



DESCRIPTION OF INDICATORS OF ORPHANAGE TRAFFICKING



UBS Optimus Foundation



Indicators of Acts: Unlawful Removal, Recruitment, and Transfer of a Child into a Residential Care Facility

Operation of an unauthorized residential care facility (RCF)

RCFs that are not registered in accordance with stipulated laws and regulations, may not be legally permitted to operate or receive children into care. This may indicate that children in their care have been recruited or transferred in contravention of gatekeeping mechanisms¹ stipulated in law and policy. The operation of an unregistered or unauthorized RCF is therefore a strong indicator of unlawful/irregular removal, recruitment, and transfer of a child into an RCF.

Irregular or unauthorized admission of children into a RCF

Based on international norms, and domestic law/policy in most countries, children should only be admitted into a residential care by mandated child protection authorities and in accordance with the gatekeeping procedures prescribed in alternative care regulations. RCFs should not be authorized to initiate or independently make decisions pertaining to children's admission.

Irregular admission includes all admissions not conducted in accordance with laws and regulations of the country. This may include admissions that do not involve the mandated authorities, involve authorities operating outside their jurisdiction, instances of insufficient legal justification, or situations where the procedures for determining that residential care is justified have not been followed. The admission of children into unauthorized RCFs is categorically classed as irregular.

¹ Gatekeeping procedures are those that describe the process for assessment and decision making for alternative care placements. It is based on first determining whether alternative care is necessary, and if so, what the most suitable placement is, considering the child's rights and best interests. Gatekeeping requires referring mandated authorities to exhaust all family-based care options before referring a child to residential care.

Active recruitment of children from families	Active recruitment involves directors, staff and/or child finders actively seeking children for admission. It may take the form of promoting RCFs in communities, making direct approaches to families, providing incentives to community leaders to encourage referrals, or encouraging children and families to recruit amongst their peer or family networks. Active recruitment is a strong indicator of unlawful removal, as it constitutes admission by RCF operators rather than mandated child protection authorities. To prevent unnecessary separation and child institutionalisation, RCFs should not be permitted to initiate or make decisions regarding a child's placement. Admission should be strictly on referral by mandated authorities who must follow rigorous gatekeeping processes. Voluntarily placement of children in RCFs without the involvement of mandated authorities should also not be permissible. As lawful removal and admission should only be based on referral from mandated authorities, active recruitment is a strong indicator of unlawful removal.
Advertising the residential care services in the community	Advertising residential care services is often linked to active recruitment. It can involve direct advertising to families, to community groups, including churches, or to local authorities. Advertising is for the purpose of populating the RCF. As RCFs should not be lawfully permitted to initiate admissions or referrals, direct advertising of RCF services may indicate involvement in unlawful removal and irregular admission.
Incomplete or absent child files	Based on international norms, RCFs should be required under law/regulation to keep a secure file for each child admitted into their care. Files should contain documents such as birth certificates (or copies of), academic transfer records, contact details for families, admission related information and any other health/education/assessment information gathered over time. The absence of child files, or significant gaps in information in files can indicate unlawful removal. Gaps in information about a child's family or identity is of particular concern.
Incomplete child intake/admission forms	When the removal and admission of children into RCFs follows the prescribed gatekeeping process, comprehensive information should be gathered and captured in official forms that are signed and kept in individual child files. Where a requirement to complete formal intake documentation exists in the country, yet forms are incomplete or missing, unlawful removal and irregular admission may be indicated.
Widespread irregularities in children's files and identity documents	In RCFs involved in child trafficking, multiple victims are typically recruited/unlawfully removed under similar means. Patterns of irregularity in children's files or with their identity documents may be observable when multiple files are compared and examined together. These irregularities may include evidence of changed names (non-national names in birth certificates), changes to parents listed on identity documents (for example, the same parent listed on more than one birth certificate of non-biologically related children), numerous identity documents issued from the same local government office other than the office of the child's community origin, consistent gaps in information about the child's parents or community of origin in intake or case management forms. Consistent irregularities across multiple files may indicate unlawful removal.

