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# **ORPHAN CARE**

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### ABSTRACT

In this article I make an attempt to examine the different causes and types of orphanage and try to seek answers to the problems of and challenges to orphan care caused by our contemporary society. Since today's orphans are the tomorrow's adults, the topic has significant importance not only on societal, but on political and economic level as well. The idea of orphan care traces back to the broader idea of human security and tightly connected to the rights of children in general. Children constitute one of the most vulnerable groups of people and in case of orphans, factors of vulnerabilities (being woman or part of a minority, having disability) are often multiple. Researchers found that children living in orphanages are much more exposed to all forms of violence. The basic root of the problem is that the institutions cannot provide the emotional and psychological care that children need; therefore, they are easy target for becoming a street child, being exploited workforce, victims of trafficking or prostitution. Apart from the rights provided by the institutional and international background of social and orphan care issues, the personality of the caregiver has particular importance with regard to the assimilation of orphans to the society. An ideal caregiver tries to mitigate the pressure on orphans caused by traditions and social expectations. However, these social impacts may take various forms originating from the specific environment of the domestic culture. The aim is to strengthen the way of communication between children and social workers and to provide the orphans moral and emotional support to build up their own confidence, which is necessary to cope with the life outside the orphanages.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

The idea of collective security emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War, which led to the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the two Covenants (ICCPR and ICESCR) in 1966, with which it makes up the International Bill of Human Rights. The foundation, and explanation of human security, - greatly influenced by the Cold War and the rising intra-state conflicts, - was layed down by the UNDP's Human Development Report 1994, according to which

- Human security is a *universal* concern,
- The components of human security are *interdependent*,
- Human Security is *easier to ensure through early prevention* than later intervention,
- Human security is *people-centered*.

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And divided the threats to human security to the seven categories of economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Also, this is the source of the well-known shortened definition of human security as "freedom from fear and freedom from want."People being safe from "fear and want" are less willing to join organizations of crime, terrorist groups, or commit any kind of crime which can affect us globally.One of the key principles and framework for advancing human security that it relies on is multi-sectorality. As the seven categories of human security may often imply diverse actors from different fields, with whom it is important to cooperate and coordinate to address a certain issue.Due to context-specificity measuring human security, - especially in an international sense, - is a very complicated, if not impossible task. Local cooperation requires trust which involves diverse strategies, such as the introduction of FET (Female Engagement Team) in Afghanistan to gain the trust of local rural women.

Rights of Children and the Orphans: Probably all of us have used at least once the well-known sentence of, children are our future," even if we are coming from different cultural and linguistic background. The future will be dependent on society as well. All covenants of human rights emphasize the protection of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, minorities (cultural, religious, linguistic, ethnic), refugees, people with disabilities etc., in case of orphans these factors of vulnerability can, and indeed, are often multiple. For this reason, it would be very important to treat them according to their unique status. The UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child which came into force in 1990 and is one of the most supported conventions, and today with the exception of the US is ratified by all nations. This convention covers all rights from the perspective of children, and children being in a vulnerable condition (disabled, orphans, victims etc.), calling upon states to provide the adequate security and special care and rehabilitation for child victims. This is a crucial step from a human security approach, as it provides international monitoring, recommendations, but most of all "States parties are required to undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures to implement the Convention. [Also, it is required] to review its legislation and ensure that laws are consistent with the Convention."

Other than basic material needs children need emotional and psychological care, which institutions usually cannot provide. As they are still in the phase of learning to differentiate between good and bad and are easily controllable they become easy target for labour force, trafficking, prostitution, etc. After bad experiences, - may that derive from the above mentioned, domestic or other type of abuse, - some children become oversensitive, some insensitive after such bad experiences. There is an innate capacity of resilience in every child, but not to the same degree, however, it is something that can be learned with a good caregiver. Some children learn to master and see their experiences from another perspective, while others try to suppress their emotions. The factor for becoming a perpetrator seems to raise in the latter case. If the child is not able to communicate his/her problems verbally, might act it out physically, sometimes committing the same abuse as the one s/he had suffered. The severity of trauma is not necessarily in parallel with the gravity of abuse or other similar experiences.Orphans and abandoned children do not have a role model due to the lack of family, or even if they do it is often not a good one. Thus, caretakers should try to provide a role model too, through their behaviouran communication as well. "Eevidence and best practice clearly demonstrate that the better models of residential care offer small, "family-style" environments with qualified and consistent caregiving. Such care is a recognized option within the continuum of alternative care for children when family care is not available or possible. Enabling INGOs to monitor countries has the advantage of learning about children's circumstances. For instance, Human Rights Watch has shed light on the circumstances of Russian orphanages, where more than 50% of orphanages are made up of disabled children.In these isolated places often, there is frequent "physical and psychological abuse of children. Staff frequently injected children with sedatives to punish them for not following the institution's 'routine.'"With such consequences as "a 7-year-old boy with an intellectual disability died in a Russian orphanage after a health worker used cloth diapers to tie him to his bed. A preliminary account stated that the boy may have choked on his own vomit and that beingtied down stopped him from rolling over to

