

Residential care centre perspectives on the impacts of orphanage tourism in Cambodia

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Abstract:

This article analyses on the phenomenon of orphanage tourism/ childcare tourism in Cambodia and its social and economic impacts by interviewing the managers directors or volunteer coordinators of nine residential care facilities and to develop recommendations and guidelines for the residential care centres and volunteer organisations to improve the volunteering practice in the future. Impacts of orphanage tourism are perceived by the respondents as mainly positive and rarely negative- residential care is considered more positive than the children's abusive family situations. All centres say the positive impacts are due to strict recruitment, induction, rules and regulations concerning volunteers and tourists. The negative impacts are perceived to mainly be caused by cooperation with volunteer sending agencies which have an overall negative reputation throughout the literature and secondary data. The respondents distance themselves from the overly negative description of orphanage tourism in literature and media. Thus the research provides interesting insights in the perception of impacts of orphanage tourism through the eyes of the host. Furthermore it provides recommendations for host organisations, volunteer sending organisations and governments to improve their practices and policies about orphanage tourism.

Keywords: Orphanage Tourism, Volunteer Tourism, Cambodia.

Introduction

The growing popularity of international volunteering has led to the trend of orphanage tourism, whereby people take time to volunteer at or visit an orphanage while visiting a foreign country. The literature on volunteer tourism is growing but mainly focuses on the volunteer and to a lesser extent on the host communities, and the literature on orphanage tourism is limited. Hanna Tabea Voelkl¹

¹ Hanna Tabea Voelkl (2012)

conducted an unpublished qualitative case study in Ghana that focused specifically on the experiences of orphanage children with international volunteer tourists and Richter and Norman² published the study "AIDS orphan tourism: A threat to young children in residential care". Jane Reas³ also conducted an unpublished sociological research about the commodification and objectification of the orphaned child in Cambodia. Furthermore, there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence about the positive and negative impacts on host organizations, but very little empirical research has been published. Many blogs, newspapers and journalists have pointed out the potential negative impacts and tour operators are bringing forward possible positive impacts.

This paper unravels some of the tensions between the vocational and financial aspects of care from the currently unreported perspective of the managers of the care centres. It analyses social and economic, negative and positive impacts of orphanage tourism in Cambodia by interviewing the managers, directors or volunteer coordinators of nine residential care facilities and to develop recommendations and guidelines for the residential care centres and volunteer organisations. Orphanages in Cambodia are supposed to be long term residential centres that provide all basic developmental needs for children who have lost one or both biological parents⁴. Yet Save The Children Alliance⁵ shows many countries in which 80% of the children in residential care have parents, which is also the case in Cambodia according to UNICEF⁶. Cambodia has an estimated 553,000 single and double orphans, accounting for 8.8 % of all children. In comparison, the child population in residential care facilities remains relatively small at 11,945 (2.2%) and the majority of children in residential care are not double orphans, but children with parents. These centres also admit a variety of children at risk and children in need of special protection, but are often unable to provide specialised services. 2009 statistics counted 269 orphanages in Cambodia⁷, growing fast and increasingly replacing non-residential alternative care options⁸.

International research demonstrates that institutionalisation of children impacts negatively on social, physical, intellectual and emotional child development and that non-institutional care is recognised as providing children with a range of benefits compared to other forms of residential care⁹. Globally, there

² Richter and Norman, 2010

³ Reas, 2013

⁴ UN, 2009

⁵ Save The Children Alliance, 2003

⁶ UNICEF, 2010

⁷ UNICEF, 2010

⁸ UNICEF, 2011

⁹ Save The Children, 1995; Save The Children, 2003; Rehman & Eloundou- Enyegue, 2007; Evans & Miguel, 2007; Friends International, 2011; UNICEF, 2011

is a growing consensus on the need to promote family-based alternatives to institutional care for children. Furthermore, much of the care in these centres is done by international volunteers. The literature and media point out a manifold of issues arising with orphanage tourism. It is believed to negatively impact the children and the community and add existing problems or create an environment where children are kept in vulnerable and dangerous situations¹⁰. However the literature on volunteer tourism also points out several positive impacts on host organizations: alleviation of poverty¹¹, enhancing career opportunities by training locals¹², improving the local economy¹³ and establishing cross cultural understanding¹⁴.

Orphanage Tourism

'Orphanage tourism', a form of volunteer tourism characterized by short-term travel to residential care facilities to engage in every day caregiving or for a short leisure visit, sells an emotional connection with needy young children¹⁵. Tourists in Cambodia also attend dance performances or events in which orphans perform¹⁶. In the literature, the issues arising from orphanage tourism are manifold. Although examples in other countries exist, the literature mainly focuses on Cambodia.

