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WEBINAR #5: Impact of COVID-19 on Privately Run Residential Care Institutions Insights Study Findings

10 AUGUST 2021



MODERATOR

Britta Holmberg,
Deputy Secretary General &
Program Director,
World Childhood
Foundation



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- The platform establishes more strategic sector-wide collaboration
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- This webinar is being recorded and the recording will be made available to you (with Spanish and French subtitles).
- Introduce yourself in the chat (select “Panelists and Attendees” when sending a message so everyone can see it)
- Use the Q & A to ask questions and upvote and comment on the questions of other attendees.



AGENDA

- Introduction to the webinar - Britta Holmberg, Deputy Secretary General & Program Director at World Childhood Foundation
- Presenters
 - Rebecca Nhep, Better Care Network
 - Dr Kate van Doore, Griffith Law School & Law Futures Centre
 - Dr Kanthamaneer Ladaphongphatthana, Alternative Care Thailand
 - Daniel Gleisner, ERIKS Development Partners
 - Q & A



Background to the study

The study sought to understand the impacts of COVID-19 public health measures on the functioning of privately run residential care institutions.

This included the impacts of:

- Government directives
- School closures
- Social distancing measures
- Lockdowns
- Travel restrictions and border closures
- The ripple effect of economic impacts on funding streams



Background to the study

Seeking to investigate whether those measures had caused:

- Changes in the operations of RCIs
- Changes to the financial situation of RCIs
- Changes to the situation of children in care
- Adaptations throughout the pandemic
- Reflections and considerations for changes to the operations or services in the future



Background to the study

Looking for insights as to whether COVID-19 may have created new opportunities with respect to:

- Donor and supporter facing advocacy to encourage support of families and family-based care
- Engagement with RCI directors and founders to encourage transition from residential to family-based models of care
- Awareness raising to discourage orphanage tourism and volunteering



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PRESENTATIONS



REBECCA
NHEP

Senior Technical Advisor,
Better Care Network



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**DR. KATE
VAN DOORE**

Academic, Griffith Law
School & Law Futures
Centre



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Key findings, insights,
and implications



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IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PRIVATELY RUN RESIDENTIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS

INSIGHTS & IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVOCACY & AWARENESS RAISING

ERIKS
DEVELOPMENT PARTNER



**Better
Care
Network**

CHILDHOOD
WORLD CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION
FOUNDED BY IVA BIRCH NEVILL OF SWEDEN

 **Griffith** UNIVERSITY
Queensland, Australia
Law Futures Centre

ABOUT THE STUDY

Qualitative study using semi-structured interviews

About the participants

Pre-COVID Institutional Context

Impacts on Functioning of RCIs

Impacts on Volunteering & Visiting

Impacts on Children's Care

Impacts on Family Contact & Reunification

Reflections & Plans for the Future

Implications for Advocacy, Engagement and
Progressing Care Reforms

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

21 participants across 7 countries representing a total of 28 institutions

5 donors of RCIS, 16 directors of RCIS

All foreign funded and with a history of accepting visitors and volunteers

12 foreign founded, 6 foreign run.

CATALYST FOR INVOLVEMENT WITH RCI

29% of participants commenced involvement with RCIs due to a past experience of orphanage tourism

19% commenced involvement due to personal experience of being in care.

14% commenced involvement due to donor/founder initiation

9% commenced involvement due to depictions of children in films/media

5% commenced involvement responding to a faith calling

71.5% listed faith as part of their motivation

IMPACTS OF COVID ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF RCI FUNCTIONING

