



Funding orphanages on donations and gifts: Implications for orphans in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing a growth in the number of children who need formal alternative care. One of the principal factors contributing to this is orphanhood. While most orphans live with their extended families, many end up in privately-run orphanages that operate outside of the government's regulation and funding. Without government assistance and being the most costly care option, the orphanages have to come up with mechanisms to get the finances that they need. However, relatively little evidence exists on the funding streams of orphanages in sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on the literature from Ghana and other low-income countries, the study explores the funding of orphanages and its implications for orphans in Ghana. The evidence from the literature shows that the funding for most orphanages comes from donations by private organisations and individuals, mostly from the developed world. This funding system is generally unsustainable and carries negative ramifications for the social-emotional progress and rights of orphans residing in orphanages, such as abuse, unnecessary institutionalisation, and stigma. Policy and practice recommendations include increasing government's subsidy to the orphanages, regulating donations to and volunteering in orphanages, and helping unlicensed orphanages to transition to the provision of family-strengthening services.

1. Introduction

Worldwide, about 140 million children are identified as orphans as they have lost one or both parents (Huynh, 2019). Of this global figure, over a quarter (52 million) live in Africa (Nar, 2020). The children may have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS, conflicts, disasters and famine, leading to several authors suggesting that the continent has an orphan crisis (Drah, 2012; Lombe & Ochumbo, 2008). Furthermore, other African children, often referred to as social orphans, are orphaned on account of abandonment and poverty (Abebe, 2009). The estimated number of orphans in Ghana as of 2012 was 1.1 million (UNICEF, 2012).

Traditionally, the care of orphans in Ghana is the collective responsibility of extended families and community members (Atobrah, 2016; Kuyini, Alhassan, Tollerud, Weld, & Haruna, 2009). However, in recent years, socio-economic issues such as poverty and migration have made many informal carers, often older women with health challenges and no reliable income, reluctant or unable to absorb the responsibility of caring for orphans (Drah, 2014; Imoh, 2012). Apart from the health and financial reasons, HIV/AIDS orphans are repeatedly rejected by family members because of the stigma attached to the disease (Voyk,

2011). Consequently, a growing number of orphans are without a family and on their own.

For orphans deprived of a family, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) places a mandate on state parties to offer quality alternative care and protection (Wijemanne, 2017). Like other African countries, the main formal alternative care option for orphans in Ghana is residential care, commonly called orphanages (Frimpong-Manso & Kpei Mawudoku, 2017; Desmond, Watt, Saha, Huang, & Lu, 2020; Petrowski, Cappa, & Gross, 2017). In 2013, orphanages operating in Ghana totalled 114, the majority of which were run and financed by non-governmental and faith-based organisations (Frimpong-Manso & Kpei Mawudoku, 2017). Most of the privately-run orphanages are unregistered with the Department of Social Welfare (DSW), the statutory body responsible for licensing orphanages in Ghana (Better Care Network & UNICEF, 2015).

Despite the existing evidence suggesting that residential care is the most expensive alternative care option (Santa-Ana-Tellez, DeMaria, & Galárraga, 2011), private orphanages in Ghana do not receive funding from the state to cover their costs (Better Care Network & UNICEF, 2015). Therefore, most orphanages have to devise mechanisms to access funding to support the children under their care (Galama, 2010).

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However, relatively little is known about the funding streams' impact on the experience and well-being of orphans (Roche, 2019, p. 43). It is this gap in the literature that the current article seeks to fill.

Drawing on the literature from Ghana and other low-income countries, this paper presents evidence on the various sources and strategies used by orphanages to raise funds. Furthermore, it discusses the implications that the funding mechanisms of the orphanages have on the care and well-being of orphans living in these institutions. Finally, the paper offers some recommendations to inform both policy and practice.