There is a high rise in number of orphanages globally, with evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa¹⁷, Nepal¹⁸, Indonesia¹⁹ and Ghana²⁰. The growth in Cambodia is 75% since 2005²¹ counting only facilities registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, so actual numbers could be much higher. Some believe there is a link between the 250% rise in tourism during the same period as the rise in residential care facilities²². Most orphanages are supported by overseas donors and tourists who are unaware of community based and family care alternatives and the potential risks of

¹⁰ Friends International, 2012; Baranova, 2012; Richter and Norman, 2010; Richter, 2010; Birrel, 2010,2011; Brandpunt, 2014; ZDF, 2014; Al Jazeera, 2012; Carmichael, 2010; Tourism Concern, 2013; Horton, 2011; Reas, 2011; Voelkl, 2012; Save the Children, 2009

¹¹ Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004

¹² Wearing, 2001

¹³ Clifton & Benson, 2006; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Barbieri, Santos & Katsube; 2012 Morgan 2010)

¹⁴ Sin, 2009; Mcintosh & Zahra, 2008

¹⁵ Richter & Norman, 2010

¹⁶ Reas, 2011

¹⁷ UNICEF, 2004; Firelight Foundation, 2005; Richter & Norman 2010

¹⁸ Next Generation Nepal, 2013

¹⁹ UNICEF, 2005; Schimmelpfenning, 2011

²⁰ Birrell, 2010

²¹ UNICEF, 2011

²² Morgan & Walker, 2013; Brandpunt, 2014

putting children in orphanages²³. Also contributing to this increase is the support residential care receives by local government, who often suggests to families to put their children into care in the absence of alternative support mechanisms.²⁴ Now, there are 269 orphanages in the country and only 21 are state run. Cambodia, torn apart by civil war in the 1970s, and again in the 1990s, has become a hotspot for volunteer tourism and orphanage tourism. Residential care facilities are increasingly replacing traditional forms of non-residential care, like family and community care²⁵.

The orphanage is a tourist attraction. According to UNICEF private overseas donors are the main funders of residential care in Cambodia and have little awareness of alternatives to residential care. Sebastien Marot, Director of NGO Friends International and the Child Safe network in Cambodia, acknowledges most tourists going to orphanages are acting out of pure motives when they visit and donate money²⁶. There is little doubt that some Cambodian orphanages have been set up to make money from foreign tourists and there are cases of children being asked to perform for, or befriend donors and sometimes to actively solicit the funds to guarantee the residential centres' survival²⁷. Jane Reas²⁸ argues the poorness and orphaned state of Cambodia's children is being turned into a marketable commodity, in part, by an equally massive industry that is volunteer tourism. "Labourers in many of the components of the orphanage tourist industry transform the poverty and neediness of the orphaned child into 'an amazing experience'; 'a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity'; 'the most fun you'll ever have'". She quotes Halnon²⁹ "the tourist is estranged from what really lies behind the commodity: the haunting humanity of the poor and fearful reality of poverty".

Cambodian orphans have parents. The situation outlined in the introduction also happens in Cambodia: parents are giving away their children to orphanages in hope of a better future and a good education³⁰. Over 70% of the 'orphans' in Cambodia have at least one living parent³¹. These residential care centres are technically not orphanages and these children are not orphans, but in Cambodia for example the terms 'orphanages' and 'orphans' are widespread³². Yet many tourists are unaware that the majority of

²³ UNICEF, 2011

²⁴ UNICEF, 2011

²⁵ UNICEF, 2011

²⁶ Carmichael, 2011

²⁷ UNICEF, 2011; ZDF, 2014; Brandpunt, 2014; Tourism Concern, 2013

²⁸ Reas, 2011: 11

²⁹ Halnon, 2002: 508

³⁰ UNICEF, 2011; Tolfree, 1995

³¹ Aljazeera, 2013

³² Reas, 2011

children in residential care in Cambodia are not double orphans and 49.3 % of tourists believed the main reason children were in orphanages was because they did not have parents³³.

Residential care has negative impacts on vulnerable children. Studies found that young children in residential care had significantly higher rates of Reactive Attachment Disorder³⁴ that can either make the child withdrawn (inhibited type) or indiscriminately social (disinhibited type)³⁵. Young children in institutions were more likely to have cognitive delays, poorer physical growth and competence³⁶. According to Save The Children³⁷, children under three, in particular, are at risk of permanent developmental damage as a result of the lack of family-based care. A meta-analysis of 42 studies conducted in 19 countries found significant differences between the IQ of institutional children and children raised in family settings. It also found that children placed younger at the institution had worse outcomes than those who were older or placed at an older age³⁸. Other studies confirm that orphans face inferior educational outcomes than non-orphans³⁹.

