

Consultant to research and evaluate possibilities for a multi-country youth-led social media campaign against volunteering in residential care centres

Terms of Reference

Introduction

In 2013 The Better Care Network and Save the Children UK began an inter-agency initiative involving Better Care Network Netherlands, ECPAT, Faith to Action Initiative, Friends International, Hope and Homes for Children, SOS Children's Villages, and UNICEF. The purpose of this initiative was to review and share existing knowledge on international volunteerism as related to the alternative care of children in developing countries. Supported by The Oak Foundation, this initiative - known as "Better Volunteering, Better Care" – was created in response to a growing concern from child protection specialists and other stakeholders about the negative impact of volunteerism within this setting.

Following an initial period of reviewing and sharing knowledge and network building, a global engagement strategy was developed at the end of 2014. This engagement strategy focused on three key areas – creating structural change, developing a youth-led media campaign, and working with national governments. All of these different areas would be supported by the creation of a global working group.

In early 2015, following the high levels of engagement and motivation by numerous actors on this issue worldwide and across multiple sectors, a global working group was formed with the support of the Human Dignity Foundation. The aim of this global working group is to coordinate and support advocacy by working group members, while at the same time continuing to further the aims outlined in the global engagement strategy. As part of these efforts, Better Volunteering Better Care is planning a youth-led social media campaign across the UK, USA, and Australia, supported by Oak Foundation.

Overview

A growing evidence base has consistently highlighted the negative impact on children of living in institutional care such as orphanages – especially when a parents or close family members are still living nearby.¹ The increasing trend in volunteering in these facilities

¹ Browne, K. (2009). *Risk of Harm to Young Children in Institutional Care*. Retrieved on 3 December 2013 from: http://bettercarenetwork.org/docs/The_Risk_of_Harm.pdf; Williamson, J and Greenberg, A. (2010). *Families not*

compounds the issue and the impact on children. As demonstrated in the [documents produced by the Better Volunteering, Better Care initiative](#), volunteering in residential care centres in some areas supports a “business model” of care that contributes to the separation of children from families and puts vulnerable children at further risk. In other cases, volunteering in such settings sustains residential care systems, and also creates a variety of immediate concerns for vulnerable children, including abuse and attachment problems.

There is a critical need to raise awareness of the risks of harm involved in these volunteering practices with prospective volunteers. It is also critical to be able to suggest alternatives in a positive and respectful manner which encourages ethical volunteerism that supports entire families and communities and in line with the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children endorsed by the United Nations in 2009.²

Research shows that many prospective volunteers are young people between the ages of 18 to 25 who volunteer before, during or after university, usually as way to travel with structure, gain work experience and “give back”. Some young people arrange placements through universities or church groups, while others book directly online with volunteer travel companies. Better Volunteering Better Care is developing a variety of interventions to work with universities, church groups, and travel agencies but believes it is also of crucial importance to involve young people themselves in raising awareness of the issue.

Better Volunteering Better Care is working together with Oak Foundation to design a youth-led English-language media campaign to raise awareness of the harm caused by international volunteering in residential care centres.

Overall Objective and Outputs of the Project:

This consultancy project consists of a 3 month period to further research and develop plans for a youth-led media campaign in the UK, USA, and Australia. The goal of this project is to clarify relevant opportunities and networks and identify potential communications agencies to develop and deliver the activities.

Better Volunteering Better Care has so far developed some initial thinking for this campaign (see Appendix A). The output of this consultancy will seek to build on this thinking to produce comprehensive proposal, developed in coordination with the Better Volunteering Better Care initiative Co-Chairs and Coordinator, for the implementation of the campaign.

Orphanages. Retrieved 3 December 2013 from: <http://bettercarenetwork.org/docs/Families%20Not%20Orphanages.pdf> ; McCall Robert (2012). *The Development and Care of Institutionally Reared Children, Child Development Perspectives. Volume 6. Issue 2. pages 174–180.*

² United Nations. (2009). *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*. United Nations. Retrieved on 3 December 2013 from: <http://bettercarenetwork.org/docs/Guidelines-English.pdf>.

Consultancy deliverables

The overall deliverable of this consultancy is a proposal for a youth-led social media campaign in the UK, USA, and Australia, aimed raising awareness among young people aged 18 – 25 about why they should not volunteer in residential care centres. This proposal should include:

- 1) Tender proposals from between 3 and 5 experienced communications agencies. Proposals must demonstrate a capability to deliver high quality and high impact projects in the countries specified and include an initial draft budget.
- 2) Overview and evaluation of the communications agencies invited to tender including but not limited to; experience working on youth engagement initiatives; demonstrated experience in developing strategies for behaviour change; demonstrated experience working on social change initiatives; knowledge of the issue in question; connections with youth groups, student groups and universities; organisational values indicating openness to collaboration and transparency of process.
- 3) Consultation with between 5-10 experts (from social media, social change, campaigning, youth advocacy etc.) per country to gain insights into challenges and opportunities
- 4) Identification of local, regional, and national networks and actors that may be relevant to the campaign.
- 5) Overview of 2-3 targeted youth campaigns in each country using social media, detailing the change they were trying to create, platforms used, organisations involved, target audience and any traditional media coverage.
- 6) Observations on differentiating factors between countries (i.e. language of volunteering and service, age of volunteering, academic credit awarded, common companies used etc.)
- 7) Amendments or additions to activities suggested in current concept note.
- 8) General observations and recommendations.

Timeline

35 days over 3 months beginning May 2015

Requirements

- BA in a related field
- Knowledge of communications and media agencies and industry in one or more of the target countries
- Experience in developing communication strategies aimed at addressing complex social problems
- Understanding of the child protection and care sector including the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. Additional experience and knowledge of the volunteer sector would be an asset
- Excellent writing skills in English and in summarizing complex papers.
- Experience in compiling comprehensive proposals, including relevant budgets
- Excellent coordination/ facilitation skills

Email applications to: volunteering@bettercarenetwork.org

Deadline: June 3rd 2016