2. Methodology

I undertook a review from March to September 2019 to identify and synthesize evidence on the funding strategies used by orphanages and their implications for orphans. Because of the paucity of the research on the topic, it took various steps to search for relevant literature from Ghana and other low-income countries. Both published and unpublished research, including peer-reviewed articles, theses and conference papers, were located through various electronic databases: Oxford Journals Online, PsycInfo, ProQuest Health and Social Sciences, Sage Journals Online, Taylor & Francis Online, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, and Social Science Citation Index. In all, a total of 1618 references were identified during the search across the nine electronic databases. Of these, only 42 sources met the inclusion criteria and were subsequently included in this review. Additionally, Google searches were carried out to identify and retrieve other peer-reviewed articles and grey literature, including newspaper articles and technical reports. I also conducted a targeted internet search of the websites of orphanages and other agencies and other organisations involved in funding the orphanages to identify their reports and other unpublished studies on the topic. For all the studies that were retrieved, their reference list was also searched to ascertain additional references. The key search terms included 'funding', 'finances', 'sponsorship', 'donations', 'residential care', 'institutional care', 'orphanages', 'children', 'youth' and 'minor'. The search was in English for studies published since 2005. It is important to stress that this was not a systematic review due to the limited research on the topic.

3. Funding streams of orphanages

Orphanages in Ghana get their funding from a variety of sources. As discussed in the previous section, the government provides funds for just the state-owned homes, yet this is generally inadequate to meet their expenditure. While estimates are unavailable, anecdotal evidence suggests that the annual budget of an orphanage in Ghana is up to US \$70,000 (African Press International, 2009). However in 2012, for example, the government's funding for the public orphanages was GH ₵6000 (US\$3000), an amount that covered only 30% of the money that they required to take care of almost 200 children (Manful & Badu-Nyarko, 2011). With the government support inadequate or non-existent, both public and private orphanages rely heavily on donations from donors, most of them foreigners (Frimpong-Manso, Deliege, Wilson, & Norman, 2019; UNICEF, DSW & MoGCSP, 2018a).

Similar to evidence from other low-income countries such as Nepal and Haiti (Vernaede & Guillaume, 2017, pp. 3–46; Keshavarzian & Borgström, 2020), a key group among the international donors that fund orphanages are faith-based groups. Many orphanages have an affiliation with churches in the Western world, and they use these networks to raise part or all of their funding. Other orphanages are established and run by religious groups. Faith-based donors support the orphanages primarily to fulfil their religious duty (e.g., James 1:27, Quran 107:1–2) to care rather than of caring for orphans but also to have a destination for mission trips (Cheney & Ucembe, 2019; Freidus & Caro, 2018; McLaren & Qonita, 2019).

Many of the orphanages also get resources through orphanage tourism, a phenomenon taking place in Ghana and other developing

countries where tourists, usually from developed countries, visit or volunteer at an orphanage as part of their holiday (Richter & Norman, 2010). The volunteers, typically gap-year students, pay the tourist agencies that organise the placements for as much as \$1800, excluding flights, to engage in hands-on activities such as teaching and child care in the orphanages (Sanon, 2016).

However, the orphanages get little of what the volunteers pay to the tour agencies (UNICEF, DSW & MoGCSP, 2018a). Most of the income from the volunteers comes from the payments they make for the food and accommodation provided by the orphanage, financial and material donations, and unpaid labour (Rotabi, Roby, & McCreery Bunkers, 2016). In a few cases, the volunteers who maintain a relationship with the orphanage raise funds for them when they return home (Voelkl, 2012).

Many orphanages also draw their support through child sponsorships programmes. The sponsorship programmes, often advertised on the website of the orphanages, offer donors the opportunity to support one or several orphans by providing a monthly or annual allowance (Dzisah, 2019; Herr, 2014). Sponsors can have an ongoing relationship with the child that they sponsor through email and other forms of correspondence. They get annual reports on the sponsored child's health and educational progress (Chege, 2018).