<p>Falsified reasons for admission</p>	<p>Gatekeeping mechanisms should stipulate legal justifications for a child's removal from family and placement in an RCF. In many cases where removal and admission is unlawful or irregular, these thresholds have not been met. Stories about hardship, orphanhood, abandonment, vulnerability, or risk may therefore be falsified, or embellished to justify a child's admission into the RCF.</p> <p>Reasons for admission may be falsified in children's files and documents as well as in donor and online fundraising communications. In many cases there are discrepancies between information in the child's file and information provided to the donor. This can be detected by comparing these two sources of information and looking for discrepancies.</p> <p>Similarly, information gathered during child and family assessments that contradicts the information in files or donor communications may indicate that the removal of a child was unlawful/irregular. This is also an indicator of profit as falsification is often for the purpose of soliciting funds.</p>
<p>Paper orphaning</p>	<p>Paper orphans are children who have living parents and whose orphanhood status has been altered on paper to falsely justify the admission of a child into an RCF. This can be through falsified birth certificates, death certificates of parents, abandonment certifications or verification of a child's orphan or abandonment status on formal case management forms.</p> <p>Paper orphaning severs family ties as a means of keeping children in care long-term. It is an indicator of unlawful removal but can also be an indicator of purposes including profit or adoption.</p>
<p>Movement of children from one residential care facility to another</p>	<p>Movement of children from one RCF to another more often occurs between unregistered institutions and can indicate unlawful removal and irregular admission. It is sometimes done to disrupt family contact as part of paper orphaning.</p>
<p>Patron-client relationships occurring in the RCI</p>	<p>Patron-client relationships in RCFs can be between the directors and the families of the children in care and/or the directors and external patrons who may hold positions of power in society. These relationships can be used to (a) recruit children into care, which constitutes unlawful removal and irregular admission and/or (b) protect the RCF from regulatory or legal consequences for unlawful conduct. The presence of patron-client relationships in the RCF can indicate unlawful removal.</p>
<p>Indicators of Purpose: Sexual Exploitation</p>	
<p>Withdrawn, isolated, fearful, anxious, or aggressive behavior amongst children</p>	<p>These behaviors are common amongst children who have been victims of sexual abuse or exploitation. They may be heightened for children being sexually exploited in an RCF because they live in a closed environment and under the near total control of the perpetrator.</p>

Sexually harmful behaviors	Sexualized behavior and sexual knowledge in advance of child's age may indicate exposure to sexual exploitation or abuse. This may manifest in inappropriate play, developmentally inappropriate sexual behavior towards visitors, volunteers, other children, or as child-on-child sexual abuse in the RCF. These behaviors may indicate that sexual exploitation is occurring in the RCF.
Grooming of children in the RCF	Children in exploitative RCFs may be groomed for sexual exploitation. Grooming may be indicated when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special attention is paid to certain children (by the director, staff, founder, or other stakeholders) • Some children are intentionally isolated from other children (e.g., asked to do special chores, frequently taken off site alone) • Favoritism is displayed towards certain children (gifts, extra food, more opportunities) • Normal and appropriate personal boundaries are violated • Some children have money or possessions other children don't have and without occasion or explanation.
Volunteers or visitors taking children offsite unaccompanied	Allowing volunteers and visitors to take children off site and unaccompanied demonstrates a serious lack of standards to safeguard children. In some cases, the lack of standards results in opportunistic abuse by volunteers. Reduced child safety standards enabling 'orphan experiences' for paying or donating volunteers may indicate the purpose of profit. In other cases, RCF operators facilitate the sexual exploitation of children who are taken off site.
Physical signs of abuse, STIs, pregnancy, self-harm, drug, and alcohol use	Physical marks, bruises, unexplained bleeding, trauma to the genital area, STIs, frequent UTIs, teen pregnancy, substance and alcohol abuse, and physical signs of self-harm, are all signs that can indicate sexual exploitation or abuse.
Disclosures of sexual abuse made by children/youth	<p>Children or youth who are in care or have left care may disclose or allude to sexual abuse occurring in the RCF. They may indicate this is happening to other children or to themselves. It is rare for children who remain in the RCF to disclose sexual abuse. Typically, disclosures happen once the child/young person has left care and is no longer under the control of the perpetrator/s.</p> <p>Children subject to sexual exploitation as a purpose of child trafficking rarely understand the full extent of what has occurred. They may not see themselves as victims, particularly not of child trafficking. They are more likely to disclose abuse or indecent conduct but are unlikely to understand the full extent of the crime perpetrated against them. Any reports, disclosures, suspicions of sexual abuse or indecent acts of children in an RCF should be treated as potential indicators of sexual exploitation and should trigger an investigation into whether child trafficking may have occurred.</p>

