

“SOME OF THEM COME TO SEE HOW THE AFRICANS ARE”

Children's perspective on international volunteering in children's homes in
Kenya

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Thesis, Fall 2015
Diaconia University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Social Services
Bachelor of Social Services (UAP)

ABSTRACT

Joutsijoki, Anna. "Some of them come to see how the Africans are" – Children's perspective on international volunteering in children's homes in Kenya. Diak South, Helsinki, Fall 2015, 102 p, 6 appendices. Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Degree Program in Social Services, Bachelor of Social Services (UAS)

The aim of this study was to find out the children's experiences and perceptions on international volunteering in children's homes in Kenya. Thus ultimately improving the practices and enhancing the lives of the children by bringing these experiences accessible for everyone interested in international volunteering or offering international volunteering services in children's homes. The empirical data was gathered through qualitative methods in two children's homes in Kenya. Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to collect data from the children and the employees. A thematic analysis was used to analyze the data.

Children's perceptions of international volunteering in children's homes held both positive and negative aspects to it. Material and financial support, improvement in welfare, and exposure were seen as the main benefits. The consensus of the reflected data and theory is that even though the children and the employees see the beneficiaries, many of the risks established by the critics were present in the international volunteering practices at the children's homes. The risks include inequality, power imbalance, unsustainability, and dependency. In its current form of international volunteering the benefits do not overcome the risks in regards of the child's best interest. Recommendations for future research include studying the recipient perspective, the impacts of attachment on children due international volunteering, shifting from residential care to family-based care, and utilizing the positive aspects of international volunteering without the risks included.

Key words: International child welfare, children, orphan, children's home, orphanage, international volunteering, voluntourism, residential care, Kenya

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	5
2 BACKGROUND	8
2.1 Kenya	8
2.2 Orphans and vulnerable children in Kenya.....	9
2.3 Residential care in Kenya.....	10
3 CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE.....	11
4 INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING	14
4.1 The motivational factors of the international volunteers	15
4.2 International volunteering in children's homes.....	17
4.3 Criticism towards international volunteering in children's homes.....	18
5 PREVIOUS STUDIES.....	23
6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES.....	29
7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	30
7.1 Research environment and target group	30
7.2 Children as research participants	32
7.3 Data collection methods	34
7.4 Data collection process	36
7.5 Data analysis.....	37
8 RESEARCH FINDINGS	42
8.1 Perceptions of international volunteers.....	43
8.1.1 Perceived profiles and motivations of an international volunteer	43
8.1.2 Children's images of oneself and caregivers in relation to international volunteers	46
8.2 Relationships between the children and the international volunteers	48
8.2.1 Interaction between the children and the international volunteers	48
8.2.2 Children's feelings upon arrival and departure of international volunteers	50
8.3 Perceived benefits of international volunteering	52
8.3.1 Financial and material benefits	52
8.3.2 Benefits on the welfare of the children	54

8.4 Exposure in international volunteering.....	55
8.4.1 Cultural exchange and mutual learning	56
8.4.2 Negative exposure	57
8.5 Sustainability in international volunteering.....	58
8.5.1 Continuity	58
8.5.2 Dependency on international volunteers.....	59
8.6 Future perspectives into international volunteering	62
8.6.1 International volunteering in the future.....	62
8.6.2 An ideal volunteer	63
9 DISCUSSION.....	65
9.1 Conclusion.....	73
9.2 Ethical considerations and reliability.....	75
9.3 Recommendations for further research	79
9.4 Professional development	80
REFERENCES	82
APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CARETAKERS	92
APPENDIX 2. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MANAGEMENT	94
APPENDIX 3. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS OF THE CHILDREN	96
APPENDIX 4. INVITATION LETTER	99
APPENDIX 5. PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM.....	101
APPENDIX 6. A WRITTEN CONSENT.....	102

1 INTRODUCTION

International volunteering is a popular way of travelling while working for a good cause. In Finland alone there are several non-profit organizations offering international voluntary work opportunities in developing countries (Rantapallo 2012). and many of the voluntary projects offer work with children, which is often seen as desirable by volunteers (Richter & Norman 2010). A Finnish travelling website Rantapallo (2012) describes international voluntary projects as a way to gain experiences that an "Average Joe" would not otherwise experience, while doing something useful. It is written on the site that for those interested in working with people there are a lot of tasks in teaching in schools or caretaking work in orphanages and institutions. The site states that "getting closer than this to local life will be difficult".