A small and seasonal contribution of the funding of orphanages comes from local philanthropic individuals and corporations. People such as politicians and celebrities visit orphanages regularly, especially on their birthday for recognition and divine blessing for riches and business success (Owusu, 2013). The orphanages also solicit help from various organisations consisting of banks, churches, embassies, and corporations (Castillo, Sarver, Bettmann, Mortensen, & Akuoko, 2012; Essel, 2013). The organisations donate to orphanages with different motives: to reduce their business taxes, market their products, or undertake their corporate social responsibility (Ishak, 2014). Local donors tend to donate more goods and services rather than cash because they are generally distrustful of the corporate governance of the institutions (UNICEF, DSW & MoGCSP, 2018a).

To be self-sustaining, several orphanages have commercial projects including guest houses, agricultural farms, schools, and health centres as part of their financing structure, some of which are built with the funds from donors and volunteers (UNICEF, DSW & MoGCSP, 2018). The projects, apart from cutting down on the orphanage's expenditure, generate an income through the fees that they charge (Bonacci, 2014; Colburn, 2010).

4. Implications of the funding structures on the children's well-being

The next section discusses the implications that the funding structures of the orphanages have on the well-being of the children in the institutions, including the unnecessary institutionalisation of children, abuse, stigma and unmet emotional and material needs.

4.1. Abuse

As described in the previous section, almost all orphanages in Ghana depend on private donations for their operations. However, in raising these funds, some orphanages, especially those that operate illegally, exploit the children. Since it is a major source of funding, many orphanages allow tourists and donors to visit and engage with the orphans (Guiney & Mostafanezhad, 2014). When these visitors come to the orphanages, the children often have to perform (e.g., sing and dance) to welcome them, and if they brought donations, also thank them for it. (Galama, 2010; Sanon, 2016).

One implication of the children engaging in these activities is that they may lose valuable study and playtime. For instance, depending on the number of times that people visit the orphanages, the children may miss several hours of study time rehearsing and undertaking these

performances (Ishak, 2012). This could partly contribute to the lower academic attainments observed among orphanage children (Yendork & Somhlaba, 2015). The children often have no say in whether they want to take part in the performances or not and can be punished if they refuse (Emmanuel, 2015).

Having visitors and volunteers coming into the orphanage exposes the orphans to sexual abuse. This is because the visitors are usually not screened but given unrestricted access to the children (Messmer, 2014). Though reports of its occurrence in Ghana are scanty, the evidence from other African countries (e.g., Kenya and Malawi) indicate that some paedophiles start or volunteer in orphanages with the sole purpose to abuse children sexually (Kenney, 2016; Scolforo, 2019). Some of the commercial projects of orphanages also put the children at risk of sexual abuse. For example, an orphanage in Ghana operates a guest house that allows male guests to stay overnight, sometimes in the company of prostitutes (GhanaWeb, 2010). This is a situation augurs not only poorly for the children's upbringing, but it also exposes them to potential abuse.

Given the low level of disclosure of sexual abuse among children in Ghana (Böhm, 2017), it is likely that some visitors to the orphanages can abuse some children in silence (UNICEF, DSW, & MoGCSP, 2018a). Recent undercover investigations into the activities of several Ghanaian orphanages unearthed tragic stories of forced sex, sodomy, unwanted pregnancies, and abortions (Issahaku, 2018a), risky sexual behaviours common among abused children (Homma et al., 2012).

There is evidence that various orphanages run as businesses and exploit the children in their care for the profit of the owners (Mulheir & Gyllesten, 2018). To feed the demand for volunteering and inter-country adoptions, the orphanages recruit children from families facing economic challenges with the promise of providing them a better future and access to proper education (Arku, 2013). Without access to social protection, many vulnerable families give their children to the orphanages hoping they will have access to primary services (Issahaku, 2018b).

Once in these orphanages, the fraudulent operators manipulate the children's details (e.g., parental death certificates) to give them an orphan label since this makes them marketable for adoption or orphanage tourism (Van Doore, 2016). These orphanages then engage in unlawful intercountry adoptions or the sale of 'orphans' to foreigners (Osei Sarpong & Mensah-Ankrah, 2018; Shelley, 2011). An impact of these illegal adoptions and trafficking is that it increases the possibility of children ending up in child labour or other abusive and exploitative environments. For instance, in the US, Kenny and Kelly Fry were arrested for abusing two children that they adopted from Ghana. The children were neglected, starved, and forced to live in deplorable conditions, resulting in malnourishment and stunted growth (Sims, 2019).

