that guidelines are enforced and that employees do not volunteer or invest in children's institutions.
- **Private donors should ensure that the projects they support are not engaged in child trafficking.** Private donors are strongly encouraged to read the Model Law and its detailed Commentary in order to understand the risks involved for children and to put in place due diligence measures to ensure they are not supporting the trafficking of children into childcare institutions.
- **Private donors should ensure that the projects they support link into a long-term vision and strategy of sustainable care transformation.** As care reform is not a quick process, a longer-term commitment to the redirection of funds is essential.
- **Funders with an established relationship with an institution(s) should ensure a phased approach to ceasing support.** This should minimise the risk of placing the remaining children in an even more damaging situation and support a process of reform. Loss of funding can lead to poor nutrition, reduced staffing, loss of school fees, and more. Immediately withdrawing support to institutions is likely to harm children in the short term. Private funders should instead develop a divestment strategy to phase out support responsibly and redirect it based on an understanding of needs.