Tourism itself also has negative impacts on residential care centers. Very young children are programmed to build attachments⁴⁰ and undergo repeated abandonments: first the young children's parents may die or leave them, then they go to live in an orphanage where you often have high staff turnover and finally the tourists come and go as sort of the third wave of this abandonment. Institutionalized children tend to manifest the same indiscriminate affection towards volunteers⁴¹ and volunteers are often encouraged to make intimate connections with the children. After a few days or weeks, this attachment is broken when the volunteer leaves and a new attachment forms when the next volunteer arrives. Although there is little empirical evidence on children's reactions to very short-term, repeat attachments over time, evidence from children in temporary or unstable foster care indicates that repeated disruptions in attachment are extremely disturbing for children. Constant abandonment causes low self-esteem, and lack of self-worth created by hugging and playing with volunteers and visitors⁴². One study concludes that children in orphanages are spoiled but poor: they receive a lot of

³³ UNICEF, 2011

³⁴ Tizard & Hodges, 1978; Zeanah et al, 2005

³⁵ American Psychiatrists Association, 2013

³⁶ Smyke et al, 2002; Smyke et al, 2007; Nelson, 2007

³⁷ Save The Children, 2009

³⁸ Van IJzendoorn, Luijk & Juffer, 2008

³⁹ Rehman & Eloundou- Enyegue 2007; Evans & Miguel 2007

⁴⁰ Norman, 2011

⁴¹ Richter, 2010

⁴² Tourism Concern, 2013

material presents and have constant entertainment through the continuous flow of volunteers but the volunteers make very little impact in terms of sustainable improvement of the children's living situation or their intellectual development⁴³. Possible gaps in the children's education due to the lack of consistency in teaching, accents and different approaches to teaching⁴⁴. The use of care institutions continues to rise, with evidence from central and eastern Europe, the former Soviet, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and many more despite recognition of the harm it can cause, due to the persistent use of institutional care within the formal child protection system, while other increases are due to the rise of unregulated and unlicensed institutions⁴⁵.

This is aggravated by the lack of skills on orphanage management as the vast majority of people running the orphanages in Cambodia have little or no skills and experience in operating residential childcare institutions⁴⁶. Visitors who have undergone no background checks can walk into dozens of Cambodia's orphanages and be left alone with children, even removing children from the centre for a trip or a lunch⁴⁷. Staff and volunteers do not always undergo background checks before working at the orphanage⁴⁸. Orphanages are financially unviable as a long-term solution, costing far more per child than alternative, community-based care- a recent study in sub-Saharan Africa showed that institutional care can cost up to six times as much as alternative child care mechanisms⁴⁹. Yet Cambodian residential care centres generate funds that cannot be accounted for or provide profit⁵⁰. Many donors would rather donate to orphanages, where they can see an actual child, build an emotional 'relationship', and feel that they know exactly where their donation is going. Better, more appropriate community based alternatives that are more child focused, rather than donor focused, are often overlooked.

Yet alternative options to orphanages exist⁵¹. Several successful models of family and community-based care have already been developed. Not all care institutions are harmful to children, and small group homes, in particular, can sometimes play an important role in meeting the needs of certain groups of children. However institutional care in general is rarely provided appropriately, to a high enough standard and in the best interests of the individual child. Also, the problem is not being tackled due to

⁴³ Voelkl, 2012

⁴⁴ Tourism Concern, 2013

⁴⁵ Save the Children, 2009

⁴⁶ Horton, 2011; UNICEF, 2011

⁴⁷ Horton, 2011; ZDF, 2014; Brandpunt, 2014; Tourism Concern, 2013

⁴⁸ (UNICEF 2011; Al Jazeera 2013)

⁴⁹ Tourism Concern (2013) and Phiri and Webb (2002)

⁵⁰ UNICEF 2011

⁵¹ Save The Children, 2009

lack of political will to invest in and promote family-based and community care and misconceptions of donors and humanitarian organizations, unaware of the potential harm on institutional care.

Methodology

The technique of data triangulation was applied in this research, involving in depth- semi-structured interviews and literature and media review. The in depth- interview was chosen with the intention to reveal the interviewees ideas, opinions and expressions and to reach the research's aims and objectives. The focal point of the sample structure was the orphanage type. The respondents are managers at orphanages that follow national, international laws and guidelines on childcare and child protection. A criterion sample was used and The Child Safe guidelines on Orphanage Tourism⁵² and United Nations Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children⁵³ were used as criteria to select orphanages out of the population of 269 registered orphanages. The criteria are that the orphanage:

- Is legally registered and monitored.
- Has a child protection policy
- Mustn't allow visitors to drop in and have access to the children without supervision.
- Mustn't require children to work to secure funds for the orphanage.
- Must have an active family reunification program.
- Must try and keep siblings together in a family unit.
- Is ideally set up as a family-like or small group setting.
- Is ideally located in the same community as the child previously lived.
- Has long-term, trained, and well supervised staff.
- Respects and accommodates each child's religious beliefs.