breathe." But this example may also lead us to the question of who is exactly an orphan?

#### Who is an Orphan?

"UNICEF and global partners define an orphan as a child who has lost one ["single" or "semi-orphan"] or both parents [double orphan]. [..]. This definition contrasts with concepts of orphan in many industrialized countries, where a child must have lost both parents to qualify as an orphan."However, "[t]he vast majority of children in residential care globally are not double orphans. Depending on the region, upwards of 50-90% of children living in orphanages have at least one living parent."Significant reasons to place children in orphanages apart from poverty, is disability, child neglect or abuse.Orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) come from various backgrounds, especially until the time get into an orphan care, shelter. Semi-orphans may come from poverty, a background of abuse, with a possible history of being a street children, victim of trafficking, etc. And abuse may not stop even in diverse shelters. Researches found that children living in orphanages are much more exposed to all forms of violence, from caregivers, volunteers, or even by running the institution as a brothel. And in case of human trafficking, sometimes it works on a less known level. Such as in Nepal, where orphanage has also become a business by receiving financial aid and charities. "NGN has received reports of orphanage managers in Nepal asking traffickers to "bring them children" specifically because they have foreign donors willing to support their children's home.

"Street-children are especially easy targets as probably no one will look fot them, but there are kidnappings too. There are also orphans of war and children orphaned by HIV who might need specific care. Orphans of war are impacted by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which has serious consequences on them mentally and physically. Some of these children become uncontrollable with sudden violent outbreaks, either towards themselves, their friends, or the rest of their family. In addition, "childsoldiers are often orphans of war. The armed group gives them protection and a sense of family." In such cases, which are all too frequent, the killer is also the victim." Hence, their later rehabilitation and reintegration is also very difficult. The younger the child is, the easier to convince him/her to kill, as they didn't have enough time to develop a strict distinction between right and wrong and are less aware of what they are doing.

Children orphaned by HIV/AIDS usually before becoming an orphan already suffer from discrimination due to social stigmatization, often work to help out the parents while they are sick, see as they suffer and die. "Inaddition, there turns to schooling could bereduced by the experiencessurrounding the death of a parent, including time lost from school during the parent's illness and death and emotionals carring that may compromise the child'sabilitytolearn."Even though, being orphaned by HIVdoesn't necessarily mean the orphan himself/herself is HIV positive; as a matter of fact it is more likely that they are not infected. Since in this case we could say the additional sufferingis due to ignorance, and for instance the media could also play a key role in raising awareness, which might also involve the government, because of its influence, - most of all regarding social taboos, - let's take a look at society.

## Structural Violence and Orphanhood

The term "structural violence" was coined by Johan Galtung, the father of peace studies, in 1969. It derives from the structure of a given society, similarly to cultural violence.One of the most relevant impact of structural violence here is gender roles deriving from patriarchy. Partly because of the additional disadvantage girls are facing and are considered as "financial ruins", but also with the provision of what does a "real" man constitute, since it may not be possible to reach that "requirement" for all. And especially in places, such as Nepal children will face other disadvantages at finding jobs, or marrying which re culturally linked to the family. In addition, due to homophobia and because "men" are expected to be able to defend themselvesabuses are harder to reveal in case of boys.While for girls in some cases discrimination comes in multiple ways, as for instance in India gender discrimination is accompanied by the "castes" too.As for an example of cultural violence, in Africa due to traditions and social expectations, "remarriage and migration among widows and widowers may also result in the separation of children from their surviving parents," similarly to children who were born outside marriage.