Labor Exploitation

Children working on farms, land, properties or in construction roles	Children in RCFs where exploitation is taking place are often forced to provide manual labor on farms or properties owned by the director or their family members. Labor may include clearing land, farming, and construction work. Children are almost never paid for this work. It is often framed as an obligation for the children to demonstrate gratitude to the director for providing them with shelter, food, and education.
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<p>Children who have been admitted into the RCF providing labor in businesses owned by the director or the directors family</p>	<p>Children subject to orphanage trafficking can be transported to the RCF as a transit destination and then relocated to work in businesses, farms or other initiatives that are not situated at the RCF. In these cases, children may live at these sites without caregivers or appropriate adult supervision. They may not be free to leave and the provision of labor under these conditions may disrupt their education. Where children whose names are listed on the RCF admission list are not present at the RCF and are residing on farms or other property, it may indicate labor exploitation and child trafficking.</p>
<p>Children providing domestic labor in the homes of directors/staff</p>	<p>Some children, particularly older children or youth may be forced to work in domestic roles in the homes of directors or staff. Such labor may include cleaning, cooking, guarding the property or caring for other children. Children may live at the director's home instead of the RCF, yet may be sleep, eat, and generally live separate from the director's family. This may indicate child or forced labor.</p>
<p>Children performing for visitors/ volunteers</p>	<p>Children in RCFs may be forced to perform in orphanage tourism shows for volunteers and visitors. These can occur on site at the RCF or at other tourist venues including restaurants or theatres. This indicates the purposes of profit and forced labor.</p> <p>Street signage advertising regular orphanage shows, the inclusion of orphanage visits and shows in travel itineraries, performances at other tourism venues by 'orphans' and frequent sighting of tour buses at orphanages may indicate child labor and the purpose of profit.</p>
<p>Servitude and Slavery Like Practices</p>	
<p>Never or rarely leaving the RCF, or never without the accompaniment of the director or their family members</p>	<p>The exploitation of children for labor or services in RCFs, including orphanage performances, may constitute servitude where children are deprived of their liberty. When children are subjected to the control of perpetrators of exploitation, they are dependent on them for their basic needs (shelter, food, clothing), making it impossible for the children to leave. Where indicators of labor exploitation are present and the child's freedom of movement is entirely or severely restricted, it may indicate servitude.</p>
<p>Children residing on farms/ properties where they provide labor</p>	<p>In some cases, children are trafficked into RCFs and then sent to live and work on farms or properties not on-site at the RCF. Evidence of children living on farms or properties where they are providing labor, who are unsupervised or inadequately supervised, and are not free to leave or cease providing labor, may indicate servitude.</p>
<p>School aged children not attending school</p>	<p>In most cases, RCFs attract children with the promise of education. If there are children residing in the RCF of school age, who are not attending or are infrequently attending school, this may indicate they are being used to provide involuntary labor or services and is not free or permitted to leave the RCF. This can indicate servitude.</p>

Profit

Orphanage tourism, voluntourism and volunteering

Orphanage tourism, voluntourism and visiting is a practice that places children at unnecessary risk of harm and abuse and indicates poor child safeguarding standards. It is a strong indicator of the purpose of profit.