Comment [c1]: Joni I tried to make these more grammatically consistent.

A purposive sample of 9 orphanages was chosen. The orphanages were recruited by announcement on popular online media forums and by e-mail and through the researcher's network, who lived in Cambodia for several years. Over a 3 week period a series of 9 semi-structured in-depth interviews amongst Western and Cambodian orphanage managers, directors or volunteer coordinators were conducted in Cambodia. Distortions such as the `` interviewer effect`` were minimized and `researcher bias` was carefully avoided by being objective, formulating the questions clearly, following the interview guide and noting the answers exactly the way the respondents formulate them. The primary data from the interviews was then transformed into an analyzable form. For more detail, please see the extended report.

Comment [c2]: Joni, how did you achieve that?

⁵² Child Safe International, 2013

⁵³ United Nations, 2009

Results

Only one Cambodian participant, and 8 foreigners, participated in the study. The respondents either run or owned the orphanage, all had good intentions, philanthropic ideas and little education or background in child care except two respondents. According to all the respondents, their centres are a last resort for children from abusive, very poor or parentless families. Two of the orphanages care for children with HIV or affected by HIV, who are often rejected by Cambodian society or their parents.

“When we first started the kids and their families basically lived on the garbage dump, that’s why we started housing the kids”

The lack of knowledge about family reintegration or family based care among all interviewees was notable, except for one respondent with an academic background in social work. She believed most children could be reintegrated within their families and has started a family reintegration programme. Furthermore two other orphanages mentioned efforts towards integrating children back into their families.

The role of volunteers

Confirming the literature, according to the orphanages, the volunteers’ main motivations are experiencing another culture, working with children and gaining a sense of self-worth. The research also reveals the interest of people affected with HIV to volunteer with children who are equally affected by the illness. Volunteers stay in the orphanages for an average of 6 weeks and are mostly employed as English teaching assistants or creative workshop teachers. One orphanage lets the volunteers teach the staff instead of teaching the children directly. Child care responsibilities are given to volunteers by one orphanage only: to dress the children, give them medicines and bring them to the hospital. This contrasts the more typical experience⁵⁴ of volunteers as caregivers. In contrast, orphanage tourism in this research is not “the engagement in every day caregiving for needy orphans”. Volunteers and visitors in the centres mainly take on the role of teacher, social worker, creative workshop teacher, manual or administrative labourer.

Impacts of orphanage tourism

⁵⁴ Norman & Richter, 2010

Categorising the impacts of orphanage tourism, we started off by looking at the impacts of the first type of orphanage tourists: the volunteers, on the organisation of the orphanage. The findings demonstrate that the respondents mainly perceive volunteers as an asset and positive experiences with volunteers are dominant.

It first emerged that working with volunteers is **work intensive**: volunteers require time, training and supervision. This is not strictly perceived as a negative impact because volunteers are worth the effort according to the respondents: The workload mainly consists out of recruitment of volunteers. Certain authors⁵⁵ gave the example of orphanages where people walk off the street to volunteer without any requirements or interviews. All respondents except one strongly deny such practices, have strict regulations and do not allow visitors to walk freely in the centre. The orphanages have requirements for the applicants to pass in order to be selected. The general idea among these orphanages seemed to be: the stricter the screening, the better the volunteers. Child protection policies in all centres are lengthy and need to be respected.

“Because of the strict screening process, we mostly attract good volunteers”.

A smaller part of the workload consists of the **volunteer induction**, led by centre managers/ directors or volunteer coordinators. Three of the orphanages also have volunteer coordinators to guide and supervise them; other inductions are led by orphanage staff. None of the orphanages provide training for the volunteers, after the induction they usually start the work or settle in their room. The orphanages do not agree with Carey⁵⁶ saying if one views labour as the sole objective, the costs of having volunteers outweighs the benefits. According to them, the benefits outweigh the costs and resources.

