



Joan Marie del Mundo / Save the Children

Mapping the European Contribution to the Institutionalisation of Children Overseas

United Kingdom, France and Germany

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As of March 2020, the members of the ReThink Orphanages European Hub include: Adieu-Arche-B Marketing, Better Care Network, Better Care Network Netherlands, Comhlámh, Friends International, London School of Economics, Home for Good, Hope and Homes for Children, Lumos Foundation, People and Places, Save the Children, Stahili Foundation, STC Expeditions, Tearfund Ireland, United Social Ventures, World Childhood Foundation, and the Year Out Group.

DISCLAIMER

In view of the limitations in the methodology, availability of data, and inconsistencies in terminology, the ReThink Orphanages European Hub views this mapping report as a starting point for future activities and will review the mapping one year after publication.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International volunteering is widely understood to have originated primarily in Western Europe, specifically the United Kingdom, before the trend expanded to other parts of the world with similar demographics, for example Australia and the United States.ⁱ Today, significant anecdotal evidence suggests that other countries across Europe also make a considerable contribution to the supply chain of people, money and resources that continue to sustain and foster the orphanage industry worldwide. However, there is a lack of data available to accurately assess the extent of this contribution. As the linkages between the growth in the number of orphanages worldwide and the booming orphanage volunteering business become more apparent, more attention needs to be given to European countries and the role they play in the institutionalisation of children overseas.

This report seeks to map the contribution of the three countries in Europe with the largest volunteer travel markets: The United Kingdom, Germany and France. For each country, a number of sectors have been considered and opportunities for further engagement have been identified. The format of this report follows a previously published [ReThink Orphanages Australia report](#) that engaged in a similar mapping exercise. This mapping report should be seen as a starting point, identifying areas that start to shed light on a large problem, but also to point to gaps in data, and the continued confusion in terminology and classification of orphanage volunteering trips which make data collection challenging. Acknowledging the data gaps that currently exist, the report will be reviewed one year after publication.

Much of the attention, particularly in France and Germany, has focused on short-term trips operated by volunteer for-profit organisations, while all other sectors providing orphanage tourism experiences (not-for-profit volunteer organisations, faith groups, educational institutions, tourism operators, both traditional and those operating in “sustainable tourism”) have largely been absent from the debate. The few examples where organisations have changed and no longer support orphanage volunteering, have mostly been achieved with volunteer for-profit organisations, while a significant proportion of the other volunteering and tourism organisations continue to regularly offer orphanage trips, including volunteer opportunities. To make more progress on this debate, we need to better clarify the message and broaden the debate to include all kinds of volunteering regardless of the legal status of the enabling organisation or the length of volunteer stays.

While the European Union has promoted deinstitutionalisation in many ways, particularly by supporting the shift from institutional to community-based care through EU funding, this direction of travel has not filtered into the volunteering space. In both France and Germany, there are still many government-funded programmes that support orphanage volunteering. Specifically working to exclude orphanage volunteering from government funded programmes would help to 1) stop public funds being used to support orphanages, 2) increase the debate amongst those that receive a mixture of government funding with private funding, and 3) engage faith communities, especially in France and Germany, many of which also benefit from government funded programmes.

Faith communities across Europe are very involved in supporting orphanages overseas. However equally importantly, many are also interested in supporting families and communities. More work needs to be done on how best to shift their giving and developing case studies as examples of how to do this appropriately in the best interests of children. Some have compared this shift to the debate on child sponsorship which shifted from supporting individual children to supporting or sponsoring a community.

Given the popularity and movement to promote volunteering by young people and students, particularly in the United Kingdom, clear guidance across Europe on how to choose ethical and sustainable placements should be readily available.

Many sending organisations have very little direct contact with the host country, thus an additional area of research should be focused on the role of incoming agencies, those that serve as a host to volunteering “sending organisations” and working to help them to ethically and gradually divest from orphanage volunteering.

DEFINITIONS

Residential Care: Residential care is a group-living arrangement in a specially designated facility where salaried staff or volunteers ensure care on a shift basis. Residential care is an umbrella term that includes short - and long-term placements in orphanages, institutions, children's centres, small-group homes, half-way houses, safe houses or refuges, therapeutic centres, rehabilitation centres for substance abuse, boarding homes, mother and baby units, and transit centres.ⁱⁱ In this document we use the terms "residential childcare centres" or "residential childcare institutions" to refer to a place providing overnight residential care for children.

Alternative Care: The care provided for children by caregivers who are not their biological parents. This care may take the form of informal or formal care whereby a child is looked after at least overnight outside the parental home, either by decision of a judicial or administrative authority or duly accredited body, or at the initiative of the child, his/her parent(s) or primary caregivers, or spontaneously by a care provider in the absence of parents. Alternative care may be kinship care; foster care; other forms of family-based or family-like care placements; residential care; or supervised independent living arrangements for children.ⁱⁱⁱ

Deinstitutionalisation: Policy-driven process of reforming a country's alternative care system, which primarily aims to: decrease reliance on institutional and residential care with a complementary increase in family and community-based care and services; prevent separation of children from their parents by providing adequate support to children, families and communities; and prepare the process of leaving care, ensuring social inclusion for care leavers and a smooth transition towards independent living.^{iv}

Family-based care: Family-based care includes all forms of parental childcare, extended family, or alternative family care in which a child is raised by a family, rather than within residential care. Family-based care includes parental care, kinship care, guardianship, foster care and adoption.^v

Incoming Agency: An organisation (comparable with Destination Management Companies in traditional tourism) that identifies host projects where volunteers can be placed and handles the volunteers on the ground in the volunteer destination. Incoming agencies can be for-profit organisations or not-for-profit organisations and contract with sending agencies in the volunteers' home countries. Some incoming agencies also work as sending agencies.

Institutional Care: While there is no set definition of institutional care, the Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care, convened by the former European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equality Opportunities, Vladimír Špidla, stated "an institution is a residential care facility where an institutional culture prevails. The size of the institution matters, but this is not the only defining feature."^{vi} An institutional culture refers to: the lack of individual support or privacy to children, separation or isolation of children from the wider community, regimented routines for children, discouraging contact with the birth or extended family, and lack of opportunity to form attachment to one or two primary caregivers.

Modern Slavery: The recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation. In the United Kingdom, it is a crime under the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) and includes holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after.^{vii}

Orphanage: An orphanage is a residential care centre for children.

Orphanage Volunteering: Orphanage volunteering is a term used to define a spectrum of activities related to the support of orphanages and children's homes by individuals who are primarily, or were initially, tourists on vacation. In most cases, orphanage volunteering involves a tourist who wishes to include an element of social work-orientated volunteering in their travels and who chooses to do this by volunteering their time – sometimes coupled with financial or material support – to an orphanage.^{viii}

Sending Agency: An organisation (company or not-for-profit) that promotes volunteer placements in the volunteers' home country and processes the volunteers' applications. Some sending organisations have their own staff in the volunteer destination, others rely on incoming agencies to manage the volunteers and their work in the destination country.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Overseas volunteering continues to be popular in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. This includes volunteers interested in volunteering with children, including caring for children housed in residential care centres in developing countries. It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of children living in residential childcare centres globally with numbers ranging from 2.7 to 8 million depending on the reporting mechanism.^{ix}

The term “orphanage” tends to lead to the mistaken assumption that children living in residential care are there because they have no parents. Studies in multiple locations over a period of time have shown that the majority of children living in childcare institutions have at least one living parent.^x In many cases the extended family network typical of the home country tends to provide a further safety net in terms of proximity and diversity of potential care for each child.^{xi}

There is a recognition in the majority of ‘developed’ countries, at least in terms of domestic policy, that growing up in a residential childcare centre is detrimental to a child’s development and puts them at increased risk of harm, as outlined in Section II. Yet Western Non-Governmental Organisations, donors and volunteers continue to fund residential childcare centres abroad with the aim of giving children a better quality of life. The perpetuation of residential childcare institutions undermines alternative models of community and family-based support, providing incentives for family separation.^{xii} In families with one or both parents alive, the decision can be made to place a child in residential care believing it will offer a better standard of education and access to other services. This simply further increases the demand.

The continued financial support of residential childcare centres also provides a potential platform for child exploitation. The livelihoods of those managing the centres depends upon the cultivation of donors, which in turn creates a demand for vulnerable children for those donors to fund. The potential not just for wilful misrepresentation of what orphanages can offer children and their families, but also for child trafficking, is enormous.^{xiii} And perversely, the visible neglect of children in poor living conditions can provide greater interest and income from prospective donors meaning that orphanage owners have an incentive to keep children in poverty.^{xiv} The fact that visitors to these institutions are in most cases unskilled and inexperienced, unable to make informed decisions about the facilities or the treatment of resident children, coupled with the lack of regulation around residential childcare institutions across much of the developing world, means that malpractice is able to continue and the interests of the child continue to be neglected.

In 2016, ReThink Orphanages published an analysis of the ways in which many Australia agencies and organisations contribute to the institutionalisation of children overseas.^{xv} This paper seeks to build upon that research, using a similar methodology, but instead looking at the context of three European nations: the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. Through developing a greater understanding of the structures and involvement across different sectors in these countries, key barriers are identified, and recommendations made towards helping European countries play a stronger role in driving care reform in the best interests of children.

SECTION II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to outline the nature of volunteering and its relation to the alternative care of children in countries across the Global South, consider the harmful impact of institutionalisation on children, and scope of engagement in the growing orphanage industry from the United Kingdom, France and Germany – both financially and through volunteering opportunities. It provides an overview of existing data and regulations within each relevant sector and seeks to highlight gaps where only limited data and information is available.

ORPHANAGE VOLUNTEERING

As this paper seeks to apply to the European context the same methodology as that used in the ReThink Orphanages Australia mapping, it is appropriate to adopt the same understanding of ‘volunteering’ as set out in the RO Australia mapping: namely the process whereby “tourists, for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment.”^{xvi} Estimates suggest that those participating in overseas volunteering each year could number up to a staggering 10 million, with a spend of over 2 billion USD.^{xvii} A 2008 reference showed rapid growth within the sector with a sharp rise in the number of both willing volunteers and facilitators operating within the market.^{xviii} Without more recent statistics, it is unclear if this growth has continued however there are still many organisations offering volunteering opportunities abroad.