ORPHANAGE TOURISM/ VOLUNTEERING PRE COVID

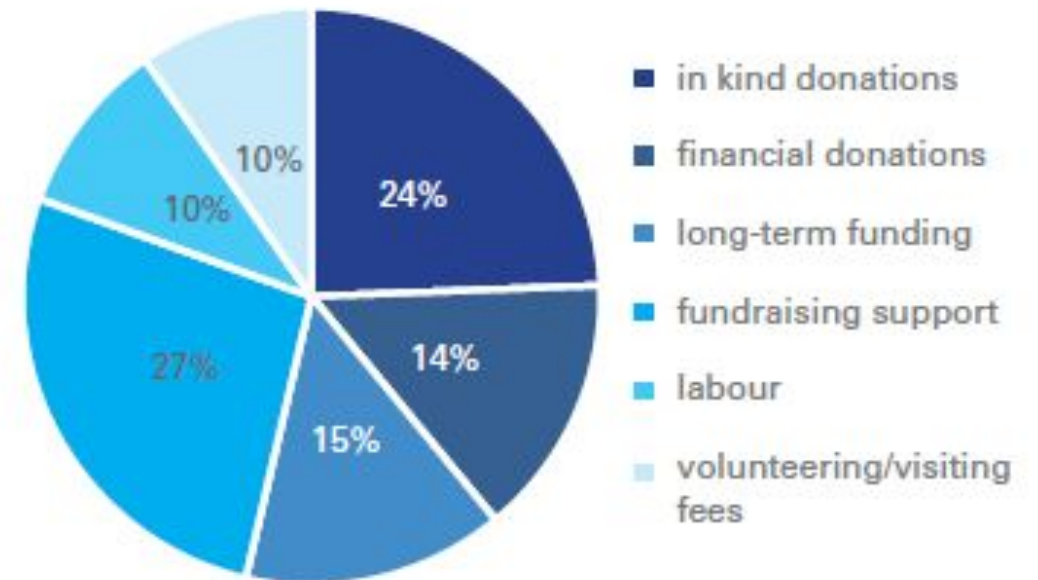
95% facilitated international orphanage tourism/volunteering pre COVID.

5% did not allow international volunteers visitors but accepted local volunteers/visitors

46.6% accepted both local and international volunteers/visitors

45% said orphanage tourism was integral to their fundraising

Benefits of Volunteering/Visiting



IMPACT OF CESSATION OF ORPHANAGE TOURISM/ VOLUNTEERING

52.4% reported a loss of income due to the cessation of international volunteering/visiting

80% said volunteers were involved in running activities (pre COVID). Only 5% listed this as a benefit. Only 19% noted the cessation had any impact on children's activities

25% said volunteers were involved in caregiving (pre COVID). None listed this as a benefit. None noted the cessation had any impact on caregiving

81.3% stated the primary benefit of volunteers/visitors was fundraising. In 100% of these cases, orphanage tourism was integral to funding model. These RCIs comprised 80% of all RCIs who experienced a drop in funding.

81% reported an intention to resume orphanage tourism. 9.5% stated they would not. 11.8% of those who intend to resume, expect to do so in a more limited/restricted manner.

19% noted positive impacts due to the cessation of orphanage tourism on the children and/or organisation, however **all plan on resuming the practice regardless.**

IMPACT ON NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE

The majority of RCI's (76.2%) included in the study had experienced a decrease in the number of children in their care since the onset of COVID-19

Only half of those indicated that this was in some way triggered by the pandemic.

61.6% of participants had plans to return some or all children to the RCI

33.3% of participants stated some children would remain permanently reintegrated.

IMPACTS ON EDUCATION

95% of participants reported school closures affecting their RCIs

47.5% transitioned children to online learning, but 60% of these, only made online learning accessible for some children

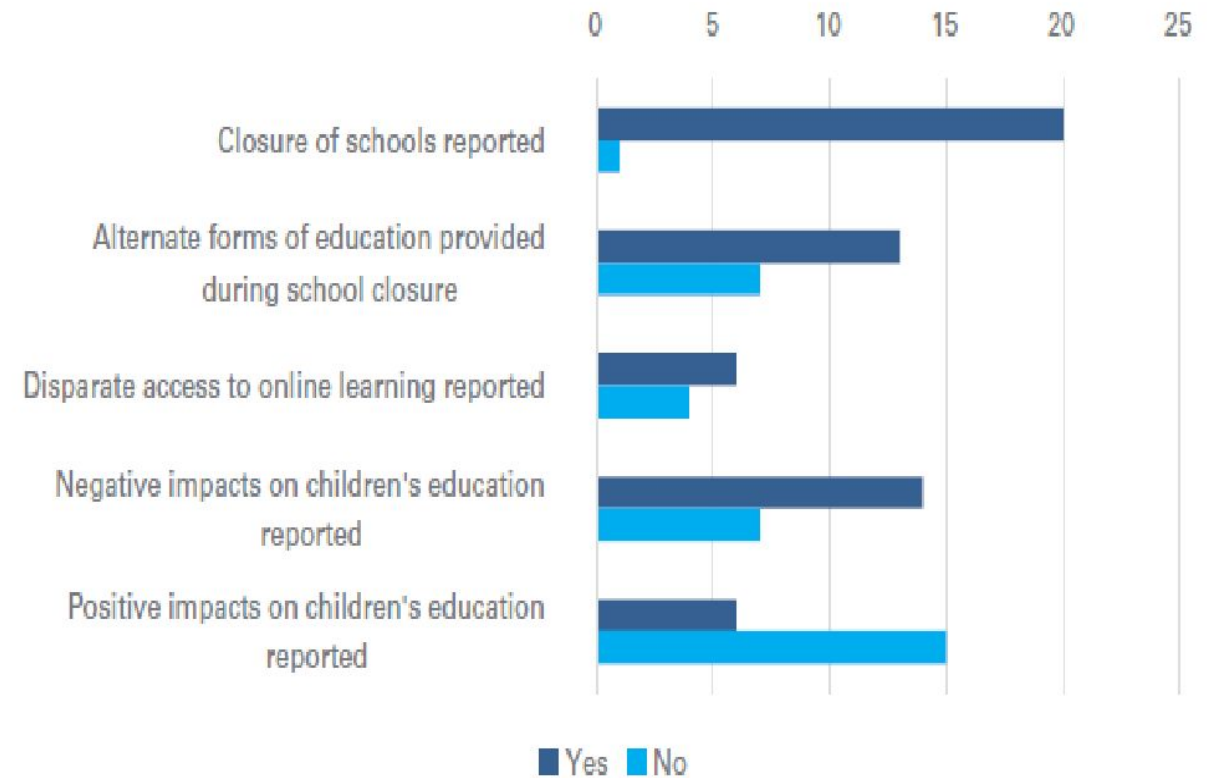
47.5% did not transition to online learning. 70% of these provided no education to children during lockdowns. 30% arranged alternate education