4.2. Unnecessary institutionalisation

Both the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Guidelines on Alternative Care (General Assembly of the United Nations, 2009; UN Commission on Human Rights, 1990), as well as Ghanaian laws such as the Children's Act 1998 (Issahaku, 2018b), give children the right to stay with their parents. These laws also prescribe that children's stay in alternative care, especially residential care, should be for the shortest possible time.

Even with these laws, the strategies employed by some orphanages to raise their funding prevents the orphans from enjoying the right to live with their family (Frimpong-Manso, 2016; UNICEF, DSW, & MoGCSP, 2018a). With many of the orphans coming from rural areas, the distance between the orphanages and the children's communities of origin makes it difficult for them to keep in contact with their families.

However, most children in orphanages desire contact with their families and communities and the deprivation of these networks creates emotional issues (Cooper, 2008). Boadu, Osei-Tutu, and Osafo (2020) found that several children in the Ghanaian orphanages that they investigated felt trapped, lonely and sad because of the physical and

social isolation from their significant others due to their prolonged stay in the institution, heightening their risk of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

The prolonged institutionalisation of the children also means that they regularly lack the cultural and social competences they need for the effective functioning in their communities after leaving care (Dziro, Mtetwa, Mukamuri, & Chikwaiwa, 2013). This is because the children are usually socialised based on the values and practices of the foreigners who fund and sometimes manage the institutions (Frimpong-Manso, 2012; Cooper, 2008; Darkwah, Daniel, & Asumeng, 2018). The social isolation and Westernised upbringing experienced by the children could cause a loss of identity and sense of belonging concerning their biological families (Kristiansen, 2009).

Ucembe (2013) argues that although the children are frequently prevented from leaving the orphanages, they are suddenly asked to leave when they are 18 years old. This is because donors feel uncomfortable seeing 'old' men and women on their premises. However, many of them are unready and unwilling to leave because of their lack of connections and dependence on the orphanage (Frimpong-Manso, 2012). Studies undertaken in Ghana (e.g., Frimpong-Manso, 2018a, 2018b) involving young people who have left an orphanage show that they experience stigma and social exclusion. Relatives are often less than willing to accept them because they become detached from them due to the loss of contact following their lengthy stay in care (Darkwah et al., 2018). In addition, the care experienced young people often cannot build social support within their communities because they lack the right cultural and social skills to do so (Frimpong-Manso, 2015).

The limited informal social support and the unavailability of formal aftercare services contribute to the myriad of problems (e.g., unemployment, low educational attainment, and housing) that many care leavers in Ghana experience (Frimpong-Manso, 2015; Frimpong-Manso & Bugyei, 2018). For example, many Ghanaian care leavers struggle to find employment because they often have no social connections to give them information about job openings or link them to employers'.

4.3. Unsustainable funding

Donations from donors provide many orphanages with the resources that they require to provide for the orphans (Sanon, 2016; Voelkl, 2012). Evidence from several studies (e.g., Huynh, 2019; Rukundo & Daniel, 2016) show that funding from donors enables many well run orphanages to provide the orphan's material needs such as food, education, and healthcare. Many of the sponsored children attend private schools, which the orphanages emphasise as a way of providing them with a better future.

However, there are several challenges related to this funding model. The first major problem is that it depends on the continued support from the benefactors. Many of the orphanages do not have committed donors, resulting in their funding being erratic, unsustainable, and inadequate, especially as donor funding is sometimes withdrawn abruptly (Carpenter, 2013; Castillo et al., 2012; Manful & Badu-Nyarko, 2015). For instance, the orphanages in Ghana saw a decrease in their finances because of the substantial drop in volunteers coming to the institutions during the Ebola outbreak (UNICEF, DSW & MoGCSP, 2018a).