The definition of orphanage volunteering can encompass short day trips to visit residential childcare institutions or longer stays incorporating care of those children by visitors. It is commonplace for tourists to incorporate an element of social purpose into an existing holiday, or to factor in elements of both vacation and volunteering when planning their trip.^{xix} In its most typical (or stereotypical) form, volunteering can be characterised by inexperienced and unskilled travellers supporting childcare institutions through financial support or short-term labour, most typically involving childcare, teaching (or simply speaking) English, or carrying out low-skill manual tasks. As orphanages become increasingly rare in the Global North, with an acceptance of the merits of family- and community-based care in providing better outcomes for children, residential childcare institutions continue to increase in number in countries across the Global South. Commentators have drawn both anecdotal and numerical correlations between increases in tourism and the increased number of orphanages.^{xx}

Research for this report suggests that there have been very few studies looking at the direct impact of volunteering on children in orphanages, and even less on the role of volunteers from specific geographies (even nations with developed and highly scrutinised charitable sectors such as the three countries comprising the focus of this paper). Among the few studies looking at orphanage operations, researchers note the value of financial contributions from volunteers and the perceived educational benefits their presence may be able to offer.^{xxi} But as summarised in the ReThink Orphanages 2016 paper: “*studies indicate that orphanage tourism is detrimental to children’s social, physical and psychological well-being and cause further negative impacts, such as the potential for children to develop or worsen attachment disorders, become separated from their families, fuel corruption or divert funds from local development priorities.*”^{xxii} Furthermore, some authors have argued that orphanage volunteering commodifies children, making them a resource available for exploitation.^{xxiii}^{xxiv}

A 2014 study conducted by Better Volunteering Better Care, later rebranded ReThink Orphanages, found that negative impacts resulting from orphanage volunteering include: (1) vulnerability of children to abuse through lack of appropriate background checks; (2) normalising the practice of using unskilled

staff to work with children; (3) disrupted attachment for children; (4) imbalance of power between foreigners and children; (5) inappropriate behaviour from unskilled and unscreened volunteers; and (6) cultural differences between volunteers and children. The biggest problems noted were that volunteers are supporting a model of care that should only be used as a last resort and are creating a demand for “orphans” which separates children from their families.^{xxv}

In October 2019, the Global Standard for Volunteering for Development was launched. This voluntary standard, developed by the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) is the first of its kind, and is designed to support organisations that work with volunteers to improve their practice and impact. It states, as a core requirement that: *‘Organisations do not allow volunteers to work with or within orphanages or other residential care facilities for children’*.^{xxvi}

IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONALISATION ON CHILDREN

Among researchers, and child protection and child development specialists, there is increasing awareness of the negative impacts that institutionalisation can have on a child’s development and well-being.^{xxvii} Children in these circumstances face greater likelihood of a range of psychological disorders and behavioural issues, as well as greater exposure to potential abuse. A growing body of evidence draws the conclusion that institutionalisation can lead to diminished intellectual capability and physical health, particularly in young children,^{xxviii} and also suggests that, when it comes to social development, young children growing up in institutions are significantly delayed compared to those of the same age growing up in a family setting.^{xxix} Researchers have pointed to the detrimental impact that attachment disorders can have on brain development as a possible factor, along with the likelihood of diminished cognitive stimulation as a result of particularly narrow life experiences.^{xxx}

Children living in institutional care are also exposed to the risk of various types of physical harm. Volunteer placements are typically short-term, with little safeguarding oversight or training provided. Abuse of children in orphanages continues to occur all too frequently. It is also commonplace for orphanages to allow, or even depend on, visitors, tourists and volunteers working directly with children regardless of vetting or supervision, putting those children at an even greater risk. Numerous child protection and advocacy groups are raising awareness about orphanage volunteering and the role it plays in the perpetuation of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect and calling for an outright halt to the practice.^{xxxi}

THE LINK TO MODERN SLAVERY

Orphanage volunteering and foreign funding create a demand for children to be in orphanages.^{xxxii} An analysis of the global volunteering market conducted in June 2018 identified the following countries as the top 10 global orphanage volunteering hot spots: Nepal, Kenya, Ghana, Cambodia, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, India, Peru and Costa Rica. The United States, United Kingdom and Australia are the top three countries sending volunteers to orphanages overseas.^{xxxiii}

Tourists are willing to spend large amounts of money in order to ‘give back’ to communities in developing countries and for-profit entities are more than happy to facilitate this process – often partnering with local NGOs who can provide this opportunity. The increase in volunteering has seen a sharp rise in the number of orphanages in developing countries, despite the number of actual orphans significantly reducing. Some orphanages receive funding per child or depend on volunteer donations, which creates an incentive for them to recruit children into care.^{xxxiv,xxxv} There is also documented evidence of parents

being offered money or being coerced to give up their children, enabling corrupt child care institutions to profit through donations or child trafficking.^{xxxvi}

Once relocated to a childcare institution, children often lose contact with their own family. Their own parent(s) are replaced by paid 'house parents'. In some cases, children's biological parents are not encouraged to visit their children, and they may even be told that their custodial rights are lost. In some countries, such as Nepal and Cambodia, children's papers are known to be falsified, and the children are moved around different orphanages and misrepresented as 'orphans'.

There are also examples where children in childcare institutions are kept in slave-like conditions and exploited for profit through forced 'cultural' performances for tourists, forced begging, and forced interaction and play with visitors. Children may also be kept in poor conditions and are malnourished in order to elicit more support in the form of donations and gifts.

In 2018, Australia became the first country to reference trafficking into and out of orphanages in its modern slavery legislation.^{xxxvii} Following this, a review of the UK's Modern Slavery Act 2015, concluded in May 2019 that the wording of the legislation was sufficiently broad enough to include emerging forms of slavery and human trafficking, including orphanage trafficking, but recommended that policy guidance be developed.

SECTION III: MAPPING

For the purposes of this mapping exercise, three European countries were prioritized - the United Kingdom, France and Germany. The decision to focus on these three countries was due to an initial online assessment of the size of the respective industries, as well as survey results from members of the ReThink Orphanages European Hub. The United Kingdom is the largest contributor, with Germany and France as the next two largest contributors from Western Europe.^{xxxviii} In addition some practices in Ireland and the Netherlands are referenced given the potential significance both within those countries and across Europe. For a more comprehensive mapping of the work currently being undertaken in the Netherlands, there will be a Dutch review following the recommendations from the [VVD White Paper](#).

Furthermore, the United Kingdom is in the process of reviewing its Modern Slavery Act. Following Australia's decision to include orphanage trafficking within the definition of modern slavery, an independent review of the UK's Modern Slavery Act recommends that the term exploitation is broad enough to include orphanage trafficking. If this recommendation is accepted, this would require businesses and charities to examine their supply chains for their links with orphanages.

METHODOLOGY

The mapping was undertaken by utilising a combination of existing data sets, internet analysis, and a literature review for each sector across the three European countries. At the time of research, the United Kingdom was still part of the European Union and further analysis will need to be conducted to determine any changes in laws and policies that may specifically impact the United Kingdom in relation to orphanage volunteering following the withdrawal. The NGO and faith-based sectors across the three countries were assessed by looking at data sets currently held by the regulatory body of that country, sector membership bodies and organisation databases. These gave insight into the priorities of active NGOs and religious institutions.

For contributions from the faith-based sector in the United Kingdom, *Home for Good*, a UK adoption and fostering charity, commissioned ComRes (a leading research consultancy and member of the British Polling Council) to run a comparative survey, with the aim of ascertaining whether Christians are more likely to support overseas orphanages than non-Christians. ComRes interviewed 6,120 British adults online across the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) between the 17th and 23rd of August 2018. Data was weighted to be demographically representative of all UK adults aged 18 and over. Regular church goers made up 9% of the sample (565 respondents). *Home for Good* also commissioned Christian Research to run a second survey. Christian Research is part of the Bible Society Group and is an independent market research agency. They operate a monthly online panel with 5000 members called Resonate, which is the only multi-denominational, publicly accessible panel of committed, practising Christians in the UK. Six questions were commissioned, and the survey ran for ten days from the 28th of June until the 8th of July 2019, with 1276 people completing the survey. There was good representation amongst the eight listed denominations, with the majority (48%) stating an affiliation with the Church of England (Anglican). The six questions in the survey were centred on financial giving and volunteering in orphanages. The aim of this survey was to find out more about the extent and nature of British Christian involvement in overseas orphanages.

The education sectors across the three countries were initially analysed by accessing lists of universities and secondary schools. Because UK universities typically promote all international volunteering via their Student Unions or Student Careers Service, assessing promotion or support for orphanage volunteering

was relatively straightforward and a thorough mapping of all 148 universities was undertaken. For schools in the UK (of which there are over 6000), a sample of high achieving and average ranking schools was assessed to give a sense of the level of support across the school continuum. Mapping universities and schools across Germany and France proved more complex, due to a lack of accessible data. Analysis was conducted through online searches, using search terms such as “university volunteering orphanage” and “school trip orphanage” to identify activities.

With regards to the final sector of travel and tourism, a data set was not available within the United Kingdom, so Internet analysis and a snowballing methodology was applied. In France and Germany, data sets already existed and so were able to be analysed, providing more accurate data on the size of the sector contribution to orphanages overseas

LIMITATIONS

While we set out to do a comprehensive mapping, it was quickly apparent that very few existing data sets are readily available. Data is often labelled and categorised differently creating overlap and confusion. For this reason, we focused on using internet analysis to provide a sense of the scale of support across the different sectors. Researchers relied heavily on the self-reporting of the institutions or industries being mapped, which means that it can be assumed findings documented in this report are not comprehensive and that other kinds of contributions are extremely likely. In addition, there are many initiatives happening at the time of writing. This mapping report should therefore not be seen as definitive, but rather a starting point, providing top line information with regards to Europe’s role in supporting institutionalisation overseas. Data should continue to be collected and policy makers should look at these gaps as a rationale for more transparency and improved systematic data collection on the financial and in-person support for institutional care.

FINDINGS

While there were some commonalities between different types of volunteering, much of the work has been fragmented with minimal learning from different countries and sectors. We found this particularly striking with different agencies working in multiple countries in Europe, supporting orphanage volunteering in one country and actively campaigning against it in another. Learning needs to continue to be shared across borders and sectors in multiple languages.

CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

With the fall of communism in 1989, the discovery of the conditions of children in orphanages throughout Eastern Europe shocked the world. As Romania looked to join the European Union (EU), the EU, together with civil society, took an active role in ensuring that deinstitutionalisation was a key component of accession. Over time, the EU has shown great commitment to ensure all children can grow up in families. It has recognised the harm that institutionalisation causes to children and taken a number of steps to ensure that no further investment goes to institutional settings within its borders. While the EU’s commitment can be traced globally, it has not yet actively put in place measures to ensure volunteers are not supporting institutions for children. The following section provides an overview of the legal and policy frameworks, including European Union funds, that have supported deinstitutionalisation both within and outside of the EU. It also outlines various EU volunteering programmes.

European Union leadership in child welfare and protection

In the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#)^{xxxix}, the [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#)^{xl}, the [EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child](#)^{xli} and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#),^{xlii} the EU has established robust legal and policy frameworks to secure the rights of children to grow up in families. All EU Member States have ratified the [United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#) which clearly recognises member states' obligations to support families. Specifically it states, "the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community." It goes on to state: "Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding".^{xliii}

Most notably, by acceding to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010, the EU and its Member States have committed to ensuring that everyone, including children with a disability, are given the right to live independently.