Lack of Family: As mentioned before in a family children have role models and several advantages in society. Orphans are not only easy preys as children. After being raised in orphanages, these people have a lack of knowledge of the external world, support, and resources. Therefore, orphanages can themselves become targets; - similarly to marginalized people. Thisis well illustrated by a report of Hungary in 2013, in which, "experts report that traffickers recruited Roma and other girls from Hungarian orphanages for sex trafficking within the country. Roma women and children are disproportionately represented among trafficking victims in the country."Joining a gang is mostly attractive to those facing social exclusion, poverty, and inequality; all of which may be present to those raised in orphanages, or another form of shelter. Furthermore, "aberrant behaviour may result" where the individual encounters obstacles to "growing up", and "doing" masculinity or "masculinisation opportunities" depends on the options available for each individual."By this way they earn respect, recognition, and power. The additional motivations are similar to those of women who are joining gangs; - " the need to belong to a group; the search for protection and affection; the need for money; a desire to be recognised; the need to escape a conflictive and violent family environment.", as well as low self-esteem. Drug abuse and heavy alcohol consumption can arise in gangs and drug cartels as a side effect, or demonstrating toughness; but also, as a consequence of low self-esteem, or despair and hopelessness. In situations that are hard to face. Statistics and the process of joining gangs already demonstrates the tendency of becoming perpetrators; while in case of child soldiers we are talking about victims who are perpetrators at the same time.

### Prevention on the Level of Social Care

While professionalism is valuable, culture and contextspecificity should never be dismissed. It might still be a problem that many countries, institutions and caregivers still believe the Western models are the best to follow to deal with issues. There is no one blue-print to follow, and people from other cultures will have to live in a different society when they age-out the shelter. According to experiences, the West is rather following a more clinic, therapeutic view with barriers between the child and the caretakers, while in the Philippines the emphasis is on a more informal, friendly relationship. Suggestions trying to substitute learning skills from family based on experiences may include the following:

- Peer groups can be beneficial not only in developing resilience, but to learn to trust and make friendships in the future as well. Therefore, individual and collective activities and therapies are best combined. However, caretakers must also "exert a certain air of authority in their stance towards difficult children. This is important in that most abused children have little regard for authority, often doing only what they want to do. children must learn to obey rules and thus learn to function as competent and dutiful persons in society." (Bautista *et al.*, 2001, pp124).
- There are different creative approaches to teach nonviolent communication to children, which is mostly important to learn to listen to the other, to control emotions, and to understand before reacting. While it is very useful for every child, it should be emphasized in case of the vulnerable ones, for they might already have problems with handling emotions , and when they ageout the shelter, and by listening carefully they may have a better capacity avoid social problems.
- Make-believe and role-playing strategies help to prepare children for the external life too. One example in a Filipino organization involved a role playing "eating in a fancy restaurant", after noting how messy the children were when eating. While they learned and got prepared to a situation in an external life, they have also enjoyed imagining they are in such a place.
- In the Philippines one example of utilizing indigenous concepts are the counsel of *kuyas* (older brothers) and *ates* (older sisters), who are usually playing a role model in families for the younger children. As they are closer in age, they often understand the children better, and children trust them more. Such a relationship gives a base for the future of the child, may always have someone to ask for advice, and the information may be more proper to his/her age, given trends.
- Religion and/or spiritual approaches can ease to process their experiences. Oftentimes children turning towards religion start to see their experiences as a trial by God, being part of a "bigger plan". Also, while reflection, meditation and so on, may not be exclusively part of religion, it is an essential part of it and can help to find inner peace.Consequently spiritual approaches and practices provides to such children hope, as well as it helps them to develop an ethical mindset, and possibly a sense of belonging to a religious community or even to a collective humankind - even in less religious societies.

Since religious institutions have long started to take care of children than any secular organization, working with them has also several advantages

• Religious leaders and clerics have a moral leadership and spiritual authority in the eyes of followers - or in some cases even the non-followers, for instance, in case of the Dalai Lama, - and so they have a great influence on how people think or behave, moreover, mobilize them.National and international faith leaders have an especially great potential of influence, not just towards their followers, but policy makers too.

- Possible cost-effectiveness throughout mobilizing followers, both in the form of charities and volunteers. In addition, churches often have schools and hospitals already founded.
- Concerning volunteers motivated by their faith, they are more likely to possess a strong commitment and compassion due to their belief, which also keeps them going while providing them mental and spiritual help, as well as hope, which plays a crucial role. Although faith-inspired approaches might not be sufficient by itself. it generally contains some essential characteristics and practices that could/should be learnt and practiced.For instance "metaphoric narratives can instill values, and by acting as role models can motivate children."This is also the way religious institutions teach children their values and how to differentiate between good and bad.
- Compassion is to be emphasized in the sense that just like pathologizing, feeling pitied might be sensed by a child, and may have a negative effect on him/her, as well as distance her/him, and/or refusing cooperation. In addition, the child should be helped to "develop competency rather than a vulnerability-based view of his life. He must be taught to value his strengths and capacities (competency), and not to dwell on but accept and overcome his weaknesses and limitations (vulnerability)."