The second problem is that, as discussed earlier, local donors also usually give goods and services and not cash (UNICEF, DSW & MoGCSP, 2018a). Voerster (2017) points out that while this "nappy and nan" model of supporting orphanages is helpful as it frees up funds for other needs, it presupposes that the institutions have cash for other needs. They rarely have such money. The third challenge is that some owners and staff of unregulated orphanages divert funds and sell donations, with some reports suggesting that only 30% of donations go to the care of the orphans (IRIN NEWS, 2009). According to Colburn (2010), such corrupt practices have dissuaded people from giving contributions to the orphanages because they are sceptical of where their money ends up.

The preceding factors result in a funding problem that affects the

care of institutionalized orphans (Alhassan, 2017; Bonnaci, 2014; Castillo et al., 2012). Several orphanages are often unable to provide the children's needs, including inadequate bedding, food, and medication, increasing the possibility of them becoming malnourished or ill (Adotey, Stibilj, Serfor-Armah, Nyarko, & Jaćimović, 2011; Duedu, Peprah, Anim-Baidoo, & Ayeh-Kumi, 2015; Sadik, 2010). Also, the education of the orphans is frequently insecure. Some drop out of school or lose the privilege of attending a private school because sponsors stopped sending money for their fees (Yendork & Sombhala, 2015). Some orphanages experiencing financial stress also shut down and arbitrarily expel the children in their care (Colburn, 2010; Kristiansen, 2009).

Besides, the funding limitations of many of the orphanages make it difficult for them to engage the services of qualified child care personnel. Working in the orphanages is unattractive since they often have poor working conditions, with few opportunities for professional development and low salaries (Abdullah, Cudjoe, & Manful, 2018). Darkwah et al. (2018) investigated the impact of funding sources on the work of employed carers in orphanages in Ghana. They found that in many orphanages, especially those supported by local donors, carers had little on-the-job training due to the lack of finances affecting their performance. The poor staff-to-child ratio and the limited training of the carers results in the inadequate personal attention for the children, besides maltreatment and abuse (Bettmann, Mortensen & Akuoko, 2015; Castillo et al., 2012; Yendork & Somhlaba, 2015).

Owing to the shortage of staff, short-term volunteers, regularly with modest child care skills or experience-based qualifications, fill in the personnel gap in many orphanages (Bargeman, Richards, & Govers, 2016). The flexibility that the volunteers have for determining when and what they do gives them the time and opportunity to play and to give the orphans individual attention. As such, the children, especially the smaller ones, get easily attached to them (Sanon, 2016). The volunteers also involve the orphans in activities that expose them to various skills and languages, broadening their perspective (Rogerson & Slater, 2014; Sanon, 2016).

While the volunteer's role is beneficial in augmenting the caregiving in the orphanages, it also leads to potential challenges for the children. The children get attached to the volunteers and sometimes develop the hope of getting adopted, only for the volunteers to leave unexpectedly with little further contact, leaving them susceptible to emotional issues (Galama, 2010; Richter & Norman, 2010; Zeanah et al., 2019). They often leave orphans traumatized by their separation from their parents feeling re-abandoned by the revolving door of volunteers, which has a potentially negative impact on their attachment to the permanent staff (Voyk, 2011; Yendork & Somhlaba, 2015). To protect themselves from further pain, the children may become unwilling to form attachments with the carers as they become distrustful of others (Richter & Norman, 2010).

Having volunteers and donors constantly visiting the orphanages is likely to disrupt the educational development of the orphans. For many of the people wishing to volunteer at an orphanage, teaching is commonly a task they desire to engage in as they feel it is a way to give the children a better future and a tangible result of their help (Sanon, 2016). However, several of the volunteers have limited experience and skills in terms of teaching and the language barrier regularly limits the impact they make in this area (Bargeman et al., 2016). Due to their limited understanding of the educational system in Ghana and the desire to sometimes teach courses that they consider important, they fail to stick to the prescribed syllabus which affects the educational progress of the children, especially when it comes to examinations (Sanon, 2016).