66.6% of participants reported COVID had a negative impact on children's education.

19% noted education related disadvantage was compounded for children in institutions due to large numbers of children

28.8% noted some positive impacts on education, the most common being the introduction of vocational education opportunities

Impacts on Education



IMPACTS ON FUNDING

47.6% of participants were concerned about their financial situation

81% experienced COVID related impacts

- 47.6%- loss of donor funding
- 38%- loss of income generating activity revenue
- 19% disrupted access to funds (banking systems, loss of personnel)
- 19% increased expenditure

Income generating activity revenue was the most vulnerable to immediate impacts

Participants dependent on one-off irregular experienced more significant and immediate losses compared to those with regular donors/grants

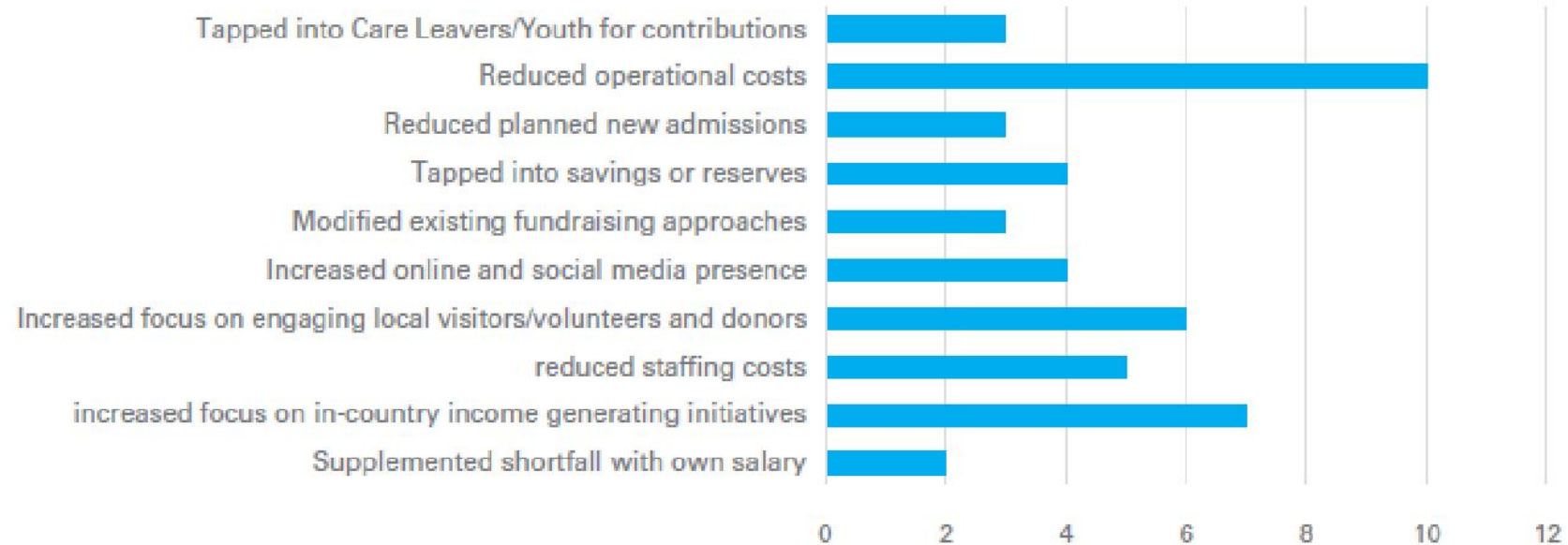
78% expressed concern about the loss of volunteers/visitors and long-term impacts on their funding