Having been personally interested in international voluntary work and having experienced it myself in Kenya I have noticed, that a lot of highlight is placed on the motivations and experiences of the volunteers. For many it has been a life changing experience. A lot less notion is given to the impact that international volunteering has on the targets of the volunteers' good deeds, the receiving end, in particular vulnerable children. This is a research-oriented thesis that was performed as a qualitative research, concentrating on the children's experiences and perspectives of international volunteering in Kenya.

The research problem and the starting point for this study was that there seems to be two sets of realities around the practice of international volunteering in children's homes. The first reality is the one of the volunteers; that provides them with new experiences, makes them feel useful, and is possibly even life changing. The other reality is the reality of the critics; the one where international volunteering in children's homes does more harm than good. The reality where children are seen exploited, or at least in danger of developmental issues caused by residential care, and where profit seeking orphanage managers are luring good intentioned volunteers to help "the poor orphans". My

goal for the research was to set all this aside and find out the third reality by hearing the perspectives of the children. See the children as participants of international volunteering rather than the objects of other people's good deeds, and allowing the children to express their opinion about the matter. In this study this is achieved by interviewing the children and the employees of the children's homes about the children's experiences and perceptions as experienced by the children and perceived by the employees.

The goal of the research is to provide information about children's perspective on international volunteering for people working in the field or being interested in volunteering, and therefore ultimately seek to enhance the wellbeing of the children. I have approached the research from the perspective that children in children's homes should be given the chance to express their experiences of volunteering and volunteers, not only vice versa. Previous studies conducted on the same topic have recommended that encounters with international volunteers and children especially in the field of social work should be studied (Timonen 2012). As a social services student, I was aiming to answer to this need. This research is topical based on the rise in international volunteering and the criticism it is facing. Based on the recommendations of previous studies it is created for a need in the field. In addition there were personal benefits gained through the study. The process developed me as a student by enhancing my research writing and interview skills, data acquisition and co-operative skills, and knowledge on the main concepts of the research. The key concepts used are orphaned and vulnerable children, international child welfare, residential care, and international volunteering, all this in the context of social work and a setting of a developing country, more specifically Kenya.

The reader will be guided through the research in different chapters. I will start the second chapter by providing the reader with the background of the research, the context in which the research was conducted. In the two following chapters I will describe the theoretical background of the research using the key concepts; children in residential care and international volunteering. In the fifth chapter I will justify my reasons for conducting this research through presenting

the reader with the previous studies on the topic. In the sixth chapter I will establish the aims, objectives and the research questions. In the seventh chapter I will describe the methodology used in this research. The findings of the research will be presented in the eighth chapter, and in the ninth and final chapter I will present the conclusion of the research including discussion, further recommendations, ethical considerations and reliability, and professional development.

2 BACKGROUND

It is important to notice, that this research is conducted from the context of children that are placed in children's homes in Kenya, a developing country. Therefore what is written in this study is not directly applicable to children placed in all forms of residential care in all parts of the world. The background of this research will be introduced through its context, Kenya. In this chapter I will familiarise the reader to Kenya as a country and the situation of orphans and vulnerable children in Kenya.

2.1 Kenya

Kenya is a country located in East Africa with the population of approximately 45 million, of which children from 0-14 years constitute 42.1 %, the median age being 19.1 years (Central Intelligence Agency 2014). The life expectancy in Kenya is 59 for males and 62 for females (WHO 2012). Kenya has one of the world's worst HIV and AIDS epidemics, with the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Kenya among adults being 6.1 % in 2012 (Central Intelligence Agency 2014), an estimated 1.6 million people living with HIV and nearly 62,000 dead from AIDS-related illnesses. The disease has orphaned 1.1 million children in Kenya since the beginning of the epidemic (Avert 2012).