Children in alternative care also have been recognised as a particularly vulnerable group by the European Commission in its Recommendation "Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage."^{xliv} The recommendation further encouraged EU Member States to "stop the expansion of institutional care settings for children without parental care and promote quality, community-based care and foster care within family settings instead where children's voice is given due consideration."^{xlv}

The '[EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child](#) (2017) Leave no child behind' have also included institutionalisation among the risks for children in vulnerable situations.^{xlvi} The document highlights the importance of appropriate alternative care for children that allows them to participate in community life and preventing family and child separation^{xlvii}, and states that the primary consideration for expenditure should be the best interests of the child.^{xlviii}

Furthermore, the [UN Resolution on the Rights of the Child](#), unanimously adopted by 193 member states in December 2019 and co-drafted by the EU, reflects a global commitment to strengthen children's care in their families, prevent unnecessary separation by address its root causes and put an end to the institutionalisation of children by progressively replacing it with family and community based care. This resolution is monumental as it the first time ever, UN member states have recognised the harm of orphanage volunteering, stating in Optional Protocol 35t that member states must take appropriate measures to "**...to prevent and address the harms related to volunteering programmes in orphanages, including in the context of tourism which can lead to trafficking and exploitation.**"^{xlix}

The European Union Investment towards Deinstitutionalisation

In addition to the above legal and policy frameworks, the EU domestically has promoted deinstitutionalisation in the use of EU Funds. In the 2014-2020 programming period, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), and in particular the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, have been used across Member States to support a wide range of measures to support the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care, in line with the requirement of the poverty reduction policy framework. Following the draft thematic guidance for desk officers of the European Commission on the transition from institutional to community-based care, "building or renovating long-stay residential institutions is excluded from the ESIF support, regardless of their size."^l

Outside of the EU, the European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development also put the issue of children in institutions on its agenda at the end of 2015 by publishing the tender ‘Study on the institutionalisation of children and possible alternative care solutions in Asia, Africa, Central and South American countries’, “in order to strengthen the knowledge of the European Commission on the nature, the extent and scope of institutionalisation and feasibility for deinstitutionalisation (alternative care for children)”.^{li} This resulted in a 2017 summary report entitled [Towards the Right Care for Children: Orientations for Reforming Alternative Care Systems in Africa, Asia and Latin America](#). The EU also published in 2018 a call for proposals entitled ‘Quality Alternative Care for Children and De-Institutionalisation’ with a total budget of 13 000 000 euros.^{lii} This call resulted in grants to five agencies for improving alternative care and/or deinstitutionalisation in Myanmar, Cambodia, Georgia, Burundi and Armenia.

While the benefits of EU funds can be traced globally, it must be noted that some reports have highlighted worrying trends. Recently a number of cases have come to light, including the Tophaz institution in Hungary^{liii} and Tantava in Romania^{liv}, where EU funds have been used to refurbish institutions in which the human rights of residents were allegedly breached. Furthermore, numerous reports and studies have been published, that highlight the use of EU funds and caution on misuse, for example by the Fundamental Rights Agency,^{lv} Community Living Europe: Structural Funds Watch,^{lvi} United Nations Human Rights office of the High Commissioner.^{lvii}

Between May and June 2018, the European Commission released its proposals for the financial instruments in the multi-annual financial framework (MFF) for the period of 2021-2027. Although the negotiations are still ongoing at the time of writing, it is encouraging to observe the prioritisation of child protection and deinstitutionalisation in the key funding instruments within the EU, such as the European Social Fund Plus, again prioritising deinstitutionalisation.^{lviii} A particularly noteworthy new development is the proposed prioritisation of deinstitutionalisation for children in the proposed external funding instrument called the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).^{lix} This proposal is supported by the European Parliament and the Council.^{lx} Most recently, in November 2019, the European Parliament’s Resolution on Children’s Rights, called on “Member States to ensure that unnecessary family separation is prevented, and that family- and community-based services are strengthened to allow all children to grow up not in institutions but in families and communities.”^{lxi}

Civil Society Engagement at the European Union Level

Civil society organisations have a wealth of experience in engaging the European Union to support the realisation of deinstitutionalisation both within and outside of the EU.

The European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community-based care (EEG), was convened in 2009 by the then European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Vladimir Špidla, in order to address the issues of institutional care reform in the EU.^{lxii} The EEG is a broad coalition gathering stakeholders representing people with care or support needs and their families, including children, people with disabilities, homeless people, people experiencing mental health problems; as well as service providers, public authorities and intergovernmental organisations. Amongst others, the EEG has developed the Common European Guidelines on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care, which provides practical advice to policy and decision makers in the EU and the neighbouring countries on deinstitutionalisation^{lxiii} and a toolkit focused on how the European Structural and Investment Funds in the 2014-2020 programming period can support national, regional and local authorities in designing and implementing structural reforms aimed at facilitating the development of quality family-based and community-based alternatives to institutional care.^{lxiv} Most recently, the EEG

together with Hope and Homes for Children developed a practical instrument which encourages a tailor-made use of EU funds across EU member states in the 2021-2027 programming period, reflective of individual needs and that should lead to the development of a wide range of family-based care and community-based services locally.^{lxv}

The Opening Door for Europe's Children campaign, which ran from 2013 to 2019, aimed to support national efforts to develop child protection systems that strengthen families and ensure high-quality family and community-based alternative care for children, by leveraging EU funding and policy and building capacity in civil society. It was a partnership between five international and civil society organisations across 16 European countries.^{lxvi} Finally, the Community Living for Europe: Structural Funds Watch is an independent initiative that tracks how the clear commitment of the European Structural and Investment Funds to support community living for persons with disabilities, children and older persons is being achieved.^{lxvii}

Globally, in the run up to the UN Resolution on the Rights of the Child, a global coalition of 256 organisations, networks, and agencies working at national, regional and international levels on children's care came together to propose a set of [key recommendations](#) to Member States on what would help to drive child care reform forward, addressing the key challenges and opportunities for implementing the rights of children without parental care.

In addition there have been several global campaigns such as the Better Care Network's [The Love you Give](#) campaign and Lumos's [#HelpingNotHelping](#) and Home for Good's [Homecoming Project](#) working to raise awareness on the harmful effects of volunteering in institutions.

Volunteering Programmes at the European Union Level

While the EU's commitment to the transition from institutional to family and community-based care can be traced globally, the EU has not actively engaged in ensuring volunteers are not placed in institutions for children. At the same time, volunteering constitutes an important part of its activities. The EU has had numerous volunteering programmes, targeted at volunteering both across the Member States and countries outside of the EU. These include The European Solidarity Corps, Youth in Action and the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EU Aid Volunteers Initiative).

The European Union ran a programme for young people called "Youth in Action" that ran from 2007 to 2013. It aimed to promote out of school mobility within and beyond the EU's borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encouraged the inclusion of all young people regardless of their educational, social and cultural background. The total budget for the programme in the 2007-2013 period was EUR 885 million. In order to achieve its objectives, the Youth in Action Programme implemented a number of actions, including the European Voluntary Service (Action 2) where "young people take part individually or in groups in not-for-profit, unpaid activities" both within and outside the EU.^{lxviii}

In the 2014-2020 programming period, the 'European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps' (or [EU Aid Volunteers](#) initiative) brought together volunteers (+18 years old and either EU citizen or long-term resident) and organisations from different countries, providing practical support to humanitarian aid projects and contributing to strengthening the local capacity and resilience of disaster-affected communities. EU Aid Volunteers projects are run by partnerships of EU-based and non-EU based organisations. EU Aid Volunteers received €147.9 million of EU funding between 2015 and 2020.^{lxix}

In reviewing the EU Strategy (2011-2014) for Corporate Social Responsibility, the European Commission stated that private companies can play an important role and contribute to the European Union's humanitarian operations, particularly through employee volunteering.^{lxx} In President Jean-Claude Juncker's 2016 annual State of the European Union speech, he emphasized the need to invest in young people and announced the idea of a [European Solidarity Corps](#) to create opportunities for young people across the European Union.^{lxxi}

The first phase of the European Solidary Corps was launched in 2016 where eight different EU programmes were mobilized to offer volunteering, traineeship or job opportunities to young people across the EU.^{lxxii}

European Solidarity Corps (ECS)

The Commission has proposed that in the 2021-2027 programming period, the European Solidarity Corps (ECS) integrates the existing EU Aid Volunteers initiative.^{lxxiii} The total budget proposed is 1.26 billion Euros. The ECS is a programme of the European Union that pools volunteer opportunities in all member states and some partner countries in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa. The ESC has replaced the European Voluntary Service (EVS) since 2018. All organisations that want to participate in the ESC, either as sending or receiving organisations, need to go through an accreditation process. The criteria for accreditation are not publicly available, apart from the [ESC Guide](#) which states that accreditation for coordinating organisations and sending organisations will be considered as a "quality label for volunteering" and receiving organisations will be considered for a "quality label for volunteering for the host role."

While there has been no mention of orphanage volunteering in previous policies, it will most likely be mentioned in upcoming regulations. Amendments to the draft regulation were proposed by the European Parliament to include language supporting the transition from institutionalisation to family- and community based-care and child protection measures, as well as to ensure that all activities carried out within the programme are in line with the "do no harm" principle and activities involving direct contact with children be guided by the principle of the "best interest of the child". Further amendments, still under discussion, also propose that participants taking part in solidarity activities for the benefit of vulnerable groups including children be specifically trained and, when needed, subjected to background checks. Moreover, one of the proposed amendments reads that "the Programme should not support measures or initiatives that hamper the commitment to end institutionalisation or any placement that would be harmful to children or persons with disabilities."^{lxxiv}

It is equally crucial that all of the awarding bodies responsible for granting quality labels (National Agencies, Executive Agencies and SALTOs^{lxxv}) to applicant organisations are well-informed about the harms caused by the institutionalisation of children and the role that orphanage volunteering plays in perpetuating this practice.

At the time of this mapping, we could not find a database of organisations that send volunteers or where they are received so it is challenging to determine how many residential childcare institutions have participated as part of the ECS or the previous EVS. However, an internet analysis of the programmes available identified several ESC placements and host projects in orphanages in Eastern Europe.^{lxxvi}

FRANCE

Volunteering Sector

There are an estimated 14,000 to 17,000 French volunteers traveling abroad each year.^{lxxvii} Volunteer-sending organisations in France can be divided into three areas: Charities and not-for-profit sending organisations, Government funded international volunteering and for-profit sending organisations.

Charities and not-for-profit sending organisations are organised through several networks and a few large actors. There are three main government funded international volunteering programmes and very few for-profit organisations sending volunteers. We will examine the role of each in more detail below.

Charities and not-for-profit sending organisations

The not-for-profit sector is organised around several different networks and big actors, the most important one being *France Volontaires*. *France Volontaires* is a platform created in 2009 operated by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs with the aim of supporting the national government, local and regional authorities, and charities to develop and promote international volunteering. Volunteer organisations set up as for-profit organisations cannot become members. *France Volontaires* is also linked to other government departments, such as the French Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, and its members include several prominent volunteer sending organisations (VSOs) such as: *DCC*, *La Guilde*, *the Cotravaux network*.

