

# What's driving the boom in the institutionalisation of children?



## Facts:

- **Cambodia:** the number of children in Residential Care Institutions (RCIs) nearly doubled since 2005 – but this is considered to be a significant underestimate as this data counts only 5 out of the 25 provinces in Cambodia. Full report on all 25 provinces due out in mid-2016.
- **Uganda:** children in institutions increased by more than 1600% since 1992
- **Zimbabwe:** children in institutions doubled since 1994
- **Ghana:** institutions have increased by 1400% since 1996
- **Nepal:** of the 600 child care homes in Nepal, almost 90% of them are located in the most popular tourist hotspots
- **Sri Lanka:** institutions increased by 350% since 1991
- **Indonesia:** institutions doubled in last the decade

**The main driver of the RCI boom is donations.**

**Donations are garnered through various activities like voluntourism and orphanage tourism.**

## Voluntourism

Volunteering in orphanages has become a popular way for well-meaning tourists to “give back” while travelling. What they don't realise is that they're actually doing more harm than good. When we talk about voluntourism we are talking about short-term, unskilled volunteering.

## Orphanage Tourism

This is when tourists visit children who are living in residential care while on holiday.

## Harms of voluntourism/orphanage tourism?

- Primary aim is not a need for an ‘extra pair of hands’ – it's eliciting an emotional connection from visitors/volunteers, who are then moved to donate. This fuels the RCI boom.
- Child protection risks – allowing strangers intimate access to vulnerable children
- Creates attachment disorders – caused by the constant rotation of adults coming in and out of children's lives.
- Invades a child's right to privacy – according to the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child.
- It takes away jobs from local people who need them the most

**Remember: children are not tourist attractions!**

**We need to put an end to the institutionalisation of vulnerable children! All children deserve a family.**