The national absolute poverty is estimated at 46%. From which the ultra-poor are being estimated at 19.91%, rural areas having the highest (21.9%) and urban areas the lowest (8.35%) percentage of the population that are ultra-poor. Ultra-poor is a term that was invented by Michael Lipton in the University of Sussex in 1986. It is defined as "a group of people who eat below 80% of their energy requirements despite spending at least 80% of income on food". (MacMillan 2015). The ultra-poor are the poorest of the poor, eating 1,5 half meals a day, not being able to afford essential services like education and health care and having an income that is both low and intermittent (Unituslabs

n.d.). Kenya is a low-income country, with the current GDP at \$44.10 billion in 2013, GNI per capita at \$930 in 2013 and poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line 45.9% of the population in 2005 (The Worldbank 2014).

The impact of poverty on children is negative, depriving them from the basic needs to survival, protection, participation and development (Department of Children Services, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social development, Kenya 2008). In Kenya 35% of children under five are stunted and 16% are underweight (Feed The Future 2013).

2.2 Orphans and vulnerable children in Kenya

In a National plan of action for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in Kenya orphan is defined as a child who has by death lost one or both parents (Department of Children Services 2008). This is the same definition that is used by UNICEF, which defines orphan as a child who has lost one or both parents, and therefore may or may not be in need of new family, shelter or care, because one of the parents may still be alive or the children may be placed with extended family. This is different from western countries, where a child is considered orphan only if they have lost both parents. (UNICEF 2008). Vulnerable child is defined as someone whose safety, welfare and development are for different reasons endangered. This includes children who are emotionally deprived or traumatized. The factors that have been causing vulnerability in Kenya include among others poverty, diseases, abandonment, disasters and the 2007 post-election violence. (Department of Children Services 2008.)

The exact number of orphans in Kenya is unknown, and because there are different methods of measurement and defining what is an orphan it is difficult to tell exact numbers of the situation. Based on UNICEF statistics of Kenya's orphans in 2013 there were 2.6 million children orphaned due all causes and 1.0 million children orphaned due AIDS (UNICEF 2013). In 2009 it was

estimated that approximately 6 million children in Kenya require special care and protection of which at that time 2.4 million were orphans, having lost one or both parents (United Nations Children's Fund 2009).

2.3 Residential care in Kenya

It has been estimated that in 2008 between 30-45% of the at that time 2.4 million orphans (in 2013 2.6 million orphans) have ended in charitable institutions, while 200.000-300.000, between 8.3% to 12.5% children are on the streets of major cities in Kenya. According to The Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (2005) it was estimated, that 36% of children do not live with their parents, 64% of children aged 0-14 years live with both of their parents of whom 20.5% live with their mothers and not their fathers and 2.4% live with their fathers and not their mothers (Department of Children Services 2008.) In Kenya some of the 36% of children that are orphans are in the care of relatives, some at charitable children's institutions and some in foster care. Some have not found a place of care at all or are residing at child-headed households and some are exploited in child labour or child trafficking. (Joint Council 2011).

It has been declared in the Kenyan Children's Act of 2001 that all the charitable children's institutions must have the government's approval. Regardless of this there are several illegal organizations that are not recognized by the government. There have been reports indicating, that some of the orphanages have recruited children (Williams, Njoka 2008.) It has been a worry, that no matter how well the organizations would provide for clothing, feeding and schooling the child, they cannot replace the love and care of a family. This is unfortunate in a situation, where some of the poor families may feel that placing their child into an institutional care is the best option for them. Many organizations have started to notice this dilemma, therefore seeking to support families to provide for the children, and advocate for foster care as an alternative for institutional care. (Joint Council 2011).