In addition to its activities in France, *France Volontaires* also operates a network of offices abroad called *Espaces Volontariats*^{lxxviii} in Africa, Asia and South America, with some offices located in countries that have been identified as orphanage hotspots including Cambodia, Ghana, Haiti and Togo. *France Volontaires* has repeatedly commented on the issue of institutionalisation of children overseas and has expressed contradictory points of view on the matter.

In May 2019, for example, *France Volontaires*' Cambodian office shared a post on Facebook about a campaign 'to stop orphanage voluntourism' and declared that 'France Volontaires fully supports this initiative and shares VSO's vision of responsible volunteering!^{lxxix} *France Volontaires*' website also features a section called *Attention au volontourisme!* (Beware of voluntourism!)^{lxxx}, intended to warn future volunteers about the potential shortfalls of voluntourism. The webpage includes a list of articles on the subject, several of which focus on the problem of orphanage volunteering, such as ChildSafe's 'Children are not tourist attractions' campaign and a video called the "Voluntourist" by Chloé Sanguinetti. However, several members of *France Volontaires* offer volunteer placements in orphanages, and *France Volontaires* also regularly showcases projects in residential care institutions on its website. It is suggested that the not-for-profit volunteer sending organisations differentiate themselves from volunteer organisations with company status, and, in the context of orphanage volunteering, perceive that if delivered via a not-for-profit organisation it constitutes responsible volunteering.^{lxxxi}

Offering volunteer placements in orphanages is a common practice in the not-for-profit sector in France, through both independent and government-funded programmes. Many of the established not-for-profit volunteer sending organisations are organised in networks. None of these networks have a publicly available child protection policy. Although not all not-for-profit volunteer sending organisations have orphanage projects, an analysis of the various organisations' websites did not identify any with a clear statement against orphanage volunteering. All of the major networks we reviewed have members that offer orphanage volunteering opportunities.

Examples of the networks we reviewed include:

- ***Coordination Sud***: A network of 164 French NGOs specialising in international development. *Coordination Sud* does not specialise in volunteering, although some of its members do (like *France Volontaires*).
- ***CLONG-Volontariat***: A network of 13 NGOs that was previously focused on the *VSI* government-funded programme (see below) but has now widened its scope to international volunteering in general.
- ***Cotravaux***: A network of 17 not-for-profits offering local or international group placements (*chantiers* in French).

French Government funded international volunteering programmes

There are three main governmental programmes that provide funding for international volunteering in France: The *Volontariat de Solidarité Internationale*, the *Service civique à l'étranger*, and the *European Solidarity Corps*. The number of French volunteers taking part in these programmes amounts to approximately 5,000 to 5,500 people participating per year (1,929 for the *VSI*, 1,547 for the *Service civique à l'étranger*,^{lxxxii} and 1,757 for the *EVS/CSE*).^{lxxxiii} Research identified a small, but not prominent, number of references to volunteering opportunities in residential childcare facilities across these programmes.

For-profit Sending Organisations

There are few French voluntary organisations that are set up as for-profit organisations in France. Three companies offering international volunteering placements operating in French and primarily targeting the French public were identified in this mapping. Out of the three, just one clearly offers orphanage volunteering placements, another ceased orphanage volunteering at the end of the 2017 and the third does not offer orphanage volunteer placements.

Tourism Sector

The tourism industry includes organisations that do not specialise in volunteering, but still include orphanages in their product offerings in a number of different ways, such as short-term visits (often a few hours as part of a tour), shows performed by orphans, or the sale of handmade crafts made by orphans. The two kinds of tourism most often referenced in France are traditional tourism and sustainable tourism (referred to in French as *tourisme solidaire/social/équitable /éthique/responsable/éco-responsable*).

Research suggests that travel packages that include the possibility of visiting or even spending a short time volunteering in an orphanage are more common amongst travel operators that consider themselves to be “sustainable”. In France, it appears that supporting an orphanage is a legitimate way of authentically visiting a destination and contributing to a charitable cause at the same time.

Traditional Tourism

Entreprises du voyage is the national network which groups the main local and international players of the French travel sector and has more than 3,800 members. No mentions of the issues surrounding child protection or orphanages were found on their website.

Analysis of three of the most prominent tour-operators in France (Club Med, Pierre & Vacances and TUI France) concluded that orphanage visits are not very common in traditional tourism. The French [Accor Group](#), a major player in the hospitality sector worldwide, has published an [Ethics and corporate social responsibility charter](#), which pledges to comply with a number of commitments. Issues surrounding child protection such as child labour, paedophilia and sexual tourism are addressed, but the document makes no mention of orphanage volunteering.

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is a relatively new form of traveling which aims to provide customers with more genuine and ethical travel experiences abroad. There are several networks dedicated to sustainable tourism in France, the major networks are listed below:

- [Association pour le Tourisme Equitable et Solidaire \(ATES\)](#) ([tourismesolidaire.org](#)), a network of 32 actors (mainly tour operators) specialising in sustainable tourism.
- [Voyageurs et Voyageistes éco-responsables \(VVE Ecotourisme\)](#) a network of 12 independent individual and for-profit organisations specialising in eco-sustainable tourism.
- [Agir pour un Tourisme Responsable \(ATR\)](#) a network of 34 actors specialising in sustainable tourism and development
- [Acteurs du tourisme durable \(ATD\)](#) a network of 90 tourism professionals (agencies, medias, local authorities, etc.) advocating for a more sustainable way of travelling abroad.

In 2015, the *ATR* network published a blog post^{lxxxiv} about the problem with ‘orphanage voluntourism’, in which it warns against short-term visits or volunteer placements in residential care institutions. However, the article suggests that such practices are deemed acceptable under certain circumstances, and recommendations are given on how to adopt appropriate behaviour when visiting an orphanage. An analysis of the sustainable tourism products available in the French market found evidence of orphanage tourism in all four of these networks. No clear statements on child protection in general or orphanages were identified.

Education Sector

Student groups or organised trips with schools or universities are not a common practice in France, and no evidence suggesting that the sector is currently growing could be found. A handful of schools, known as *Grandes écoles* (‘highly selective, elite, and prestigious institutions’),^{lxxxv} offer programmes that encourage their students to participate in a volunteering project, either in France or overseas. Such programmes can be mandatory and part of a student’s curriculum.

The Excelia Group (comprised of three *Grandes écoles* from La Rochelle) includes in its Bachelor curriculum an 8 to 12-week ‘solidarity project’, that can be carried out in France or abroad.^{lxxxvi} The ESDES (business school of the Lyon Catholic University) also has a similar programme.^{lxxxvii} There were several examples of orphanage volunteering trips through these programmes although these were identified through an internet search so it is challenging to ascertain how common this practice is.

It can be assumed that schools offering International Baccalaureate ([ibo.org](#)) programmes also encourage their students to take part in volunteering projects, as part of the IB’s community service component.^{lxxxviii} Evidence suggests that some of these projects take place in residential childcare institutions. Apart from these isolated cases, very few examples of volunteer placements can be found

among French schools and universities and no guidance could be found regarding student or group volunteering. However, there seems to be a significant number of individual initiatives emanating from students, who are taking it upon themselves to either organise or fundraise their volunteering placements.

The *Étudiants & Développement* network, a partner of *France Volontaires*, currently lists more than 1,000 university student initiatives for international development all over the world. The internet research conducted suggests that orphanages are present in several of these projects and include volunteering and fundraising.^{lxxxix}

Faith-based Sector

The main religion in France is Catholicism, followed by Islam and Protestantism.^{xc} Mission trips are not a common practice in France, and there seem to be very few queries on search engines for *voyage missionnaire* (the French equivalent of “mission trip”), with only approximately 10 monthly searches for this term as of July 2019.^{xc} However, there are a number of volunteer sending organisations that have strong ties with the (mostly Catholic) Church.

Evidence of volunteer placements in orphanages were found in all the main faith-based sending organisations reviewed in the mapping.^{xcii} Organisations with religious associations also hold a prominent place in the French government-funded programmes. Figures from 2017 show that about 51 percent of *VSI* placements were carried out through such organisations, and four out of the six organisations that hosted more than 100 *VSI* in 2017 were associated with the Catholic church (*DCC*, *SCD*, *FIDESCO* and *Enfants du Mékong*).^{xciii} There are also a significant number of French parishes that have relationships with orphanages through either the sending of international volunteers, donations, or by organising fundraising events (concerts, meals, etc.) in aid of orphanages. In July 2019, 467 results were found for the query ‘orphelinat^{xciv} site:catholique.fr’.^{xcv}

The Muslim charity *Secours Islamique France* (*SIF*) produced a report in 2013 following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, which focuses on the problem of orphanages in Haiti. In this report, *SIF* states that they are leading concrete actions to prevent family separation and are pushing forward to either reunite the children with their biological family or to place them in foster families. *SIF* also claims that the placement of children in residential childcare institutions should only be a ‘last resort and temporary measure’.^{xcvi}

It should be noted that Islam includes in its basic principles the compulsory donation of a believer’s wealth to charity (with precise calculations on what proportion of one’s wealth should be given). This is referred to as *Zakat*. Orphans and orphanages are frequently the beneficiaries of *Zakat* donations, but there was no evidence in this mapping exercise that orphanage volunteering is linked to this practice.

Non-Governmental Organisations

In France, NGOs, trade unions, religious organisations and political parties are all registered as not-for-profit organisations. Our research did not find data sets solely focused on NGOs which makes it more difficult to track the types of services NGOs are providing and their specific contribution to orphanage volunteering.^{xcvii}

GERMANY

Volunteering Sector

There are an estimated 22,000 to 32,000 German volunteers travelling abroad each year.^{xcviii} The German volunteering sector consists of not-for-profit organisations (networks and volunteer sending organisations), as well as a significant number of volunteering for-profit organisations specifically operating in German targeting the German public.

Charities and not-for-profit sending organisations

There are several hundred not-for-profit organisations that send volunteers abroad. A study of one of the major NGO networks counted at least 211 organisations that were part of one of the government-funded programmes. Twenty-six organisations also offer “flexible volunteering”, a term used to describe all types of volunteering outside of government funded or government regulated programmes. Several sending organisations that offer government funded volunteer placements in orphanages also offer flexible volunteering in the same host project for shorter durations, with a less restrictive selection process and less pre-departure training.