Participants reported income deficits of up to \$80,000

Participants reported a 20-50% drop in child sponsorship.

FINANCIAL ADAPTATIONS

Mechanisms Employed to Cope with Reduced Income



IMPACTS ON CARE

47.6% of RCIs experienced a drop in staff levels due to COVID.

In 71.4% of cases, caregiving staff had to self isolate with children in the RCIs for extended periods (1-3mths at a time)

57.1% of caregivers had to take on higher workloads and new roles, including of educators in response to school closure

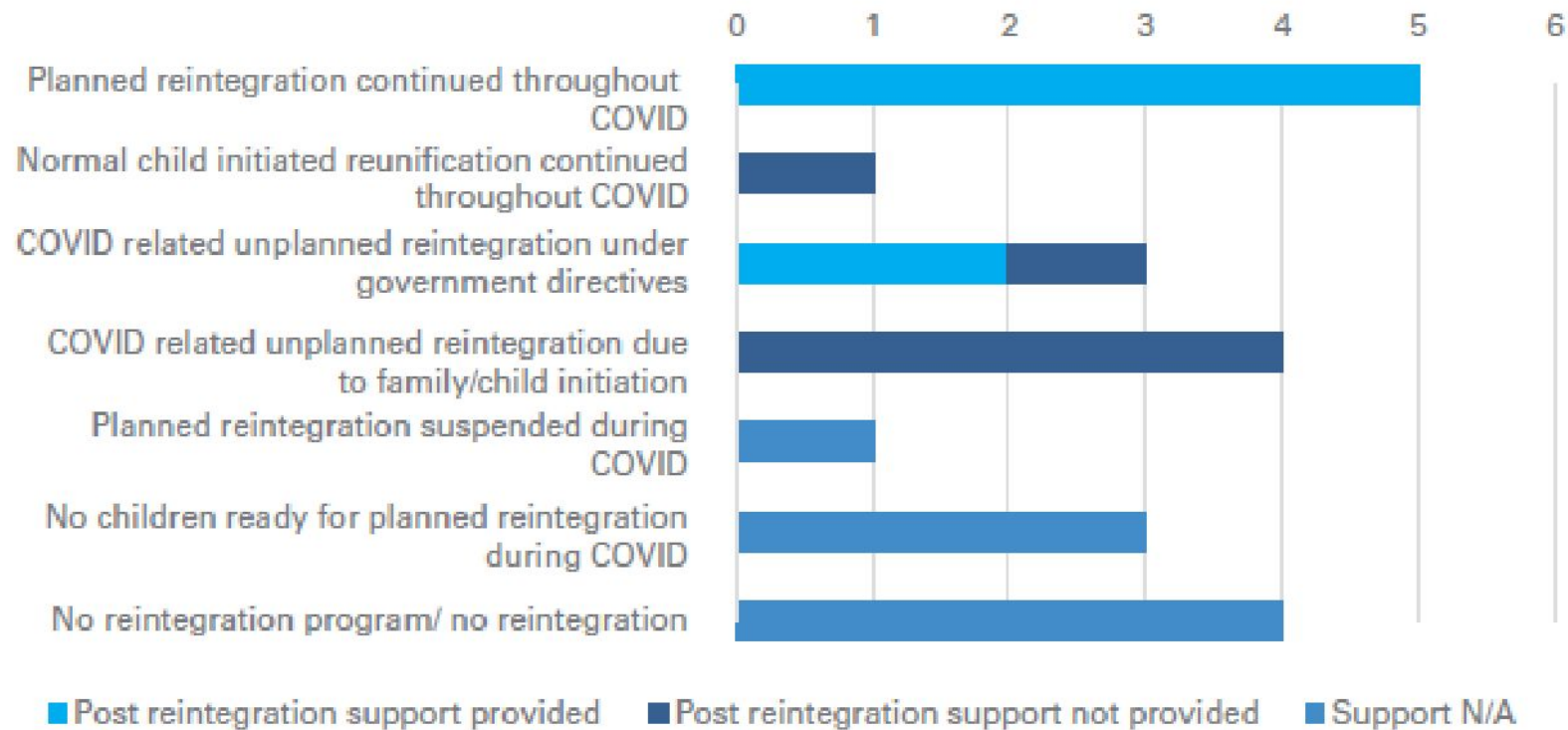
The combination of staff self-isolating at the RCI, children being on-site 24/7, increased workloads and inability of staff to see their families caused significant stress