The categorisation of voluntourists by Callanan and Thomas⁵⁷ applies to the respondents' ideas about volunteers. They classified volunteer tourists as 'shallow', 'intermediate' or 'deep'. This classification was based on the required skills or qualifications, the duration of the trip, passive or active involvement of the volunteers, their level of contribution to local communities, and the altruistic or self-interested focus of the experience. It is clear here that these orphanages aim to attract the "deep" volunteers, that are most actively involved, want to contribute to the community and have a more altruistic than self-interested focus and want to avoid the 'shallow' volunteers. They do this by investing time and

⁵⁵ Tourism Concern, 2013; UNICEF, 2011; Al Jazeera, 2013; ZDF, 2014; Brandpunt, 2014

⁵⁶ Carey, 2001

⁵⁷ Callanan & Thomas, 2005

resources in recruitment. The orphanages want to attract the 'volunteer-minded' and avoid the 'vacation-minded'⁵⁸. Yet there is still the perception of some volunteer's negative behavior occasionally negatively disrupting the daily operations of the orphanage. This behaviour ranges from disobeying the rules and unacceptable behavior, judgmental attitude to immaturity and controlling behavior.

A second impact pointed out by the respondents was the small financial benefit contributed by the volunteers. Most orphanages have donors, sponsors and financial grants. According to them the volunteers contribute little to their budget and finances. This contrasts with the literature and media, where it is often said that orphanages want to attract volunteers for their money and donations. In fact only two orphanages charge a volunteer fee but they do not rely on these fees.

"Volunteers are just a small part of our finances, for example we earn 5 times more with selling chicken eggs than with volunteers".

Interestingly all orphanages stressed that volunteers often make promises about fundraising at home but mostly don't act on it. However, the financial benefit may lie in the fact that orphanages save money by hiring volunteers instead of paid western staff. All orphanages agree: it would be hard to run the centre without volunteers. Volunteers are often qualified labourers the orphanages could not afford to pay a salary to. All orphanages point out that volunteers bring a unique set of skills and knowledge that is not available in Cambodia. Some volunteers are very artistic, tech savvy or great accountants, all skills that can be taught to either the children or the staff. They point out the poor standards of education, health care and social services in Cambodia and are happy to receive help from abroad. This, according to the orphanages, does not influence the labour demand of local staff implied in the literature⁵⁹. The local staff and the volunteers have different jobs and tasks. The volunteers perform jobs that local staff is not educated or skilled for. However volunteer tourism can foster dependency⁶⁰ as free labour and skills of the volunteers, but less on the financial benefits.

All respondents found it challenging to cooperate with overseas volunteer sending agencies. Attitudes among the respondents towards overseas sending agencies were overall very negative. Many problems seem to arise with the cooperation of orphanages and overseas volunteer sending agencies. The main complaints were the insufficient screening of volunteers, inefficiently organized agencies and lack of preparation and information for the volunteers. The respondents found one of the benefits of current

⁵⁸ Brown & Morrison, 2003

⁵⁹ Clifton & Benson, 2006; Guttentag, 2009.

⁶⁰ McGehee & Andereck, 2008; Simpson, 2004

volunteers was to advertise for the orphanage and to attract other like-minded volunteers, bypassing agencies. Most orphanages receive little or no funds from the agencies and this seemed to be a point of frustration, mainly towards those agencies that don't provide good volunteers and communication. Generally all respondents were angry and even upset about the fact that overseas sending agencies frequently make a high profit. It emerged that the more volunteers apply through the website, the less the orphanages feel the need to work with volunteer placement agencies. Some orphanages even said they wished not to work with agencies, but did not have enough volunteers and needed the agencies.

"Those agencies that give the impression that volunteering is easy or a holiday aren't appreciated, we stopped working with them. I call on the agencies to prepare the volunteers better".

"1 agency showed the kind of volunteer tourism on their website that is drinking cocktails, volunteering is easy and does not take much effort. So I refused to work with them any longer".

The literature and research findings about volunteer placement agencies largely collide. The literature reveals the criticism on overseas agencies being too profit driven, overpromising benefits, creating customer dissatisfaction and even harming destinations of the sending agencies⁶¹. The research suggests that the respondents are often unsatisfied with the recruitment of volunteers by the agencies and volunteers aren't trained or briefed on how to interact with children. The Cambodian volunteer agencies however had very good reviews. The three orphanages working with them were very pleased and content. The communication was easy and the partnerships pleasant, as the agencies are located in Cambodia and had a better understanding of the needs and culture of the place.

We now move on to discuss the impacts of volunteering on the children's education. All orphanages employ volunteers as teachers and according to them, the volunteers impacts on education are manifold and all positive. The children's English education seems to be very important to all orphanages except one, that stopped providing English classes because the children did not progress well due to volunteer turnover. The other orphanages that provide English classes claim to see great results, and see the turnover as a positive for example as children learn to adapt to different accents of the volunteers.