Many organisations are organised into networks. The main networks are:

- [Arbeitskreis Lernen und Helfen in Übersee](#) (AKLHÜ) representing secular organisations
- [Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden](#) (AGDF) with 33 members mostly associated with the the Protestant church.
- [Evangelische Freiwilligendienste](#) (gGmbH) the central office for Protestant provider organisations for volunteering in Germany and abroad
- [Verein entwicklungspolitischer Austauschorganisationen](#) (ventao)

German Government funded volunteering programmes

Government funded volunteering programmes play an important role in Germany with the main programmes being: [weltwärts](#), [Internationaler Jugendfreiwilligendienst](#) (IJFD), and [kulturweit](#). In addition, as previously stated, the European Union funds the [Europäisches Solidaritätskorps](#) ESK (European Solidarity Corps ESC), which recently has replaced the [Europäischer Freiwilligendienst](#) EFD (European Voluntary Service EVS)

Together, these programmes enable almost 7,400 German volunteers per year to go abroad. Only not-for-profit organisations can apply for funding from different German ministries (or the European Union for the ESC) and hence become *Trägerorganisationen* (provider organisations). The number of volunteers is directly related to the budget allocated to the programme and cannot be extended at will. A German volunteer sending organisation will either enter a partnership with a local incoming organisation in the destination country which in turn will identify suitable host projects where the volunteers will do their work or establish direct relations with a host project.

weltwärts

weltwärts is probably the most relevant government funded programme in this context as it is conceived as a development learning service with host projects exclusively in the developing world. It is funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and managed by the weltwärts coordination office (*Koordinierungsstelle weltwärts*) at *Engagement Global*, a not-for-profit limited organisation dedicated to supporting and strengthening the developmental commitment of the civil

society. A search for “weise” (orphan) in its centralised project database^{xcix} shows 601 different volunteering opportunities with orphans, many of them in typical residential childcare institutions / orphanages. Currently, there are about 180 German sending organisations. Not all of them are volunteering specialists; some organisations are first and foremost development charities that aim to support their activities on the ground through volunteering.

It was not possible to assess within the scope of this mapping how many organisations offer orphanage placements. This is because terms like “*kinderheim*” (children’s home) are also used to describe residential childcare institutions. In order to become a sending organisation and apply for funds, not-for-profit organisations must amongst other things:

- Be a member of one of currently five quality associations (*Qualitätsverbände*).^c Three of these quality networks are associated with either the Catholic or the Protestant church.
- Obtain within two years a quality certification from one of the two certification bodies, QUIFD and *Gütegemeinschaft Internationaler Freiwilligendienst* (see the section on certification for more details).

There have been ongoing discussions between the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and volunteer provider organisations about orphanage volunteering since 2017. However, weltwärts has not yet published a position statement and its provider organisations continue to offer orphanage volunteering placements.

According to members of the weltwärts coordination office, the number of orphanage placements is declining and “concrete measures” have been taken in Ghana, Uganda, and South Africa.

weltwärts’ arguments to justify the continued placement of volunteers in orphanages include that:

- The orphanages they support are registered with local authorities
- Longer term placements are the norm (weltwärts volunteer placements average 11-12 months) which they feel combats the challenges of children forming an attachment to the volunteer
- Many of the placements found under the keyword of “orphan” are actually boarding schools or other educational institutions hosting orphans.
- There is extensive pre-departure training.

However, an analysis of weltwärts’ central project database identified 85 placements for projects including “weise” (orphan) + Ghana, while a governmental action plan of 2010 refers to only 5 “legally approved” residential care institutions in the country.^{ci}

Internationaler Jugendfreiwilligendienst IJFD (International Youth Volunteering Service)

The IJFD is the second biggest government funded programme is run by the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. About a third of the programme’s volunteers are placed in Africa, Asia, or Latin America.^{cii} The most recent document lists 112 provider organisations.^{ciii} As the IJFD does not have a central database of placements, it is much more difficult than with weltwärts to establish the prevalence of orphanage volunteering within this programme. However, an online search identified numerous orphanage placements. All provider organisations must adhere to a *Zentrale Stelle für Qualitätsmanagement* (central places for quality management), which appears to be very similar, if not identical with the quality associations of the weltwärts programme.

kulturweit

kulturweit is the international cultural voluntary service of the German Commission for UNESCO and funded by the Federal Foreign Office. As the only government funded programme with a centralized

application system, it does not work with accredited provider organisations. Instead, the German Commission for UNESCO directly assigns volunteers to its partner organisations in the global South, Eastern Europe and the CIS. The sending organisations are all linked to the German government or the UNSECO and include: the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst DAAD*), the German Archaeological Institute, the Deutsche Welle Akademie, the Goethe-Institut, the Educational Exchange Service in cooperating with the Central Agency for Schools Abroad and National Commissions for UNESCO worldwide.

With this set of host projects that operate “within the framework of Germany’s foreign culture relations and education policy”, orphanage volunteering does not play a significant role.

For-Profit Sending Organisations

Since for-profit organisations do not have access to government funded programmes, all volunteers going abroad through for-profit organisations fall into the flexible volunteering category. No exact data is available for the number of volunteers sending organisations set up as companies with a presence in Germany. In addition to companies headquartered in Germany, there are also foreign companies that have a presence in Germany, but are headquartered elsewhere, such as [Projects Abroad](#) headquartered in the UK, or [Iko Poran](#) headquartered in Brazil. It is estimated that there are approximately 25 to 40 for-profit organisations, but the lack of data makes it difficult to assess how widespread the practice of orphanage volunteering is, or was, in Germany. An analysis from the report *From Volunteering to Voluntourism*^{iv} found that 14 out of 25 German volunteer organisations (the majority of them for-profit organisations) offered orphanage programmes in the spring of 2018. In recent years, a number of for-profit organisations have made public statements that they have divested from orphanage volunteering, including some of the biggest volunteer organisations, namely Projects Abroad, Praktikawelten, Rainbow Garden Village (RGV), Travelworks and Step Africa. However, there remains a number of for-profit organisations offering orphanage volunteering opportunities.

Certification

There are two certification bodies that provide quality certifications to not-for-profit volunteer sending organisations: [Qualität in Freiwilligendiensten](#) (QUIFD) and [Gütegemeinschaft Internationaler Freiwilligendienst / RAL Gütezeichen Internationaler Freiwilligendienst](#). The number of certified organisations has significantly increased since it became mandatory in 2014 for organisations to obtain a quality certification in order to become a weltwärts provider. Neither certification includes the verification of child protection policies in general or specifically relating to orphanage volunteering. The guidelines mainly focus on the relationship between sending and receiving organisation/host projects, as well as the relationship between sending organisation and volunteer. The nature of the host projects and the actual work a volunteer is doing are not being assessed. For-profit organisations do not have access to these certifications as they are excluded either explicitly (QUIFD) or implicitly (RAL Gütezeichen) from applying.

The [forum anders reisen](#) (forum travelling differently) is a coalition of sustainable travel operators (mostly for-profit organisations and some not-for-profits) and has been certifying its members since 2009 with TourCert certification^{cv} for sustainable tourism. At the request of several volunteer organisations with company status that were looking for volunteering quality certification but could not obtain it with QUIFD and RAL Gütezeichen because of their legal status, the *forum anders reisen* introduced a new chapter on “voluntourism” in its membership criteria in June 2019. Voluntourism is defined as “a form of travel which faces two new perspectives compared to other travel products: Travelers become volunteers

themselves in the project. And the selected project will be part of the travel offer and location of the guests.”^{cv}

Criteria related to orphanage volunteering from *forum anders reisen*

- 4.1.5. The project assignments have a minimum duration of 4 weeks. In the social field, especially, care is taken to ensure that **volunteers do not become main reference persons of children and adolescents.**
- 4.1.7. For projects with children, there is an additional **child protection policy** for all involved parties.
- 4.1.8 **Projects in orphanages, children's homes and all-day schools with overnight accommodation are excluded.**
- 4.2.1 Upon registration, volunteers must submit the following documents: (...) **extended police certificate of good conduct, (...) The signing of a general code of conduct and a child protection policy for projects in contact with children.**
- 4.2.3 The exclusive use of **photos with children** and other persons for whom **permission has been obtained.**

New members of *forum anders reisen* must commit to respecting the membership criteria and enter a certification process with TourCert. In September 2019, three volunteer specialists were members of *forum anders reisen*: Karmalaya (headquartered in Austria), Praktikawelten, and Rainbow Garden Village.

TourCert will release details of its certification process in this regard in September or October 2019 and enter a pilot phase for this new certification. During this pilot phase, TourCert will review the practicality of the new criteria.^{cvii}

A German working group existed during an attempt to establish an international industry standard for “International Volunteer Tourism” (ISO/TC 228/WG 12), but the work of this group ended in 2017. The project appears to have officially ended in February 2018.

Public Debate

The public debate on orphanage volunteering started around 2012 with the first media coverage of the issue.^{cviii} Public attention and debate increased in February 2015, with the original release of the study “From Volunteering to Voluntourism.”^{cxix} The study contains a specific chapter on “Respecting the Well-Being of the Child” with a section called “No to Orphanage Tourism!”. Its chapter “Voluntourism in Practice – An Analysis of 44 Products” analysed “voluntourism” products sold by a total of twenty three different operators, of which 20 were for-profit organisations, and concluded that “voluntourism operators hardly adhere to the basic rules of sustainable development and child protection.” While it condemns the effect on child development and the dangers of child trafficking, it restrains its criticism to “*short-term volunteering*”, while arguing that “*The best support for orphans without any other option but to live in orphanages is therefore to financially support responsibly managed institutions, or a longer volunteer service during a stay of at least six months. For such a volunteer position, the volunteers need to be carefully assessed.*”^{cx} The latter part can be interpreted as a reference to government funded programmes.

Voluntourism is defined in the study as “short-term volunteer services with high adventure – and experience-related content” offered by “commercial tour operators”. The study has gone on to become a reference point for much of the media coverage on the topic of international volunteering, as well as orphanage tourism and orphanage volunteering.^{cx1} Following the position of the study, most media coverage has focused on orphanage volunteering organised by for-profit organisations and has not addressed comparable volunteering offers by not-for-profit organisations or government funded programmes. The term “voluntourism” is therefore frequently associated only with short-term volunteering when provided by for-profit organisations.

The study and the ensuing media coverage have certainly played a significant role in the decision of various volunteering for-profit organisations to divest from orphanage volunteering. Another major point of reference in the public debate is the German branch of the [Eurodesk network](#) that “unites over 1,100 youth experts in 36 countries under a mission to raise awareness among young people on learning mobility opportunities and to encourage them to become active citizens.” In Germany, Eurodesk is funded by the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, as well as the European Union, and publishes the website [rausvonzuhause.de](#) (get out of the house.de) which is dedicated to international mobility, including international volunteering. Rausvonzuhause.de includes a page entitled “Voluntourismus”^{cx2} with voluntourism being defined as an offering by “commercial intermediary and travel agencies”. The page advises against projects with children in developing countries with specific references to the dangers of orphanages while at the same time offering orphanage volunteering by NGOs in its *Last Minute Market*.^{cx3}

Tourism Sector

The tourism industry includes organisations that do not specialise in volunteering, but that can still include orphanages in their product offerings in a number of ways, such as short-term visits (often a few hours as part of a tour), shows performed by orphans or the sale of handmade crafts made by orphans. We will distinguish between two different kinds of tourism: “traditional” and “sustainable” tourism (referred to in German as *nachhaltiger/sanfter* Tourismus).