42.9% of those who reported significant staff stress indicated it had an adverse impact on quality of caregiving

23.8% noted positive impacts on children's attachment and wellbeing, primarily stemming from more consistent caregiving (no shift work).

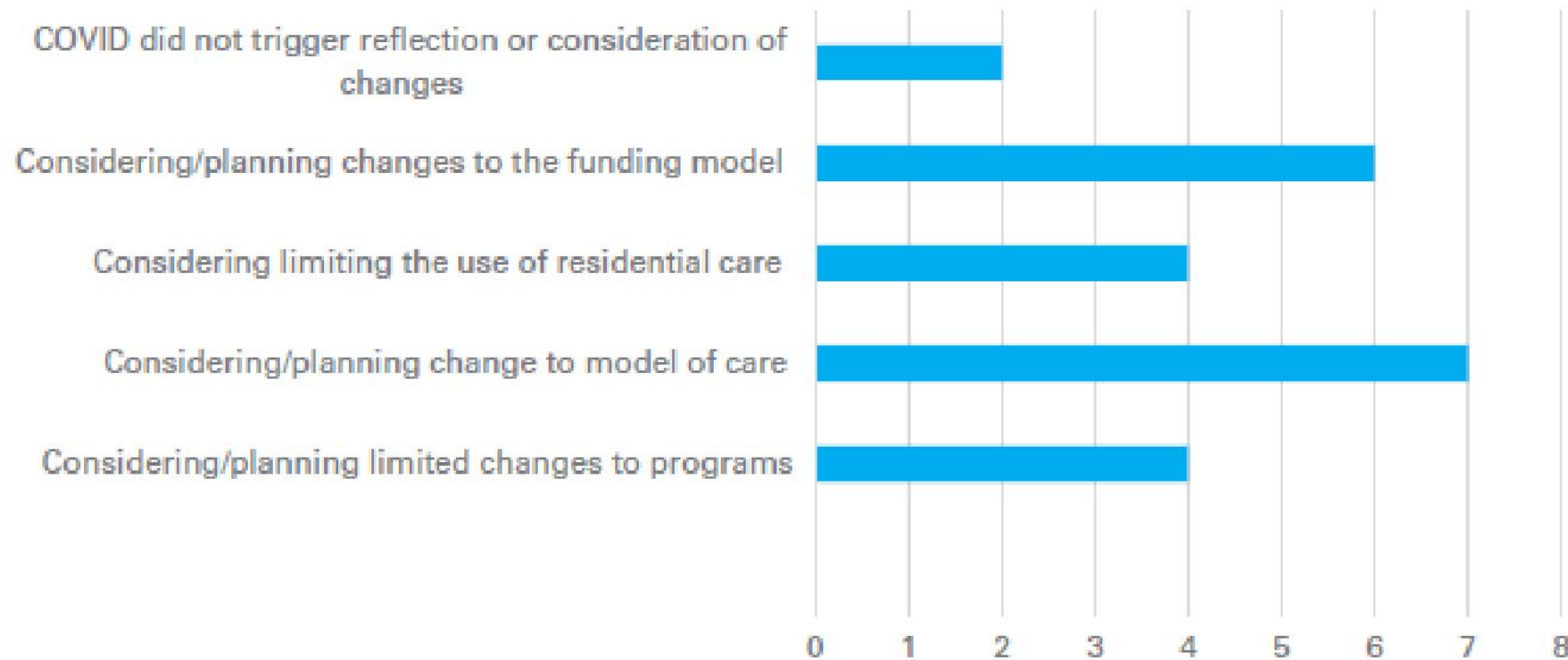
IMPACTS ON REINTEGRATION

Impacts on Reintegration



REFLECTIONS & PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Considering and Planning for Change



FINAL THOUGHTS

COVID-19 has caused RCI directors to reflect on how their centres run, how they are funded, and their purpose for being.