Some orphanages especially select volunteers on their creative skills. The volunteers teach creative workshops in the orphanage such as dance, music, art, theatre and yoga classes. The effect of these workshops is perceived as very important; respondents claim that the children can grow confident and

⁶¹ Benson & Henderson, 2011; Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004; Tomazos & Cooper, 2012; Smith & Font, 2014

learn a skill that could be valuable in later life. All orphanages, again except one, agree the interaction between the volunteers and the children increases the children's confidence more than other children as Cambodian households are traditionally very conservative and growing up with Westerners broadens the children's worldview. Respondents claim that getting used to talking to foreigners will help them in later life and future job applications.

"These kids speak a bit of French, Japanese, Danish and other languages. They learn all of that from the volunteers".

One orphanage however, argues there are better ways for children to acquire these life skills and the confidence is in fact a form of overconfidence and laziness:

"It might broaden the kids' worldview but there are other ways to do this. Over confidence can also turn against them. For example the older kids: they can't keep their jobs, they always quit, depend heavily on the centre and think money is easy to get there. True confidence is something very different".

Also, according to them, due to the influence of Westerners in the centres, the kids grow up too Westernized and alienated from their own culture:

"They grow up Western and don't understand their own culture. They get false expectations and it's hard to integrate into society. Also they get discriminated once leaving the centre: parents for example don't want their children to marry someone from an orphanage".

Another respondent partially agreed with this, but tried to teach the children how to deal with money, savings and work ethics. The literature refers to cross cultural understanding as a positive impact of volunteering⁶². However, the respondents mainly refer to the impacts on the children, as they believe the children understood more about the world and different cultures by interaction with volunteers. Therefore, the findings of the research point more towards cultural influence of the volunteers on the children, than cross-cultural understanding.

Negative effects of cross cultural understanding⁶³ include attempts to imitate tourist's consumption patterns and the rise of discontent when the desired items remain out of reach. This disappointment was mentioned by one respondent that often disagreed with the others, who believed that the exposure to volunteer lifestyles can only lead to unrealistic expectations. Another respondent pointed out that

⁶² Sin, 2009; McIntosh & Zahra, 2008

⁶³ Wall & Mathieson, 2006

children can become overconfident and spoiled, confirming the literature⁶⁴, that claims that children stay poor despite the entertainment and gifts, and that volunteers have a low positive impact on the children's living situation or their intellectual development. Our respondents contrastingly feel that volunteers impact on the intellectual development of the children but do not mention improvements in the children living situation.

Volunteering also impacts on the children's psychological and emotional wellbeing. In all orphanages, except one, volunteers teach or interact with the children. The one orphanage where volunteer interaction with the children is not allowed believes, due to inconsistency and volunteer turnover, that volunteer teachers are harmful for the children. Contrarily, according to the other orphanages, the children can always depend on the permanent staff and the volunteer turnover has little effect. They even believe it is beneficial that the children get acquainted with different teaching styles, accents and creative skills. However, some orphanages are doubtful about the potential psychological impacts on the children. One respondent pointed out the lack of knowledge on the possible impacts on the children:

"We don't see the effects on the children yet, because they are too little. We don't have young adults here yet so we don't know".

According to our respondents it is strictly forbidden for the volunteers to "play the therapist" unless they are in fact a certified therapist. In all cases when children seem distressed they need to contact the staff or social worker. Strict rules about interaction with the children are in place and the relationship is one of teacher and students. Volunteers in all the orphanages are not encouraged to make intimate connections with the children, contrary to the literature⁶⁵ that shows that children in residential care have significant higher rates of Reactive Attachment Disorder⁶⁶. The respondents mention several types of behaviour that point towards RAD mentioned, but interestingly do not find them alarming as they are not conscious about the possible link between the behaviour and the disorder, for example:

"Kids get distant and stop trying in class because they know the teacher is leaving anyway. Other kids get emotional when volunteers leave. They had a lot of abandonment in their own life".

⁶⁴ Voelkl, 2010

⁶⁵ Norman & Richter, 2010

⁶⁶ Tizard & Hodges, 1978; Zeanah et al, 2005

“Sometimes there are discipline problems. They don’t behave well because they know the teachers are leaving anyway”.

Only at one orphanage, the researcher observed during the interview behaviour from the children that could point towards the RAD disorder. The researcher would be hugged and kissed by the children during the interview and when leaving the children told her to be very sad and even begged her not to leave. During all other interviews the children were hardly around and interviewer only met the interviewee. Finally some orphanages said the kids can also be influenced by the bad behaviour of volunteers:

“Getting upset and emotional in front of the kids. We try and tell them to hide their tears from the kids”. Although again they stressed bad behaviour of volunteers is rare.