As in France, our research suggests that travel packages that include the possibility of visiting or even volunteering for a short time in an orphanage are more common amongst travel operators that consider themselves as “sustainable”. Volunteering in orphanages, visiting orphanages or supporting orphanages do not seem to be a cause for concern. On the contrary, involvement in orphan care seems to be considered as a legitimate way to authentically visit a destination and to contribute to a charitable cause at the same time.

Traditional Tourism

The member list of [The Code](#) shows 21 members for Germany, including the volunteer organisation Travelworks. The [Deutscher Reiseverband](#) (DRV) is the official German travel association and signed The Code as early as 2001.

According to their website, “The DRV informs its members on the child protection codex and motivates them to apply the six criteria.” It also has a working group on child protection which focuses on sexual exploitation of children through “Information and training of tourism staff in destination countries and information and education for travellers”.^{cx4}

Together with ECPAT Germany, as well as the German, Austrian and Swiss Ministries, the DRV has launched the campaign “Nicht wegsehen” (Don’t look away) which calls on German speaking tourists to report sexual exploitation of children during their travels, with the website nicht-wegsehen.net as the basis for the campaign. The recently released Toolbox for member companies does not make specific references to orphanages.^{cxv} The DRV also organises “destination workshops” in collaboration with ECPAT to educate the tourism staff in destination countries on the issue of child protection. While some workshops do not mention orphanage volunteering (Sri Lanka, 2017) others do (Indonesia, 2018).^{cxvi} However, review of their work through their website shows that even members who are active on the DRV’s child protection working group still support orphanages in many different ways, although this seems to be happening on a small scale.^{cxvii} We suspect that there is still a significant knowledge gap about the dangers of orphanages and orphanage tourism.

At the same time, our research has shown that orphanage tourism does not play a significant role in the packages of traditional German travel companies, as it was difficult to find travel packages that included visits to orphanages. The few examples we found were usually part of a travel itinerary of several days.

The TUI group headquartered in Germany is regularly quoted as an example of the commercialisation of volunteering as it had bought several volunteering companies in the 2000s but sold the last remaining brand in 2017.^{cxviii} In its Modern Slavery Statement in 2018 as a response to the UK Modern Slavery Act, the TUI Group states: “Orphanage visits do not form part of our excursions portfolio: TUI Destination Experiences prohibit orphanage visits (and school visits during school hours) in their 2018 Service Manuals.”^{cxix}

Sustainable Tourism (nachhaltiger/sanfter Tourismus)

Sustainable tourism is a relatively new form of traveling that aims at providing customers with more genuine and ethical travel experiences abroad. As discussed in the certification section, the main actor of sustainable tourism in Germany is the federation [forum anders reisen](#) (forum travelling differently), a coalition of sustainable travel operators (for-profit and not-for-profit organisations) with currently around 130 members. On application, all members must respect a catalogue of criteria^{cxx} and seek certification from the partner organisation TourCert within four years.

As one of these new criteria is a minimum duration of four months for volunteering projects, it is not clear how the voluntourism criteria will impact the current orphanage tourism related offerings of the organisation’s members. Currently most offerings that include visits to orphanages are sometimes paired with partner projects funded through Corporate Social Responsibility funds of for-profit organisations.^{cxxi}

It was much easier to find sustainable travel products including stops in orphanages, than traditional travel products. Orphanages still seem to be largely perceived as legitimate and, authentic charity projects to support, with orphanage tourism being seen as a sustainable way to support and meet the local population. Charities and Non-Governmental Organisations do not appear to play a significant role in the sustainable tourism market in Germany.

Education Sector

Student groups or organised volunteering trips to the global South with schools or universities are not a common practice in Germany, and no evidence could be found to suggest that the sector is currently growing. The few volunteering programmes in German language that were found^{cxxii} were all offered by

non-German volunteering organisations that most likely translated web pages targeting schools or universities from the original language into German.

It can be assumed that schools offering International Baccalaureate programmes also encourage their students to take part in volunteering projects, as part of the IB's community service component.^{cxxiii} As apparent in the French section, evidence suggests that some of these projects take place in residential childcare institutions.^{cxxiv}

Apart from these isolated cases, very few examples of institutional volunteer placements can be found among German schools and universities and no kind of guidance or direction seems to be currently in place in Germany when it comes to student or group volunteering. However, there seems to be a significant number of individual initiatives originating from the students, who are taking it upon themselves to either organise or fundraise their volunteering placements.

Two national networks of development initiatives exist: [Weitblicker](#) and [Studieren ohne Grenzen](#) (Studying without Borders) and on both websites a search on "waisenhaus" produces results that indicate support of orphanages.

Faith-Based Sector

In Germany, Christianity is the largest religion. Out of 83 million inhabitants, 44 million are associated with either one of the two mainstream churches. They are almost evenly split between the Catholic and the Protestant church (Evangelische Kirche) with approximately 24,500 and 21,000 parishes respectively. However, the Christian landscape is broader than this and, other churches are harder to quantify, as they usually do not collect church tax. There are believed to be 1.3 million Christians associated with other religious communities within Protestantism that may self-associate with terms like Evangelicalism, Pietism, Pentecostalism or consider themselves non-denominational and which take the form of free churches, or independent congregations that are formally within the Protestant Church. There are also a small number of Orthodox Churches.

Faith-based organisations play an important role as provider organisations and as quality associations in government funded programmes like weltwärts or IJFD (see section on "Government funded international volunteering" for details), as well as in flexible volunteering. Subsequently, orphanage volunteering plays a significant role in faith-based volunteering in Germany. The Catholic Church also markets these programmes with an explicit reference to missions as "Missionarin auf Zeit" (temporary missionary).^{cxxv}

The marketing website of the mainline Protestant Church describes a similar programme called "Diakonisches Jahr im Ausland" (Christian Social Welfare Year Abroad).^{cxxvi} There are at least three government accredited provider organisations for government funded programmes, including the [Global Volunteer Service](#), [Co-workers International](#), as well as [Operation Mobilisation](#) with several of them mentioning orphanage volunteering. There are also many other faith-based organisations that organise volunteering and mission trips.

While an internet search did not find any public statement by church-based organisations that takes a position either for or against orphanage volunteering, the website "tourism-watch.de", an initiative of Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World), the official development NGO of the Protestant church, features a number of articles that are critical of volunteering in orphanages. Brot für die Welt and Tourism Watch also co-published the previously mentioned study "From Volunteering to Voluntourism."^{cxxvii}

The internet search also shows that there seems to be a significant number of Christian German parishes that are involved with orphanages^{cxxviii} through the sending of international volunteers, donations, or the organisation of fundraising events (concerts, meals, etc.) in aid of orphanages. Our researchers were unable, however, to assess the precise extent of this phenomenon and how frequently on-site visits of the orphanages, group volunteering or individual volunteering occur.

Muslims make up around 5,5% of Germany's population, but we did not find any volunteer organisations with ties to Islam.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Volunteering Sector

A data set does not exist in the UK on the number and make-up of travel companies contributing to orphanages overseas, so analysis was undertaken to assess the extent of support by looking at numerous membership bodies and advertising websites within the tourism sector.

By looking at advertising websites, 44 volunteer travel companies were identified who are all registered in the UK and offer volunteering placements in childcare institutions. This is unlikely to be a complete representation of the size of the industry, as not all for-profit organisations will advertise in this manner. The majority of these companies also advertise within UK universities.

The *British Educational Travel Association* (BETA) is a membership body for student and youth educational travel organisations. It currently has 120 members. BETA claims to “continue to improve the quality of services provided by members”, although there is no guidance on its website pertaining to ethics or sustainability of travel.^{cxxix} Out of the eight members who are listed as offering international volunteering opportunities, five focus solely on delivery within the global North. The remaining three organisations all offer orphanage volunteering opportunities. BETA also runs the annual *British Youth Travel Awards*, which has a recurring category for *Best Volunteering Organisation*. The website claims that “this category is designed to reward UK based organisations engaged in volunteer tourism that can demonstrate the delivery of benefits to the local communities in which they work, and the volunteers involved”. However, the 2017 award winner (as well as the other two award finalists) offer orphanage volunteering placements, suggesting that BETA have not yet recognised the negative impact of the institutionalisation of children and how volunteering contributes to this.^{cxxx}

At the end of 2018, the *Year Out Group*, a membership body for gap year providers in the UK announced that its members will no longer offer or recommend volunteer placements in residential care settings and orphanages, with effect from June 2019.^{cxxxi}

In terms of advice for travellers, the UK *Foreign and Commonwealth Office* (FCO) updated its guidance for gap year students, volunteering overseas, and adventure travelling to include reference to orphanage tourism and volunteering.^{cxxxii} In addition, on the guidance page for visiting Nepal, it reads: “*The British Embassy has received reports of volunteer opportunities at orphanages which are profit oriented organisations rather than charities. If you're volunteering at this type of organisation, you could be contributing to child exploitation. Contact the Nepali Central Child Welfare Board for confirmation before signing up to volunteer for one of these organisations.*”^{cxxxiii} In October 2019, the FCO introduced Travel Advice about volunteering overseas, which warns of the “serious, unintended consequences” of orphanage volunteering and highlights the link with child exploitation.^{cxxxiv}

It is also worth noting that in the summer of 2018 the [Association of British Travel Agents](#) (ABTA) issued advice to gap year students planning on volunteering abroad, which included warnings against orphanage volunteering, specifically stating “*There is growing evidence orphanages can negatively affect the children who are in this environment and by working in orphanages, volunteers can inadvertently cause harm to children. ABTA has been taking an active role in supporting child safeguarding for many years and advises its Members to move away from volunteering in orphanages.*”^{cxxxv} ABTA and Hope and Homes for Children now co-lead an [Orphanage Tourism Taskforce](#) along with travel companies such as Intrepid and Tui.

Education Sector

There is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that the education sector as a whole plays a significant role in the proliferation of volunteering opportunities within residential childcare institutions globally. However, specific studies were not found relating to the extent of this support within the European countries featured in this report. A 2014 study found that many representatives of schools and universities have minimal knowledge of development contexts and thus fail to recognise the potential challenges of delivering volunteering projects overseas.^{cxxxvi} This would suggest that promotion or support for placements within residential care settings could potentially be high.

Within the United Kingdom, some progress has been seen in universities over the last few years with regards to knowledge and attitudes towards the possible harms of international volunteering and particularly that of orphanage volunteering. The [Student Volunteering Network](#), which is a peer network for staff working in UK higher or further education institutions supporting student volunteering, both at home and overseas, has a resource hub including guidance on international volunteering and orphanage volunteering.^{cxxxvii} They are also a signatory of the ‘[Stop Orphanage Volunteering](#)’ pledge, created by the *London School of Economics*, alongside nine other universities and student social action organisations.

However, despite the progress made, out of the 148 universities in the UK, 39 continue to actively promote residential childcare volunteering placements to students. It is unclear, due to needing a student login to access opportunities, whether a further 19 universities promote orphanage volunteering placements or not. Although not actively promoting placements to volunteer in residential childcare centres abroad, out of the remaining 109 Universities, only 34 offer guidance to their students about the harms associated with orphanage volunteering placements.