Capitalising on this reflection to start or progress care reform/transition considerations.

Consideration of transition cannot happen in isolation of the reality of funding implications.

Acknowledgement of lack of sustainability of reliance on international volunteers and visitors (esp funding) yet RCIs intend on resume accepting volunteers and visitors asap.

When asked directly, many participants indicated low reliance on international volunteers/visitors for funding but subsequently indicated strong link between fundraising and volunteering/visiting responses to other questions.

Government involvement was a major determining factor in successful reintegration.

**DR. KANTHAMANEE (GIFT)
LADAPHONGPHATTHANA**

Alternative Care Thailand



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Implications for
in-country
transition/reform
efforts- Thailand
example



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Alternative Care
Thailand

alternativecarethailand.com



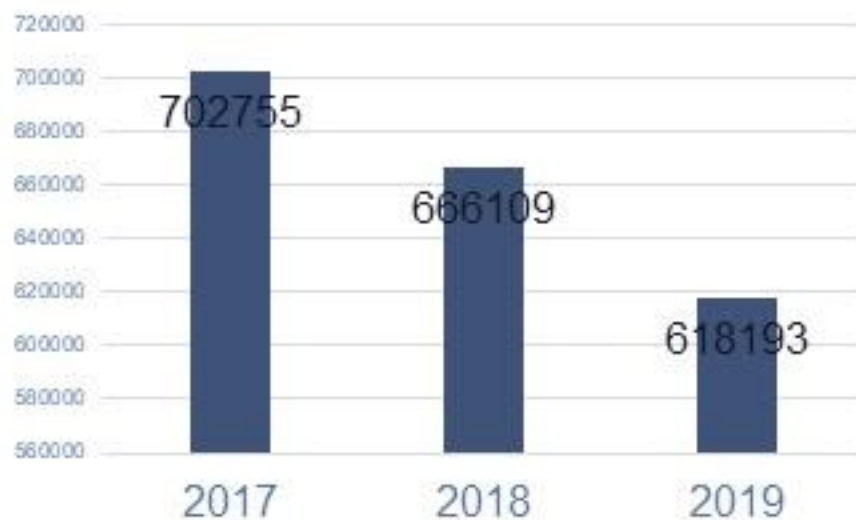
COVID-19 & CARE REFORM in Thailand



Photo credit: The Huntington Archive, Meik magazine, Suranabhorn Airport, searousets.com, Bangkok.com, Sanook.com, WWF Thailand

CHILDREN

- Thailand is at a verge of being Complete Aged Society
- Births declined
- Children accounts for 20.78%



In THAILAND

Alternative care in Thailand: Pre-COVID



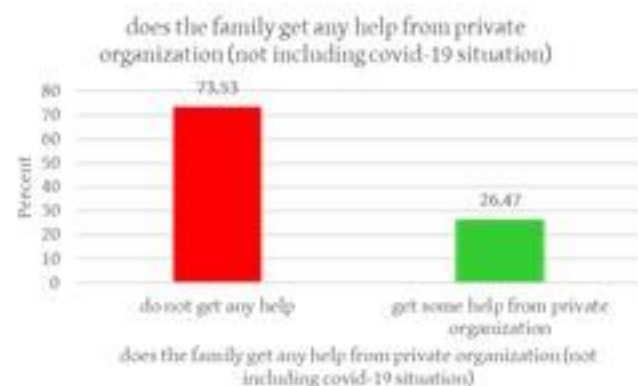
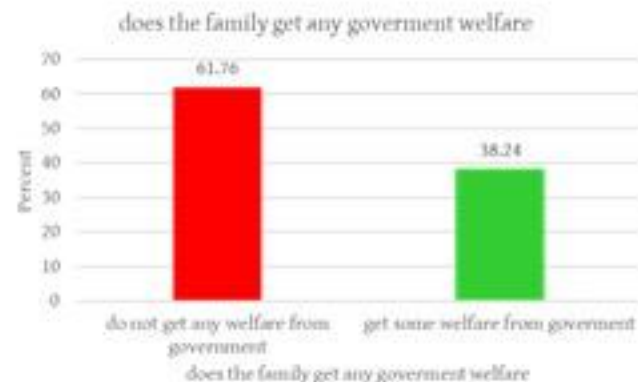
Kinship care is common

- Almost 1 in 4 children or around 3 million children have absent parents, mainly due to internal migration. (Unicef, 2020)

Who do Thai children live with?



- Only about 5,500 kinship families and 400 foster families are formally supported. (ACT, 2020)
- Family strengthening services are scarce and scattered.