It includes the following types of activities:

- Advertising (online or via signage) and/or facilitating voluntourism placements at the RCF, including short-term missions teams
- Advertising (online or via signage) and/or facilitating visits by tourists and foreign donors to the RCF
- Advertising (online or via signage) and hosting performances by children at the RCF or by children from the RCF at other venues

Indicators that orphanage tourism, voluntourism and volunteering may be connected to the purpose of profit can also include:

- Focusing on training children in traditional dance, music, or other performing arts
- Advertising fees for volunteering placements or visits
- Allowing volunteers/visitors to take children off site unaccompanied
- Encouraging children to display inappropriate levels of affection towards volunteers
- Children indiscriminately displaying affection towards visitors, volunteers.
- Reporting by volunteers of excessive focus on soliciting donations
- Using donated goods and funds for purposes other than for the care or benefit of children (being sold, locked away, or misappropriated).
- Locating the RCF in a popular tourist area
- Connections to the tourism industry (e.g., director is a tourism operator or guide or the RCF has strong relationships with voluntourism or tourism companies)

Inappropriate disclosure of children's personal details (poor confidentiality standards)

Disclosing a child's personal and confidential information with unauthorized persons, is a breach of the child's right to privacy. Such information includes, identifying details and images, past traumas, situations that led to the child's admission and medical details. When this information is shared with donors, volunteers, visitors, or is included in online posts, or in children's sponsorship profiles, it suggests that fundraising is being prioritized above confidentiality and can indicate the purpose of profit.

Scripted and coached interactions between children and volunteers/visitors

Children in RCFs are often coached to engage with volunteers and visitors in ways that will elicit sympathy and donations. Signs of this can include:

- inappropriate physical interactions (initiating hugging, sitting on laps or holding hands)
- coached verbal interactions, including scripted responses to questions, false or inconsistent claims of being orphaned or abandoned, or children appealing to visitors to make donations (e.g., saying they don't have enough food or other provisions)
- staged physical appearance (putting on old clothes, making themselves dirty and disheveled for visitors)

These signs may indicate the purpose of profit.

<p>Sharing falsified, improbable, or embellished narratives about children's backgrounds</p>	<p>Details of children's backgrounds may be falsified or embellished in donor communications as a means of eliciting sympathy and attracting donations and sponsors. Improbable stories of abandonment (being found in a rubbish bin), the sale of children (sold at a market), and abuse (kept in a cage) are indicators of profit, particularly where there is no supporting evidence or verification. Evidence of this falsified information may be found in online donor communications (web and social media), in direct communications sent to donors (emails, written sponsorship profiles, messages) or verbally communicated to visitors and volunteers.</p>
<p>Involving children in begging, recruiting volunteers or visitors or other fundraising activities</p>	<p>The use of children in the fundraising activities of RCFs, including unlawful activities such as begging, may indicate commodification of their vulnerability to elicit sympathy from donors and prospective donors. It may indicate the purpose of profit.</p> <p>It is incumbent on service providers to ensure they have adequate funds to run their RCFs to standard. It is not incumbent on children to raise funds for their own care.</p>
<p>Poor standards of care</p>	<p>There are two reasons why the failure of an RCF to meet minimum standards may indicate the purpose of profit. First, it may suggest that funds donated for the children's care are being misappropriated by operators who are personally profiting from the donations. Second, keeping children in subpar conditions is a tactic used by some operators to solicit donations from visitors and volunteers who seek to ameliorate the poor conditions through additional funds or resources. Therefore, subpar conditions in the RCF may indicate the purpose of profit.</p>
<p>Director/staff interference or lack of cooperation with reintegration</p>	<p>RCFs operating for profit are often reluctant to allow children to return to family, including in the context of reintegration programs or case management services. This is because profit is connected to the number of children in care and the ability to retain those children in care long-term. Reintegration threatens the business model of RCFs operating for profit. Directors and staff will often attempt to interfere or block reintegration efforts. This may include through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blocking social workers' access to children, children's files or children and family information • seeking to control reintegration efforts and not permitting the involvement of qualified social workers • controlling which children can be reintegrated, and selecting mainly children who are older or deemed difficult by the director • interfering with child and family assessments, including through coercion or threats to children and families. <p>These indicators may suggest an intent to keep children in care long-term in violation of their rights, for the purpose of profit.</p>
<p>Inflated admission numbers</p>	<p>RCFs involved in the unlawful removal of children for the purpose of profit may inflate the numbers of children in care on official or unofficial admission lists. This is most common when the funding model involves a per child allocation of funds. Indicators that admissions numbers are inflated include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discrepancies between admission lists and sponsorship lists • retention of the names of children who have left care on admission or sponsorship lists