Volunteering also has impacts on the staff. According to all respondents, the English speaking skills of the local staff improved through interaction with volunteers. They also learned about the world through interaction with volunteers. However, only one orphanage employs the volunteers to work on capacity building with the local staff. The researcher always had to ask explicitly about the impacts on the staff and it always took time for the interviewee to come up with an answer.

In addition we need to consider the impacts on the community. Orphanages located in rural areas with no shops, restaurants or guesthouses said the positive impacts on the local community were low. According to the other orphanages, located near small shops and restaurants, the surrounding businesses definitely gain benefits from the visitors and volunteers. The economic benefits for the community are pointed out⁶⁷.

Table 2: Summary of negative and positive impacts of volunteering

Negative impacts	Positive Impacts
Increase of workload for management	Contribution of small financial benefit
Challenging cooperation with overseas volunteer placement agencies	Cheap skilled labourers

⁶⁷ Wearing, 2001; Clifton and Benson, 2006; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Morgan, 2010; Barbieri, Santos & Katsube, 2012

Negative behaviour can disrupt daily operations	Free advertisement for the orphanage
Can possibly cause or worsen psychological traumas of the children	Improvement of children's English education
Negative behaviour can negatively impact the children's well-being.	Enhances children's creativity through creative workshops
	Enhances children's life skills
	improvement of Staffs English education and life skills

Visitors' impacts

The next part of the research focused on the impacts of the second type of orphanage tourists: the visitors: Again we looked at the different categories of impacts starting with the impacts on the organisation of the centre. The orphanages all agree the visitor impacts on the organisation are mainly financial. Visitors bring in money and often raise funds, which is worth the time and effort to guide them around the property.

"Visitors are becoming more critical; they need to see where the money goes and if it's well spent". It gives them a good feeling to have a look".

It is notable that according to the respondents, visitors contribute more financially than volunteers. However, one orphanage adds that visitors, who are in this case the children's sponsors, can often be disruptive.

“Visitors can be very demanding. They see their sponsor child as their own; they want to take them out for dinner and so on. They get emotional and unhappy if we don’t allow them to shower the child with gifts”.

It is important that, except one, all orphanages obligate visitors to make an appointment before visiting the orphanage to clarify their intention to visit the centre. This rule seems to be in place so the visitors do not disrupt the day to day operations and the staff is prepared to receive them. All orphanages have visiting hours, rules and regulations that need to be respected. There are no checks on visitors but they are guided around and never allowed to walk around alone or visit children’s private living areas. One orphanage does not allow visitors, as they believe it would be too disruptive for the work and children. Another one has set up a visitor’s centre, where visitors are welcomed and get to see photos and information about the project. Here, the visitors are not allowed to visit the property or interact with the children.

“With a visitor centre we want to show visitors how it can be done. There’s no interaction with the children but you still have a good visit”.

The second category of impacts was on the psychological and emotional wellbeing of the children. The literature⁶⁸ suggests that often visitors cannot walk in to the orphanages freely. The respondents claim otherwise, that always get a guided tour and interacting with the children is restricted to a minimum, however through further querying it is evident that three orphanages however let visitors join the volunteer activities for the children. The orphanages that work with child sponsors did point out the negative impacts on the children, as jealousy can arise among the children and sponsors can be demanding. Other behaviours that could indicate psychological traumas were mentioned by one orphanage:

“Some kids run up to visitors, they like to practice their English or get attention”.

Respondents claim that most visitors easily follow the rules and understand why they are in place, and perceive no negative impacts on the children, due to strict regulations. There were no more impacts revealed due to the little interaction of the visitors with the children.

Table 3: Visitors impacts on orphanages

⁶⁸ Sydney Morning Herald, 2011; ZDF, 2014; Brandpunt, 2014

Negative Impacts	Positive Impacts
<p>Disruptive for the daily operations</p> <p>Can possibly cause or worsen the children`s psychological traumas.</p>	<p>Financial benefits</p>

After researching the impacts of orphanage tourism on the residential care centres, the respondents were asked about their opinions and ideas about orphanage tourism and the recent media articles.

The rise in orphanages in Cambodia since 2005⁶⁹ resulting from tourism⁷⁰ may well exist according to our respondents, who see many people setting up orphanages to gain money from tourists, and claim to know many orphanages run as a business, but don`t wish to associate themselves with such practices, saying we are not “those kinds of places”. The Cambodian government has announced an inquiry into the country`s orphanages after UNICEF voiced serious concerns about the rise in facilities⁷¹, according to whom the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation have now developed a monitoring tool based on the Minimum Standards on Alternative Care for Children, used to monitor registered residential care centres across the country. The respondents applaud NGO campaigns and actions to close down exploitative and abusive residential care centres. Most respondents also claim openness towards education and information about family integration for the children, and understand the changing laws and regulations on alternative care. However, the respondents have encountered difficulties with the governments monitoring tool based on the Minimum Standards on Alternative Care for Children, and they encourage such tool but suggest it is not being used appropriately.