3 CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

In the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in part 21 and 22 it is stated that residential care should be limited to cases where it is specifically appropriate, necessary and constructive for the individual child, and alternative care for young children, especially under the age of 3 should be provided in family-based setting (United Nations General Assembly 2010, 5). By the estimation of the United Nations (2006) 8 million children however are living in care institutions. Children are being placed in residential care around the world for several reasons: when their families have difficulties, are unable, or are unwilling to take care of them. Children's homes are a form of residential care for children. The factors causing children to be placed in residential care can include a child becoming an orphan due to losing one or both parents because of HIV/AIDS, natural disasters, wars and famine. Extreme poverty, illness, abuse, and incest may also affect family relations leading to the abandonment of the child. (Humanium 2011.) In the most economically challenged communities giving the child up to care is the way for the families to try to deal with poverty, and gain access to services or better material conditions for their children (Williamsson & Greenberg 2010.)

To make the issue more complex, it is evaluated that 4 out of 5 children living in children's homes are not orphans, but children from poor families that had to give their children away. This was done in an effort to provide them with food and education. The families themselves were not able to do this for example due to poverty, limited social protection and lack of safety networks. Many of the children in institutions have one or both living parents that could take care of the children with financial or social support. (Csáky 2009). Ideal would be, that children without living parents would be taken to family-based alternatives as early on in life as possible. For the children with lack of family-based alternatives due to for example health status or special needs the institutions should be improved to enhance the development of the children. (McCall, Van Ijzendoorn, Juffer, Groark & Groza 2011). Csáky (2009) defines family-based

care as an alternate form of care where a child is living with a family other than their birth parents. This can include kinship care, foster care, adoption, and supported child-headed households.

A problem recognized in many developing nations are children referred to as paper orphans. These children are orphaned by false documents and used for human trafficking and profit seeking orphanage business. Children in such situations can be sold to children's homes in order for the children's home to gain profit through them in forms of trafficking, or their residence that enables the children's home to gain profit through sponsors, volunteers or donations. This profit making practice has not improved the situations of the children or their families, but in fact created more children's homes that are hoping to solely benefit of the children. (Van Doore 2015). These sorts of children's homes are often misleadingly titled as orphanages, and are offering anyone the chance to visit or volunteer even for an hour or two while hoping to financially benefit from the volunteers. Profitable short term volunteer tourism (voluntourism) at orphanages through a profit seeking travel agency can cause a threat in the orphanage business expanding by it coming more profitable. This would happen in the expense of the children.

Residential care can pose a threat to children's wellbeing. Based on McCail et al (2011) infants and young children's physical, neurobiological, cognitive, and social-emotional development is delayed when they are raised in an institution. All the children raised in institutions experience a separation or loss of their family and other caregivers. Improvement is often noticed after children have been transitioned to family environments. UNICEF Cambodia has stated, that residential care should never be prioritised over family-based care, and children under 3 years should not be placed to residential care at any circumstances (UNICEF Cambodia n.d.) Children living in residential care can be lacking of consistent, long-term caregivers that are able to provide the children adequate, child-centred attention. This is seen critical for a child's physical, mental, emotional and social development. The children lack the parent-child relationship, through which the children are normally noticed to achieve vital

development tasks related to their psychological and cognitive growth. This is noted to have a great impact on the children creating healthy attachment on adults also later on in their life. Children at residential care are often vulnerable and traumatized. (McCail et al 2011). Children who are deprived from the fulfilment of the human need for contact with a stable and secure attachment figures can develop insecurities or disorganized attachment. Frequent attachment disruptions are a reality for children who have experienced separation from their parents and are unable to create stable attachment relationships because of the on-going staff turnovers in the institutions. (Richter & Norman 2010). This can for example affect the way a child gets attached to a volunteer. Other issues around the residential care of children can be higher risk of physical, verbal and sexual abuse than in family-based care, and the dilemma of the best interest of the organization versus the best interests of the child. (Next Generation Nepal 2014).