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion of the names of biological children of the director and/or staff on RCF admission lists • inclusion of the names of non-resident children from the local community on RCF admission or sponsorship lists (transient involvement in the RCF)
Significant discrepancy between the living standards of the director and the children in care.	Where funds donated to the RCF are being misappropriated, it is common for the living standards in the RCF to be low, and the living standards of the director and their family to be disproportionately high. These discrepancies are most often visible in physical housing and the education of children in the RCF compared to the children of the director and/or staff. These may indicate the purpose of profit.
Nepotism	RCFs involved in child trafficking often employ family members in most or all key roles to prevent reports or disclosures of irregularities. Nepotism in RCF operations in conjunction with other indicators, may suggest the purpose of profit, or other purposes of unlawful removal.
Financial misappropriation or fraud	Evidence of financial misappropriation or fraud in an RCF is a strong indicator of the purpose of profit. This is best detected through a forensic audit of accounts, however, it may also be detected by reviewing budgets (looking for inflated costs), receipts (prevalence of unofficial receipts), and comparing budgets to receipts/reconciliations (looking for differences between budget line items and actual expenditure without surplus or irregular expenditure).
Sale of land/relocation of the RCF	<p>RCFs involved in child trafficking for profit purposes may profit from selling the land on which the RCF is built or located (acquired through donor funds) and moving the RCF to a cheaper or small property. Land is often purchased in the personal name of the director or founder, and not held in trust or under a legally registered entity. This makes it easy and 'legal' for the director or founder to sell the property and take the profits.</p> <p>The sale or advertising of RCF land and relocation to smaller properties, or from urban centres to urban fringes, may indicate the purpose of profit. Checking land title records and donation records may help detect whether profiting likely occurred.</p>
Lack of child safeguarding policies and mechanisms	The absence of policies and practices to safeguard children can indicate the purpose of profit, as it may reflect a motivation to operate an RCF for profit rather than child protection purposes. Where profit is the primary motive, there is no incentive to allocate funds towards rigorous safeguarding measures. This tends to result in lax standards, including poor caregiver to child ratios, unfettered access by volunteers and visitors, unsafe sleeping conditions, and lack of investment to address obvious risks to children's safety in the RCF setting. These signs may indicate the purpose of profit.
Giving children foreign or Christian names	RCFs soliciting funding from foreign donors, including volunteers and visitors, may change the children's names to foreign names or Christian names that are more familiar to the target donors. This can be to make it easier for donors to 'identify' with the children and create emotional bonds. It is more commonly associated with child sponsorship fundraising strategies and is used as a means of securing individual child sponsors. Changing a child's name for fundraising purposes is a violation of their right to identity and may indicate the purpose of profit.