4.4. Stigma

In their fundraising campaigns, some orphanages engage in practices that disregard the children's best interests. Similar to descriptions from Kenya (Chege, 2018), many orphanages commodify the plight of the children to attract funding. They display the children's details (photos,

names, and birth dates) and emotive personal/family histories for everyone to see. In pictures and videos, they often portray the children as abandoned and in need of urgent care and support (Dzisah, 2019).

To fit the portrayal of the waifs painted on their fundraising communications and increase the sympathy of the donors, some orphanages go to the extent of keeping the children in squalid conditions (e.g. dirty, scruffy, and malnourished) to create the poor but cute children, in dire need of support (Owusu, 2016). Barker (2019) explains that even the songs and poems used in the performances for the donors are usually scripted to show the children's vulnerability and need for support. In many orphanages, as a sign of appreciation, they assemble the orphans to share their life stories with the donors and to have their pictures taken along with the donated items. These pictures, repeatedly taken without the children's consent, end up in newspapers and on social media.

While the orphan label and images of the children are useful for drawing support, it could lead to unintended social and psychological consequences for the children (Lombe, Mabikke, Enelamah, & Chu, 2017). For one, it intensifies the stigma and discrimination that the orphans already face within their communities (Frimpong-Manso et al., 2019). Because of the exaggerated sympathy by donors and negative stereotype conferred on the orphans to attract funding, some of the children internalize the view that they are vulnerable and disadvantaged, provoking feelings of shame which influences their self-esteem and self-identity negatively. To cope with the stigma, the orphans often avoid having relationships in their community, which narrows their social capital (Galama, 2010).

According to Voyk (2011), children in orphanages face envy and jealousy in their community arising from the perception that they alone benefit from the funding sent by donors. Their access to these funds makes them 'privileged' and better off than the other orphans in the wider society. The stigma that they experience makes it tough for the children to interact with people outside of the institution, reinforcing their social exclusion.

The individual child sponsorships also lead to problems in relation to the care of the orphans in the orphanage. Sponsored children attend private schools and they are the favourites of the operators because of the funding that they bring in (Kristiansen, 2009). The preferential treatment creates resentment towards the sponsored children and provokes feelings of insecurity and low self-worth for the orphans left out of the sponsorship.

Chege (2018) also argues that the use of the children's data and images breaches both ethical and legal standards. He argues that per article 110 of the UNCRC, orphanages are supposed to keep the children's records confidential. Making the children's information accessible to the global public without their consent is a dehumanising practice that invades the children's rights to privacy and disregards their inherent dignity.

5. Lessons learned and recommendations

The review of the literature has revealed several lessons. First, the orphanages current dependence on international donations and volunteer efforts is largely unsustainable. The financial resources coming from donors are rarely guaranteed while the volunteers' presence in the orphanages is only for short periods. This lack of steady income source causes financial issues which creates poor living conditions and human rights violations for the orphans. The overdependence on donations has given donors the power to regulate the programs and operations of many orphanages. These issues point to the need for the government to support the orphanages if they are to enjoy stable and ample funding.

Second, the welfare of the orphans has become secondary to fundraising in some orphanages. Some illegal orphanages actively use the orphans and their details in their fundraising activities, commodifying and objectifying them in the process. The review of available studies shows that the varied funding strategies used by many of the orphanages may increase the risk of negative psychological impacts for orphans. The

orphans' experiences of stigma, prolonged institutionalisation, physical and sexual abuse as well as attachments breakdowns all can contribute to depression, low-social esteem, loss of identity, and behaviour problems.

Third, Ghana's child protection policy currently focuses on deinstitutionalisation and keeping orphans within their families and communities (Issahaku, 2018). Donors and volunteers are sometimes unaware that their donations add to the factors that keep orphans in institutions, even though most have traceable relatives (Keshavarzian and Borgström, 2020). This situation prevents them from acquiring appropriate values and skills. This limits their ability to develop social support systems and increases their level of social exclusion after they exit care. Fourth, donors and volunteers often unknowingly support and provide resources to orphanages that engage in activities that solidly border on criminality. For example, this can include trafficking and the fraudulent presentation of bogus documentation of both the children and their biological parents, all of which exposes the children to physical and sexual abuse and the exploitation of orphans.