In addition to Student Unions and Student Careers Services where the majority of volunteering opportunities are advertised, numerous student-led initiatives were discovered that run volunteering projects overseas. Out of a total of 10 initiatives assessed, only one appeared to involve volunteering in a residential childcare setting and there was a clear message on their website about this project being designed alongside a local partner to support the process of deinstitutionalisation.^{cxxxviii}

Students in the UK may also get the opportunity to volunteer overseas through involvement with their University’s *Raising and Giving* society (RAG). There are 72 RAGs across the UK. They exist to fundraise for charity partners, often engaging in ‘expeditions’ abroad. Finding data on these expeditions was difficult, as RAGs often publicise opportunities via student newsletters which are not accessible to the public. It appears to be one of the biggest expedition partners. *Challenges Abroad*, claim not to support orphanage volunteering. However, *Challenges Abroad* are owned by a larger company called the [FutureSense Foundation](#) who do offer residential care volunteering projects, which suggests it is not always clear to students who exactly they are fundraising on behalf of. In addition to expeditions, RAGs could directly fundraise for a residential care institution, or for an NGO who supports one. The [National](#)

[Student Fundraising Association](#) who facilitate RAG activity give no guidance on their website about the issue of orphanage volunteering.

A major limitation with regards to the mapping of UK university involvement in the institutionalisation of children overseas is that the advertisement of volunteering placements can happen in a variety of ways, which is very difficult to track or regulate. For example, the majority of volunteer travel companies who wish to advertise to a student population at a particular university will contact numerous staff members asking them to push out the opportunity. Although it is straightforward to map the extent of support from Unions and Careers Services, it is very difficult to monitor, for example, the number of individual lecturers across a university who decide to directly email their students promoting an orphanage volunteering placement. A clear example of this is seen at City University in the UK, where the student volunteering centre has a strict policy on not promoting any organisation that offers orphanage volunteering. However, a particular department within the University was discovered to be organising its own 'trips' to an orphanage in Ethiopia.^{cxix}

In addition to promotion, during the mapping it was discovered that at least seven UK universities offer scholarships to students who wish to volunteer abroad. This possible funding comes with no clear guidance on choosing an ethical, sustainable placement and no caution is given with regards to the risks surrounding orphanage volunteering. One university was even found to offer an academic module where students could volunteer abroad. Again, no clear guidance is given as to what type of placement is appropriate, which means it becomes far easier for students to take up orphanage volunteering opportunities.

A recent development within the UK university sector, that has possible implications for the continued supply of volunteers to residential care institutions abroad, is a campaign launched by [Universities UK International](#) (UUKi). UUKi is the international branch of Universities UK, a representative body that champions UK institutions in global spaces. The campaign focuses on doubling the percentage of students participating in study, work and volunteer abroad placements during their academic degrees by 2020. So far, 80 Universities have signed up to the campaign charter and have committed to increasing the number of students they support to go abroad during their studies; promoting the value of studying, working or volunteering abroad, and enhancing the accessibility of these three things to their students.^{cxl}

Although it is thought that only 2.6% of UK students who have gone abroad whilst studying have done so through a volunteering placement,^{cxli} such a large scale target across so many universities, without clear regulation and guidance, risks seeing a severe increase in the number of students participating in orphanage volunteering from the UK.

During the mapping, other sources of information on overseas volunteering programmes for UK students were assessed. Organisations and websites, such as the [National Union of Students](#), [The Student Room](#) (the largest online community for students in the UK), [Prospects](#) (a popular careers guidance website) and [STA Travel](#) (a prominent student travel company within the UK) were looked into. It was found that none of them provided clear guidance to their readership about the harms caused by volunteering in a residential childcare setting. There have been some campaigns targeting students and UK universities, like the [#HelpingnotHelping](#) campaign launched in October 2019 by Lumos to encourage policies against orphanage tourism and volunteering, however more systematic changes are needed.

With regards to mapping school support in the UK, limited data could be found. According to the [Compare School Performance](#) government website, there are 6,436 secondary schools across the UK. Without looking at each school individually, it is impossible to know if they offer opportunities to their

students to fundraise for, or visit, residential care centres abroad. In order to get a sense of school involvement, the top 30 ranked schools and the average 30 ranked schools by exam performance were assessed. This data set included a range of different UK schools, including academies, colleges, independent schools and special schools. Amongst the top 30 schools, two were found to offer 'trips' to visit orphanages abroad, whilst six engaged in fundraising activities directly for residential care centres overseas. In terms of the average 30 ranked schools, only one was found to have fundraised for a residential childcare centre. This data is not reliable enough to draw any strong conclusions, but it does suggest that schools within the UK *do* contribute to the institutionalisation of children overseas via volunteering opportunities and fundraising initiatives.

When looking at school associations, like the *Independent Schools Association*, evidence was found of individual schools having links to orphanages directly, or charities set up to support orphanages.^{cxlii} A thorough data set analysing these relationships does not exist, but associations may be able to support additional mapping.

As for organisations advertising orphanage volunteering opportunities directly to schools, only two British-registered organisations were found who claim to work with a total of over 100 schools. As well as general Internet analysis, the [*Expedition Providers Association*](#) (EPA) was assessed to provide a list of third party expedition companies who promote to schools. Amongst EPA's membership of 19 organisations, only 1 was found to support residential childcare institutions abroad. Again, no data set exists on school expedition organisations, so this figure should be considered the absolute minimum.

Faith-Based Sector

In the United Kingdom, Christianity is the largest religion, making up 59.3% of the religious demographic. Islam is the second largest, with 4.8%.^{cxliii} There are believed to be approximately 340 Christian denominations and upwards of 50,700 churches,^{cxliv} in addition to 1,750 mosques across the UK.^{cxlv} Since as religious institutions are often exempt from reporting under the *Charity Commission* which covers charities in England and Wales, the data which exists relies heavily on self-reporting. Without being able to contact each church and mosque individually it is impossible to build a clear picture of current support for orphanages overseas. However, we do know that more than a quarter of charities in the UK are faith-based, with certain areas of work, such as overseas aid, having faith-based organisations making up over half of their number.^{cxlvi} When considering the 1421 British NGOs working overseas who list their main beneficiaries as children and young people and were listed when searching 'orphan' in the existing data set, 397 report to be faith-based.

Previous research, specifically into Muslim charities, notes that key areas of focus are often "interest-free micro-finance, orphan care or food distribution". The focus on orphan care is said to be significant as it is directly referenced in the Qu'ran.^{cxlvii}

[*Home for Good*](#) a UK adoption and fostering charity, commissioned ComRes (a leading research consultancy and member of the British Polling Council) to run a comparative survey, with the aim of ascertaining whether Christians are more likely to support overseas orphanages than people of other faiths or none.^{cxlviii} ComRes interviewed 6,120 British adults online across the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) between the 17th and 23rd of August 2018. Data was weighted to be demographically representative of all UK adults aged 18 and over. Regular church goers made up 9% of the sample (565 respondents).

When asked whether they were actively involved in donating or sending items to orphanages, regular churchgoers were **three times more likely** than British adults overall to say that they were actively involved (16% vs. 5%). One in five British adults (20%) said that they did *not* consider this kind of project to be important, which is twice the proportion that said the same among regular churchgoers (11%).

Regular churchgoers were **seven times more likely** than British adults overall to say that they were actively involved with visiting or volunteering in overseas orphanages (7% vs. 1%). British adults overall were more likely than British churchgoers to say that they did *not* think visiting or volunteering in an overseas orphanage is an important activity (27% vs. 17%).

However, the survey also showed that regular churchgoers were more than **twice as likely** as British adults overall to be actively involved in donating or sending items to charities that run family and/or community-based projects (28% vs. 12%). Both British churchgoers and British adults overall equally considered it important, even when they were not actively involved (34%). British adults overall were more likely than regular churchgoers to say they did *not* consider donating or sending items to charities which run family and/or community-based projects to be important (18% vs. 10%).

When it came to visiting or volunteering with overseas charities that run family and/or community-based projects, regular churchgoers were **five times more likely** than British adults overall to do so (10% vs. 2%). British adults overall were almost twice as likely as regular churchgoers to say that they did not consider this kind of project to be important (26% vs. 14%).

The **overall findings** of the ComRes survey clearly indicate that British churchgoing adults are consistently more likely to say that they are actively involved in supporting vulnerable children overseas than British adults overall. However, there is a discrepancy in who this support goes to, with both orphanages and family-based care programmes receiving support in the form of volunteers and financial aid. Thus, there is a need for more education and awareness raising amongst British churchgoing adults about the harms of institutional care and orphanage volunteering.

Earlier in 2019, Home for Good commissioned a second survey. The second survey was conducted by Christian Research, which is part of the Bible Society Group and is an independent market research agency. Christian Research operates a monthly online panel with 5000 members called Resonate, which is the only multi-denominational, publicly accessible panel of committed, practising Christians in the UK. Approximately 1000 panel members are surveyed each month. The aim of this survey was to find out more about the extent and nature of Christian involvement in overseas orphanages.

Six questions were commissioned, and the survey ran for ten days from the 28th of June until the 8th of July 2019, with 1276 people completing the survey. There was good representation amongst the eight listed denominations, with the majority (48%) stating an affiliation with the Church of England (Anglican). The six questions in the survey were centred on financial giving and volunteering in orphanages. The objective was to find out how many practicing Christians are giving and/or going to orphanages, how much they are giving, where the orphanages are located, *how* people are giving, and some of the reasons behind their motivation. The term “residential care facility” was used throughout the survey, specifying that it includes children’s homes, children’s villages or centres, and orphanages.

The Resonate Panel survey found that **44% of practicing Christians** have financially supported an overseas residential care facility in the past 12 months, with most people (63%) giving directly to the orphanage itself. 76% of respondents who have given to an overseas orphanage have given between £1 and £500 in the past 12 months. The average donation was estimated for each giving bracket to work

out that the overall average individual donation was approximately £400 over the last 12 months. This then signifies that on average, over £200,000 (approx.) has been donated by this cohort to overseas orphanages in a 12-month period. It's important to note that 42% of the Christians who said that they do not and will not donate to orphanages, said the main reason for their answer was that they prefer to give to projects that support local families and/or communities.

Thus, the findings of both the ComRes and Resonate Panel surveys show that there are many Christians in the UK who prefer to support family- and community-based projects and programmes overseas.

8% of participants had volunteered in an overseas residential care facility for children, with half saying they would be eager to do so again and half saying that they would not do so again. A possible limitation with the results of the Resonate Panel survey is the average age of participants. A common response to the questions asked about overseas volunteering was that respondents felt too old. However, this figure is in line with the findings of the ComRes survey, where 7% of British churchgoing adults have been actively involved in volunteering in overseas orphanages.