Overt emphasis on fundraising	RCFs involved in child trafficking for profit purposes may exhibit a preoccupation with fundraising. Volunteers may comment on or report concerns of excessive requests for donations. Donors or donor communications, and online/social media communications may show frequent requests for emergency funds, including for implausible events/accidents. Communications that don't involve appeals for funds may be rare. These signs may indicate profit as a purpose.
Illicit Adoption	RCFs profiting from illicit adoption may have unusually high numbers of infants and young children in care and make that an unusually high percentage of the children in their care are abandoned and orphaned. There may be evidence of fraudulent declarations of eligibility for adoption and irregular adoption fee payments. These RCFs may facilitate orphanage tourism, however, target visitors who meet the eligibility criteria for adoption and have the means to pay fees and make significant donations to the orphanage. They are unlikely to target young adults and gap year students.
Indicator of Means: Deception, Coercion and Threats: Against families	
Contracts or agreements with parents and families	Families whose children are unlawfully/irregularly removed are sometimes required to sign agreements or agree to conditions that curtail their parental powers (in effect but not under law), and limit contact between children and families. This is for the purpose of harboring children in RCFs long-term, preventing their reintegration, and maintaining false narratives of orphanhood and abandonment that are central to the RCF business model. Contracts and agreements may contain threats, such as financial penalties should parents seek to remove their child before a set time (e.g., after graduation or once the child reaches a certain age). Such agreements or contracts at minimum constitute coercion of families and may also indicate threats and deception.
Lack of cooperation from parents during reintegration assessments	<p>Families whose children have been trafficked into the RCF may be subject to coercion and threats or false promises that prevent or discourage them from cooperating in reintegration efforts.</p> <p>Families may provide rehearsed or scripted responses during social work assessments or interviews that indicate coaching. They may be evasive, exaggerate vulnerabilities in an attempted to be deemed unsuitable for reintegration, express a lack of interest in their child returning, or decline offers of support that would enable them to resume care of their child/ren. Families may indicate that they are powerless to make the decision and defer to the RCF director. These behaviors may indicate means including coercion, threats, or deception.</p>
Limited family contact	Children in alternative care have a right to maintain contact and family relationships. According to international norms, and domestic laws/regulations in most countries, RCFs are required to facilitate family contact, including as part of reintegration efforts. When RCFs do not allow children and families to have contact or severely restrict contact, it may indicate coercion and threats as a means of harboring a child unlawfully removed and admitted into an RCF for a purpose of exploitation or profit or adoption.

Deceived about the conditions of care	Parents who relinquish their children into an RCF may do so based on false promises about the standards of care and/or education their children will receive. To maintain the deception regarding the standards of care, family contact may also be limited. Evidence of discrepancies between the promised standards of care and the actual situation of the RCF may indicate deception was used during recruitment.
Deceived through false or unmet promises	Promises are often made to parents and children during recruitment to incentivize children's admission into the RCF and to keep children in care long-term. This may include promises of education, including higher education, or study abroad opportunities, promises of support for families, including jobs, land, or housing. Where there is evidence of unmet or false promises, it may indicate deception was used during recruitment.
Abuse of vulnerability of the family	Targeting of vulnerable families for recruitment of children into RCFs can constitute an abuse of vulnerability, which is an indicator of means. Recruiters are known to target families with specific characteristics that make them vulnerable to deception, coercion, and threats. This includes single parent households, families experiencing significant crises, families with low education and literacy levels, and families from remote rural communities.
Cultivated situations of dependence between directors and families	RCF directors involved in orphanage trafficking may cultivate dependency with families to exercise coercive control. They may provide reoccurring support to families and make promises of support, on the condition that they keep their child in care and do not seek their reunification. Families may be threatened with the withdrawal of support should they seek the return of their child. This may be an indicator of coercion.
Families in patron-client relationships with RCF directors	Patron-client relationships between directors and families of children in care have been identified as occurring in RCFs. They can be used to create expectations and morally binding obligations that serve to facilitate unlawful removal, admission of children into RCFs and prevent their return to family. These patron-client relationships can be used to facilitate orphanage trafficking.

