

YOUNG CARE LEAVERS ON VOLUNTOURISM AND INSTITUTION-RELATED TRAFFICKING:

MYTHS vs REALITY



MYTH

Tourist visits to institutions are an opportunity for children to make new friends and have fun.

REALITY

Volunteers have fun during these visits, but after they leave, the children often feel upset. The volunteers do not stay in the lives of children forever, and this can be very distressing for young children to understand.

The children living in institutions may feel that volunteers are only visiting the institution to take photographs or enhance their CVs.

MYTH

Donations are crucial for the institutions and the children living in them.

REALITY

Children need more than material things to thrive.

There are some "institution traffickers" who exploit vulnerable children in fake institutions in order to elicit donations from well-meaning volunteers. By donating to institutions, you may be unknowingly contributing to this problem.

MYTH

It is appropriate for unaccompanied children and refugees to be placed in institutional care facilities

REALITY

Placing unaccompanied refugee children and refugees in institutions can further traumatise them as they are separated from their families and communities. They are likely to feel unsafe and scared being in a new country, living closely with strangers. Some may wish to go back home.



MYTH

Institutions are good for children because these children don't have families.

REALITY

Not all children in institutions are orphans; an estimated 80% have at least one living parent who could take care of them.

Children growing up in institutions suffer from adverse effects because institutions cannot provide the love and attention crucial for healthy development.



MYTH

Care services understand what institution-related trafficking is and are able to keep children safe from this form of exploitation.

REALITY

Care services, children in care and care leavers are often uninformed about this issue. Some institutions or staff do not pay sufficient attention to the children in their care, and fail to ensure that these young people understand the risks of exploitation.



MYTH

It is better for a child to live in an institution instead of in a poor family.

REALITY

Only a family can provide the love and care that a child needs.

MYTH

Children living in institutions will always be supported, even after they leave.

REALITY

In many countries, there is a lack of support for care leavers, which means that these young people will struggle to meet their daily needs or fulfil their potential. Stigma and discrimination associated with having a history of care can deny care leavers the opportunity to engage with and thrive within their community.