The Resonate Panel results showed that the top five countries worldwide where orphanages are supported financially are Uganda, India, Kenya, Malawi and Nepal. The top five countries where respondents had participated as volunteers in an orphanage were Romania, Kenya, Uganda, India and South Africa (three of them the same countries as those that people donate to). 15% of volunteers have volunteered in Romania.

In terms of denominational data, Independent churches were the only denomination that was more likely to donate to an overseas orphanage (56%). In terms of giving, the majority of Anglicans, Baptists and Methodists responded that they had given between £1 and £500 in the past 12 months. Whereas Independent churchgoers indicated that their giving is spread out between £1 and £1000.

When asked about their volunteering experience at overseas orphanages, Independents were again the most likely to say that they have volunteered at an overseas orphanage (11%) and Methodists were the least likely (5%). Thus, although British Christians are more likely to support overseas orphanages, they are also **more likely to support family- and community-based programmes**. This once again indicates a wide variety of practices when it comes to supporting vulnerable children overseas and demonstrates the need for Church engagement and education on best practice in supporting vulnerable children overseas.

The findings of the ComRes and Resonate Panel surveys were crucial to gaining a better understanding of the behaviour patterns of regular British churchgoers and to lay the groundwork for Home for Good's [Homecoming project](#) campaign, which aims to engage, educate and equip churches and Christians in the UK to support family-based care rather than orphanages.

Despite not having a clear number of how many churches or mosques in the UK are sending volunteers or funding to support residential care centres abroad, we can be confident that, even considering the small amount of research currently available, it is a large percentage.

Non-Governmental Agencies

According to the Charity Commission, there are currently 198,767 registered charities in England and Wales.^{cxlix} Over 24,000 of these, report to work overseas, with a further 12,000 reporting that their main

beneficiaries overseas are children and young people. It is not possible to see data on the types of activities that these 12,000 organisations are engaged in, but on entering the search term 'orphan', 1,421 NGOs are listed, suggesting the number of UK NGOs engaged in supporting orphanages and/or orphan sponsorship overseas is very high. This analysis focused on charity commission reporting with many more charities obviously practicing and potentially also supporting orphanages in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

ROLE OF “INCOMING AGENCIES”

As seen in the French and German contexts, many UK volunteer sending organisations do not have direct contact with the host projects where the volunteers actually work (such as orphanages). Instead they rely on incoming agencies (comparable with Destination Management Companies in traditional tourism) that identify host projects where volunteers can be placed and handle the volunteers on the ground.

Most incoming agencies specialise in a single country destination, sometimes even a single region, but some international players with activities in several countries do exist. These organisations might be set-up as not-for-profits or as companies. Frequently, incoming agencies work with multiple volunteer sending organisations (not-for-profits or for-profit organisations) based in different volunteer sending countries. Conversely, a volunteer sending organisation in the UK, France or Germany might work with multiple incoming agencies in different destination countries.

Not-for-profit volunteer organisations sometimes rely on other members of international not-for-profit networks, such as [International Cultural Youth Exchange](#) (ICYE) or [Service Civil International](#) (SCI) that pool volunteering offerings of the entire network. The same national branch might therefore act as a sending organisation, sending for example French volunteers abroad, and as incoming agency, offering volunteer placements and handling international volunteers coming to France. Network members in developing countries tend to play a much larger role as incoming agencies, rather than as sending organisations.

A full evaluation of the incoming agencies was not carried out under the scope of this mapping, but given the international reach of incoming agencies, both to volunteer sending countries and volunteer host countries, it is suggested that incoming agencies are an important target where divestment from orphanage volunteering could have a significant impact on their partner sending organisations.

SECTION IV: EXAMPLES OF PROMISING PRACTICE IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

IRELAND

The Orphanage Working Group (OWG)^{cl} was set up in 2016 by [Comhlámh](#), an Irish member organisation promoting international volunteering and development for an equitable and sustainable world, and a number of volunteer sending agencies who were concerned at the harm of institutional care on children and the harmful impact of international volunteering in orphanages. Comhlámh and the OWG has worked to raise awareness of the negative impact of volunteering in orphanages, to enable the international volunteering sector to responsibly and sustainably transition away from sending volunteers, to advocate for change in Ireland's development policy and practice and to support the global care reform movement towards family- and community-based care. They did this through a variety of means:

- Developing a [Code of Good Practice](#) that calls on volunteer sending agencies to progressively stop sending volunteers to orphanages which a network of 40 organisations are now working to implement.
- Engaging with organisations that are still sending volunteers to orphanages to highlight the harm of institutional care and how volunteering in orphanages perpetuates the problem and to work together to explore issues of how to ethically transition away from supporting orphanage volunteering.
- Organising a series of learning events with child protection professionals, trainings, workshops and podcasts on specific issues related to the harm of institutionalisation, divestment options that support families and communities and what community-based care for children with disabilities looks like.
- Discussion sessions with members of the Code to create safe spaces for learning from those that have already transitioned their support.
- Launching a report entitled [Children First: A Global Perspective on Volunteering in Orphanages and Transforming care](#) targeted at policy makers
- Inviting a child rights advocate with experience of growing up in care to raise awareness on the issue and meet with members of the Ireland's Joint Committee of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Irish Aid (Ireland's international development body) to advocate for policy change, travel advice, and the allocation of resources to support care reform.
- Creating an [online public pledge not to volunteer in orphanages](#).
- Creating a number of online courses including [Where Do I Start](#) to enable potential volunteers to consider the myriad of issues involved and to support critical engagement on social justice issues and responsible volunteering.

NETHERLANDS

In November 2018, the liberal party in the Netherlands, the VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie), released a white paper proposal (['initiatiefnota'](#)) to Dutch parliamentarians on measures to combat orphanage tourism. The unofficial English translation of the paper is entitled "[A good intention is not always a good idea: a proposal to combat orphanage tourism.](#)" After an intensive preparatory process, a hearing and debate with the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (Minister Kaag) took place in the spring of 2019. Under pressure from broad support from the House of Representatives, the Minister promised research on orphanage tourism focusing on the impact from the

Netherlands. This study will take place between October 2010 and July 2020. The final report will work to outline the nature and size of the Dutch contribution to orphanage volunteering both in number of people and the amount of money in the sector. It should also outline possible actions that the Dutch Government can take to stop orphanage volunteering. While this process is being undertaken, the Dutch Government also introduced travel advice at the end of October 2019 to discourage orphanage volunteering and warn of the harm of orphanage tourism and possible connections with trafficking. Specific warnings were included in the travel advice of thirteen countries (Cambodia, Ghana, Haiti, Kenya, Nepal, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia).

In addition, a Dutch organisation called [NUFFIC](#) started to provide students and professionals information about the harms of institutionalisation,^{cli} but it is unclear if this practice has started in other countries across Europe.

SECTION V: CONCLUSIONS

Based on the mapping, we have five main recommendations:

- All European countries need to improve their data collection on volunteering to specifically capture volunteering, funding, and support for residential childcare institutions.
- National government and/or EU funding should be discouraged away from volunteering schemes that support volunteering in institutions for children, and this should be accompanied by guidance on how to safely divest existing support.
- Given that many not-for-profit organisations seem to believe that the problem lies only in short-term voluntourism to orphanages and that their own activities are unproblematic, messaging to discourage volunteering in residential childcare institutions must stress its relevance to all volunteer sending organisations, including not-for-profit organisations and government funded schemes.
- General, as well as targeted advocacy messages, about volunteering need to include information about the harm of institutionalisation in general and how volunteering continues to perpetuate a business model that sustains such centres.
- More awareness-raising and advocacy must be done to mobilize and support faith-based organisations in transitioning from supporting orphanages towards supporting ethical and sustainable family- and community-based projects instead.

Throughout our mapping, it was challenging to find comprehensive data sets that use similar terms to describe volunteering in residential childcare centres. This makes it challenging to determine the full extent of the problem and the European contribution to it. However, even relying on self-reporting and internet searches, volunteering in orphanages is widespread and still generally viewed as a positive activity.

Although work to discourage orphanage volunteering has changed the modalities of some organisations, there is much more work to be done. Although the European Union has led important work to challenge the institutionalisation of children and support deinstitutionalisation, this work has not yet been mainstreamed to EU supported volunteer programming overseas. The EU could use its convening power to encourage member states and civil society to better understand and address this issue. Throughout Europe, significant progress could be made through advocating to governments to stop funding volunteering schemes that support orphanage volunteering and providing guidance on ethical divestment strategies. In addition, the EU could use its own communications targeting young people to raise awareness of this important issue.

Throughout Europe, there has been a divided discourse between those volunteering in orphanages through not-for-profit organisations and churches with those volunteering through for-profit organisations, even though the impact on children may be the same. Messaging about attachment seems to have caused organisations to change their focus from short-term trips, which are being viewed negatively, to longer-term opportunities, which are seen as more positive. This implies that messaging needs to shift to focus more broadly on the harm of volunteering in residential childcare institutions regardless of the length of deployment or the status of the organisation. To be more effective, messages should include information about the harm of institutionalisation in general and how volunteering continues to perpetuate the existence of orphanages.

In France, volunteer experiences that involve orphanages can be found in all sectors (volunteering, tourism, education, faith groups) and there seems to be little to no awareness surrounding the issue. The debate that has started around the harmful nature of orphanage volunteering seems to be solely focused on for-profit volunteer sending organisations. The prevailing position seems to be that the problem lies with the commercial aspect of 'voluntourism', with little to no questioning of the not-for-profit sector's current involvement with orphanages.

Similarly, in Germany, the issue around orphanage volunteering, while more widely and publicly discussed, has almost been exclusively focused on for-profit volunteer organisations even though all sectors seem to provide orphanage support and trips relatively frequently.

While there have been some recent high-profile for-profit organisations divesting from orphanage volunteering, public pressure and debate needs to be broadened to include all types of orphanage volunteering and support, with specific efforts focusing on government funded programmes.

In the United Kingdom, while it appears there has been some progress being made to raise awareness on the benefits, as well as the potential harms of international volunteering in general, including orphanage volunteering, very few universities provide specific guidance on how to choose ethical, sustainable volunteer placements or avoid the harm of orphanage volunteering.

Faith-based organisations and churches appear to be much more likely to volunteer or visit overseas orphanages, but they are also much more likely to be more knowledgeable about the project they are supporting. The ComRes survey found that regular churchgoers in the UK were 7 times more likely than the average British adult to volunteer in overseas orphanages. In addition, the Resonate Panel survey found that 44% of practicing Christians in the UK financially supported an overseas residential care facility in a 12-month period. However, both surveys showed that many Christians in the UK prefer to support family and community-based projects and programmes and overseas.

Much more work needs to be done to actively engage the faith-community to support promising practices which support projects that support families and communities and discuss the issue of residential childcare centres overseas. We have already seen examples of faith-based organisations championing change and helping to support longer-term sustainable development in the communities they support.

Given the lack of direct contact many sending organisations have with the host country, an additional area of research should be focused on the role of incoming agencies, those that serve as a host to volunteering "sending organisations", and working to help them to ethically and gradually divest from orphanage volunteering.

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