Alternative care in Thailand: Pre-COVID

Yet, the care system relies heavily on institutional care

- There are **at least 600 private children's homes in Thailand**. About half of them are operating without license
- 63% are located in Northern Thailand, especially in Chiangmai, Chiangrai, and Tak provinces
- **At least 64% are or affiliate with faith based organisations (FBOs)**, particularly Christianity. Most received fundings from churches abroad.
- There were reports on malpractices such as disclosing personal information, child exploitation, and proselytization



Category	Count	Category	Count
Registered Children's Homes in Thailand	585	Other Children's Homes	575
Non-Registered Children's Homes	30	Group Home Registered Children's Homes	291
Other Home-Registered Children's Homes	254	Registered Boarding Schools	-
Home Children's Homes	4	Religious Institutions	-



COVID in Thailand:

Effects on children

More children in need

- About 65,000 children are **tested positive for COVID-19, including children in public and private institutional care facilities.**
- More children are being separated, orphaned, poor, starving, and dropping out.
- **About 5,000 children have lost a parent** to COVID-19
- The impact of COVID-19 towards the children in Thailand are **worse than Tsunami.**

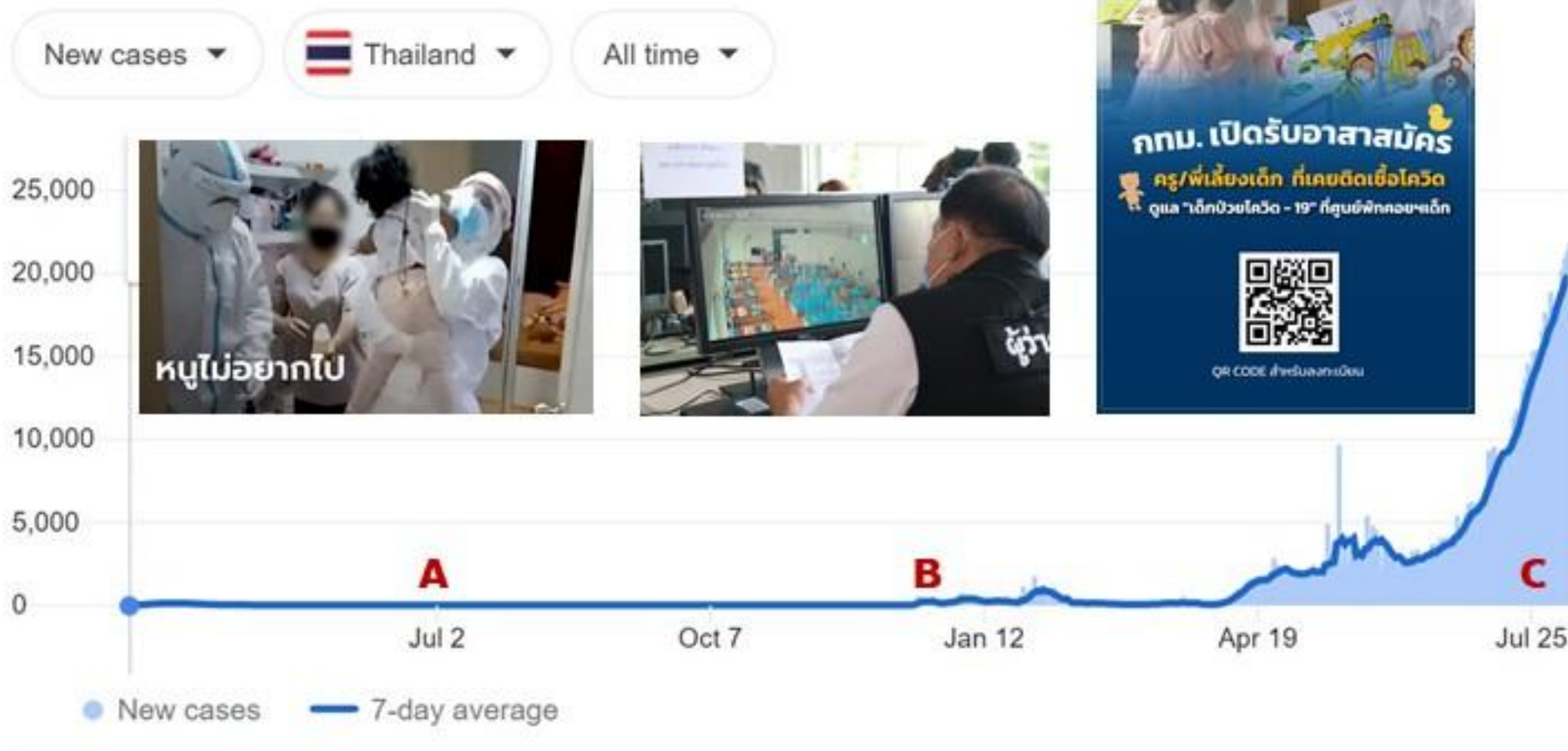


COVID in Thailand:

Different procedures for family separation

Emergency?