Deception, Coercion and Threats: Against children

Inability to speak to children alone (social workers/inspectors)	Children who have been trafficked into RCFs and exploited, maybe prevented from speaking freely with social workers or mandated authorities, to prevent disclosure of information that may reveal abuse, exploitation, or trafficking. RCF directors or staff may hover during social work meetings or interviews, refuse to allow children to be interviewed alone, refuse to allow interviews to be conducted in private spaces and may remain in sight of children during the interview as a way of intimidating them. This behavior may indicate coercion or threats.
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Rapid exit of some children (older children and youth) without due process	To prevent disclosures, reports, and the detection of exploitation or trafficking, RCF operators may seek to exit certain children or youth from the RCF before reintegration case management commences. These children/young people may exit care rapidly and without due process or support. They may be threatened or subject to allegations (of crime, or sexually inappropriate conduct) to undermine the credibility of any reports they make. Evidence of hasty removal of select children or youth from care before reintegration case management commences may indicate threats and coercion.
Violence, physical or emotional/verbal abuse.	RCFs involved in child trafficking and exploitation may use violence against children and between children as a means of exerting control. Older children may be instructed to use corporal punishment against younger children. Children and youth may be instructed to intimidate social workers with threatening or violent behavior to undermine the ability of social workers to develop trusting relationships with children. Violence can be used as a means of preventing disclosure and undermining processes that may lead to the detection of abuse, exploitation, or trafficking. Therefore, high levels of violence in the RCF (physical, verbal, or emotional abuse) may indicate orphanage trafficking.
Noticeable changes in children's demeanor during assessments/interview	During interviews conducted by social workers or mandated authorities, children might display noticeable changes in demeanor if they've been threatened to prevent the disclosure of information about the RCF. This change in demeanor may occur at the point when interviewers ask questions that relate directly to information they have been instructed to withhold (questions about the child's parents, community of origin, or experience in the RCF). They may appear uncomfortable, nervous, anxious, or may begin to provide obviously scripted responses to questions. This may indicate threat or coercion.
Showing submissive, fearful, distressed, or anxious behavior	Children subject to prolonged threats and coercion may display behavioral indicators that demonstrate fear and anxiety. They may appear wary of certain adults. They may be overly compliant, particularly around certain adults. They may model negative threatening or coercive behavior during play. They may display symptoms of depression and withdrawal. These behavioral indicators, particularly when it involves multiple children in the RCF, may indicate coercion and threats.
Forced to lie to donors, volunteers, visitors and authorities	Children subject to orphanage trafficking and exploitation have often had their identities altered and falsified (paper orphaning) and are instructed to participate in the maintenance of false narratives that sustain the RCFs operations. They may be instructed to tell visitors, volunteers, and donors that they are orphans or recount stories of their abandonment that are not factual. They may be instructed to lie to authorities in the context of inspections. Discrepancies in children's stories, and evidence that children have been instructed to lie to maintain false narratives, may indicate coercion.

Evidence of trauma bonds

Children who have been exploited may develop a trauma bond with the perpetrator of abuse. Children subject to exploitation in RCFs are at high risk of developing trauma bonds as abuse/exploitation is conflated with 'care'.

Children who justify, defend and display loyalty towards the perpetrator may be displaying indicators of a trauma bond. Children may display extreme and negative feelings towards 'rescuers' and undermine rescue efforts. They may refuse to provide statements or testify against perpetrators. They may seek to return to the perpetrator after they have been rescued. They may display extreme cognitive dissonance, recognizing the abuse, yet defending the abuser at the same time. Trauma bonds can be intentionally cultivated by perpetrators as a means of exerting coercive control.

Disclaimer: These indicators have been drawn from the research and literature available on orphanage trafficking at the time of writing. However, it is recognized that existing research on indicators of orphanage trafficking is limited. More research is required to verify the generalizability of these indicators