Conclusion

Orphanage tourism is clearly different from conventional forms of tourism as it involves the combination of pleasure, work and children. The research provided background information on the phenomenon of orphanage tourism/ childcare tourism in Cambodia and its social and economic impacts through

⁶⁹ UNICEF, 2011

⁷⁰ Brandpant, 2014; Morgan & Walker, 2013

⁷¹ Maclsaac & Kuntheart, 2011

extensive literature research and secondary data. The research findings present the narrative of the orphanages and compare their opinions and ideas with the literature on the subject.

Impacts of orphanage tourism are perceived as mainly positive and rarely negative. The positive impacts are on the children's education, life skills, confidence, staff skills, the local economy and the centres' finances. Impacts of residential care are also a better option than the children's abusive family situations according to the respondents. It is important to mention that one orphanage responded more critically than the others and they in fact find the impacts of orphanage tourism on residential care centres mainly negative. All centres say the positive impacts are due to strict recruitment, induction, rules and regulations. Interestingly, according to the respondents, negative impacts were mainly caused by cooperation with volunteer placement agencies which have an overall negative reputation throughout the literature and secondary data. However, it was revealed that most respondents had a certain lack of knowledge concerning negative impacts of orphanage tourism. They risk not acknowledging the signs of negative impacts on the children's wellbeing, for example RAD. However the orphanages claimed to be generally willing to learn about childcare, specifically family reintegration and improve their practices. They were open for government monitoring and applaud efforts to reduce exploitation in residential care

The orphanages overall depend on volunteers for cheap skilled labour and on visitors for financial benefits. It was apparent that the literature and host organisations barely mention the impacts of orphanage tourism on their staff and only one of the orphanages employs the volunteers to build staff capacity. It was clear that the respondents and the literature largely contrast in depicting the practice of orphanage tourism. The respondents distance themselves from the overly negative description of orphanage tourism in literature and media and acknowledge the existence of "those exploitative orphanages" but do not associate with them.

The impacts of orphanage tourism on the children in orphanages needs further detailed investigation, especially by psychologists and social workers. The research revealed that the majority of the orphanages were unaware and unskilled to determine the emotional and psychological impacts of orphanage tourism on children. Furthermore the impacts of orphanage tourism on staff and the possibilities for capacity building should be further researched. Is there in fact a categorization of orphanages and are there different types of "good" and "bad" orphanages? The impacts of orphanage tourism on orphanages can be researched on a wider scale and in different countries, to expand the academic research on the topic and give a broader view on the subject. There is clearly a need for

further research which investigates the long-term effects of voluntourists on the orphans and research with orphanages that are not considered best practice. Finally the possibilities for alternative care in developing countries should be further investigated to determine if residential care is in fact the solution or the centres should shift towards a family re integration approach.

Recommendations

Recommendations for residential care centres to improve their volunteer and visitor management:

It is important for the residential care centres to further develop the appropriate tools to determine the commitment and intent of the volunteers and visitors, to minimize negative impacts of orphanage tourism. It is also important to determine the possible negative impacts of orphanage tourism on the children's well-being by cooperating with therapists and social workers and measure the extent to which volunteers contribute to sustainable development. Furthermore it is suggested to address the government about their concerns with the execution of the governments monitoring and evaluations. The orphanages can also communicate their concerns to the volunteer placement agencies and even use the research findings to address the deteriorating reputation and relationship with the sending agencies. Finally the residential care centres should consider the potential benefits of capacity building and staff training by volunteers rather than just educating the children. There is also a need for better training for orphanage staff to recognise and manage the psychological impacts of voluntourism on the children in their care. Capacity building is an important tool towards poverty alleviation, which is an aim of orphanage tourism.

Recommendations for volunteer placement agencies:

Volunteer placement agencies play an important role in ensuring the positive impacts of orphanage tourism and minimising the negative. This study points out a large percentage of the agencies are not fulfilling this role. It is important for the sending agencies to develop positive relationships with the host organisations, focus on the needs of the organisations and asses the merits of each project to determine the impact of orphanage tourism. They should develop clear lines of communication and recognise their responsibility towards host communities. These companies need to review their practices and try to align more closely with developmental issues in order to truly `` make a difference``.

Recommendations for government

The monitoring tool could be a valuable instrument to eliminate abusive and exploitative residential care centres. Therefore it needs to be re-evaluated and the opinions and a clear tool of communication between the orphanages and the government should be developed. Finally there`s a need for educational materials about family reintegration and alternative care.

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