- The society was able to **absorb** children without adequate parental care until April 2021.
- At first, **children and parents were separated**. Now there are procedures in place.
- In July, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has opened a **care center for children with Covid-19**
>> refer to hospital or home isolation program.



COVID in Thailand:

Different opinions towards alternative care

A tug of war

- Care reform have started?**
 Government and NGOs have been working together to raise awareness, build capacity and evidences, conduct pilot projects.
- A long pause**
 Government budget was reallocated, but many project continued. NGOs were not able to mobilize the agenda as planned.
- Reiterate the importance of family and the need for family support**
 Amidst Covid-19, different child protection stakeholders insist on family preservation.
- Residential care needed?**
 Public awareness, lack of family-based options (even in normal time), and different care centers leading to a voice for institutional care.



It is an opportunity to 'engage' RCIs

Operators' concerns about financial situation lead them to seek ways to survive. Public and private stakeholders should engage and help them with the transformation.

1. Introducing a more financially "sustainable" ways to **fundraise**
 - *International: funders, particularly FBOs, awareness raising helps*
 - *Domestic: governments to take a firm position in allocating resources*
2. Providing **"how to" to transform** current residential care programs to serve more people in the community
 - *Many RCIs are in transition, more acceptable to change*
3. Developing/promoting **DI models**

In parallel with

- **Highlighting the need for systematic family strengthening and support services**
- **Promoting family-based alternative care**

Implications of the findings for
CARE REFORM
in Thailand



**DANIEL
GLEISNER**

Project Manager, ERIKS
Development Partners



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Implications for donor
facing advocacy and
engagement- Sweden
faith-based donor
example



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**Advocating for
family-based care within
the faith-based
community in Sweden**

ERIKS Development
Partners

The Swedish Foundation
ERIKS Development Partner

A child rights organisation working in 16 countries.

Our mission is to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting the rights of the child.

We focus mainly on the child's right to education, health and protection.

Strengthened arguments through report findings



Webinar in May –
faith-based
community



Shortterm missions
and volunteer trips



Window of
opportunity

Strategies

- To reach the founders and fundraisers directly
- Long-term perspective in raising awareness within church denominations

Q&A



RESOURCES

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PRIVATELY RUN RESIDENTIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS
 Insights and Implications for Advocacy and Awareness Raising
 April 2021
 Authored by: Rebecca Nhep, Better Care Network
 Dr Kate van Doore, Law Futures Centre & Griffith Law School

Impact of COVID-19 on Privately Run and Funded Residential Care Institutions
 Briefing Note for Donors and Supporters of Overseas RCIs
 This briefing paper draws on data and findings from the Impact of COVID-19 on Privately Run Residential Care Institutions study report.

Summary of Key Findings for Donors and Supporters of RCIs

1. Funding	
	76% of participating RCIs were entirely funded by overseas sources of income
	81% of participants stated that COVID impacted the financial situation of the RCi
	47.6% experienced a loss of international donor funding
	38% experienced a loss of revenue from income-generating activities
	52.3% experienced a loss of income from orphanage volunteering/visiting

COVID-19 ON PRIVATELY RUN RESIDENTIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS
STUDY 1: FUTURE'S CHILDREN'S CENTRE
 Learn from the impact of COVID-19 on Privately Run Residential Care Institutions Study. Interviews with directors and principal donors of residential care institutions across the world to understand the impact COVID-19 was having on their operations. This case study is a summary of findings given by one participant. It has been anonymized for privacy reasons, however all names and locations are accurate.

...was established as a registered children's centre in 2010. It was set up as an international organisation to support the development of children in their own countries in their home countries. The centre's primary focus is on the well-being of children and their families, including the provision of care, education, and health services. The centre's primary focus is on the well-being of children and their families, including the provision of care, education, and health services. The centre's primary focus is on the well-being of children and their families, including the provision of care, education, and health services.



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YOU FOR
JOINING!**

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