Connected to the above, the Children's Act 1998 (Act, 560) Section 114 (2a-c) makes it illegal for an unlicensed orphanage to admit children and it gives the DSW the authority to close such institutions and to take legal action against its operators. While some illegal orphanages have been shut down and the children living there resettled, many more continue to operate and new ones pop-up frequently. Several structural issues impede the DSW's ability to undertake the sustained monitoring of orphanages to safeguard the well-being of the children. The DSW is understaffed, and it lacks the financial resources to carry out the regular monitoring and supervision of orphanages to enable them to detect and curb illegal activities such as child trafficking and illegal adoption (Laird, 2008). Social workers in Ghana often refer children to unregistered orphanages because preventive and alternative family and community-based care options such as formal foster care are limited (Frimpong-Manso & Kpei Mawudoku, 2017). Therefore, enforcing the laws to close down the unregistered orphanages would leave the children under their care stranded. Closing an orphanage and resettling the children takes a lot of money, which is an expense that the government cannot incur due to limited resources.

Based on the above lessons, the study makes several recommendations to improve the funding of orphanages and the care and well-being of the orphans cared for in these institutions. The lack of effective government support has serious implications for the funding of orphanages and their ability to provide adequate care for the orphans. The government needs to find ways to provide reliable funding for the orphanages so then they can support the children in their care and place their rights at the centre of the service delivery. A way to do this is to use a percentage of the national lottery earnings to provide regular finances for the orphanages, as is done in other African countries such as South Africa (Vorster, 2017). The children in the orphanages can be given grants from the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) social protection program since they qualify under the orphans and vulnerable children's category of the scheme (Issahaku, 2018).

However, for a low-resourced country like Ghana, it is unlikely that the government alone can fund orphanages on its own. The orphanages will still need private donor support. The DSW should regulate the funding from these sources to the orphanages so then it used for its intended purpose, otherwise there is the chance of putting the orphans at risk of abuse or maltreatment. The DSW should periodically publish the names of licensed orphanages in the media and encourage donors to make donations to only these orphanages. Alternatively, the DSW should have an office in each district where the donors can channel the donations for the orphanages. The district social worker in charge of the donations could then use the funds to pay for the cost of the care of the orphans in the licensed orphanages. While most institutions receive foreign funding, this is often not sustainable. A way to deal with this situation and become efficient in their operations, the orphanages should become more self-sustaining by generating a sizeable proportion

of their income, an existing strength of the funding approach of several of the orphanages that they can build on. They can do this by investing some funding from donors into business ventures, such as schools and clinics.

While the use of short-term volunteers should be discouraged, those with relevant and specialised skills such as nutritionists, teachers, and psychologists who want to stay in the orphanages for a longer period (at least six months) can still be a useful complement to the staff of various orphanages. However, potential volunteers should apply to the DSW where they can be screened, selected and given an orientation. Due to the inadequate number of social workers in many districts, the DSW can collaborate with the police and other related agencies to ensure the monitoring and regulation of orphanages. This would assist in closing orphanages that engage in illegal activities to enable them to effectively safeguard the interests and well-being of the children involved. In addition, social work students undertaking their one year of national service can be posted to the various orphanages to ensure that the homes comply with the provisions of the National Standards for Residential Homes for Children (UNICEF, DSW & MoGCSP, 2018b).

6. Conclusion

A major form of alternative care for orphans in Ghana is residential care. It is the government's mandate to ensure that there are appropriate financial resources to cover the cost of caring for orphans in these institutions. However, at the moment, Ghana is outsourcing this responsibility to foreign individuals and organisations due to the dependence on their donations and gifts. By doing so, the welfare of vulnerable children in Ghana has become a charity rather than a mandatory entitlement, which contradicts the rights-based approach to child protection espoused by the CRC.

Author statement

The corresponding author is responsible for writing of the entire manuscript.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2020.100835>.

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