But both secular a faith-based short-time volunteers should be reminded of possible unintended negative consequences on children by short-time attachments. Therefore, it's better to direct them to "participate in activities that support local caregivers and provide them with training and tools (if needed) that will continue to strengthen their care for children long after you have left. By offering skills training in child development and abuse prevention or by working alongside community members to build a children's center. Furthermore, "there is need for support and safety nets for *orphans* that will ensure their rights are protected and minimize their exposure to discrimination and stigma."Emphasis added As well as, young people who have aged-out of shelter. As the the above list illustrates as well information sharing and cooperation plays a crucial role. Gatherings could include researchers and writers as well, for the same purpose of sharing information and improvement, which, through them can be spread even more. Social workers must be open to others' critiques and views, both from their own staff, and globally, for continuous improvement. Also, they have to be prepared for possible emotional impacts, may that be attachment to a child or the story of a child. Moreover, because they might regularly experience such, to talk out themselves, and to exercise some form of self-healing practices (e.g. meditation), in order to perform well with children. Role-playing may have both a healing effect, and a preparation for the "field-work". Similarly to children, it would be important to learn nonviolent communication for social workers who want to work with people, not to mention vulnerable children, which would help to control their temper and put aside judgments.

### Conclusion

The rights of orphans are generally discussed under the notion of Orphans and Vulnerable Children's (OVC) rights. Many

children are vulnerable and potential future orphans because of poverty; thus helping families is an efficient way to prevention, as vulnerable children may still be able to "change status". As a research conducted by WHO in Europe states "It is possible to prevent cycles of violence in the community through the early identification of childhood victims, who can be offered help and support before they develop antisocial behavior."Community should always be considered. Laws by themselves are far from being sufficient to protect children as there are numerous examples of ongoing practices even though they are illegal; moreover, they can provide great help both in intervention, and helping orphans. Therefore, "the role of civil society and in particular of child rights networks, in contributing to reform and development of child protection systems cannot be ignored. Often it is civil society making the bridge between the relevant actors and ensuring good cooperation mechanisms are established."Training and educating not just social workers, but community as well to identify and enable to help vulnerable children might have a much more effective outcome. Such education could start at an early age, in order to empower children to become responsible citizens later on.

The individual-centeredness of human security has a clear logic, as individuals are the building blocks of society. At the same time, when communities focus on the individual tend to care less for the good of their community, forget the very interconnectedness which is one of the pillars of human security, and care less for others. As a matter of fact, Religions for Peace, the world's largest and most representative multireligious coalition "advanced the notion of "shared security" in major international forums, including the United Nations' Alliance of Civilizations and the Helsinki Process. "Shared Security" focuses on the fundamental reciprocity of all persons the fact that the security of one is intimately related to the security of others and the fundamental vulnerability of the human state. It builds upon and complements the notion of "human security" that has been creatively advanced in UN circles. It should be emphasized that "Individual freedom is quintessentially a social product, and there is a two-way relation between social arrangements to expand individual freedoms and the use of individual freedoms not only to improve the respective lives but also to make the social arrangements more appropriate and effective."

Therefore, learning about personal and social responsibilities including the purpose of human rights, - and the consequences of lack of should be part of basic education. Informing and educating people about the structure of the given society has in important role in prevention. While all actors (NGOs, FBOs, social workers) may contribute to this to a certain level, this is mostly the responsibility of governments, as for instance, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography recognizes and obliges its State Parties to do so.Whereby it " sets forth a more general obligation to "promote awareness in the public at large, including children, through information by all appropriate means, education and training, about the preventive measures and harmful effects of the offences referred to in the present Protocol." States Parties are obliged to "encourage the participation of the community and, in particular, children and child victims, in such information and education and training programmes, including at the international level." It also emphasizes "the importance of compliance with this obligation in countries where, for

religious, social, cultural or other reasons, it is difficult to have public discussions on sale, prostitution and pornography. "Finally, even though reunification is always emphasized when it comes to shelters, orphanages, support of families should be emphasized, especially support for women in order to save children from additional suffering. For in case of domestic violence mothers may face "financial considerations, because no one would support the family in case the father or stepfather gets imprisoned." As well as they may also fear losing their children.

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