4 INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING

International volunteering as a popular way of combining travelling abroad and “doing good” is often described as the new form of volunteering, even with its origins reaching all the way to the 1800’s missionaries. It has been traditionally an interest for the students, but is gaining popularity among people already in the work life. The reason for increasing interest in international volunteering in the recent past has been information technology which has brought more information available, increased interest in global issues, and provided easier travel with more options and decreased prices. There are not only more volunteers and organizations offering volunteering services, but also more countries to choose from. (Lager, Laihiala, Kontinen 2009). Kenya is among the 10 most searched countries with opportunities of volunteering abroad worldwide and among the four most popularly searched countries with international volunteering in Africa (Go Overseas 2012.)

The duration of international volunteering can be anything from short term up till 2 year positions. Most of the international volunteers do not use any sending voluntary organizations but can through the opportunities provided by the internet search for international volunteering opportunities by themselves. (Lager et al. 2009).

Among the term international volunteering the terms volunteer tourism or voluntourism have been on the rise. The term international volunteering refers to a practice of giving your time without pay and free-willingly for a cause supporting some form of social good abroad. International volunteering is often conducted through an NGO. The difference to voluntourism is often the length and form of the volunteering period. Voluntourism or volunteer tourism is as international volunteering a practice of giving your time for a good cause, but often short-term and included in other tourist activities. Voluntourism is often conducted through a profit seeking travel agency (Kristin Lamoureux n.d.) Voluntourism is frequently seen as the more negative form of volunteering,

coming from the needs of the voluntourist and the organization rather than the people they volunteer with. The reason I chose to use the term international volunteering over voluntourism in this research was to make a distinction between the short and the mid to long term volunteering, as well as the tourist activity versus voluntary work.

The rise of voluntourism and commercial factors related to volunteering in the field have raised concerns over the benefits and the disadvantages of international volunteering. By the estimation of the critics, the disadvantages would be higher than the benefits. The disadvantages are for example presenting the global south as helpless, the over exaggeration of the international volunteers abilities to ease the situation and the provision of unjustified expert status given for the volunteers. It has been also a concern whether international volunteering would take job opportunities from the locals, when some of the volunteering projects have been pushed to the communities almost at force. Because of this the quality and the ethical criteria within the field has been taken into more careful consideration. (Lager et al. 2009).

4.1 The motivational factors of the international volunteers

In Finland half of the youth aged between 15 and 25 expressed their interest in “helping the developing countries” by volunteering (The Finnish Children and Youth Foundation 2012.) After the change of the millennium youth have been the ones for whom the international volunteering opportunities in developing countries have been widened while different ways of going abroad have increased (Lager et al. 2009.)

In 2009 travel planning site GeckoGo conducted a worldwide research on international volunteering with over 2481 respondents globally. It was found out, that most of the international volunteers had also volunteered in their home countries. For most, humanitarian work was the most favored international volunteering activity, and altruism the main reason for deciding on the location

of volunteering. Smith, Stebbins and Donor (2007) have defined altruism as a person's interest to help someone outside of their family based on their concern on their welfare or satisfaction. The writers state that it is often expressed at some sort of sacrifice to the person, and can mean giving money, goods, property, or as in the volunteer's case time to improve the situation of others. Lager et al. (2009) describe altruistic motivations in volunteering as producing good for others and for a common good through volunteering. Some of the expectations that the people had for volunteering was cultural exchange and understanding, giving back, doing something meaningful and gaining life experiences and personal growth. Most of the respondents felt that the international volunteering experience they had had was very meaningful for them, and their contributions were useful. A great majority of the international volunteers felt that volunteering abroad was a good idea and that their volunteering had a positive impact on local people and that the volunteers do a lot of good. (GeckoGo 2009).

The Better Volunteering, Better Care initiative conducted a survey about "International volunteering: Trends and insights" in 2014. In this study they surveyed the motivations for volunteering abroad. It was noticeable that everyone has their own personal motives since the decision to volunteer is often emotional, even though it includes practical reasons as well. The survey pointed out, that international volunteering had become sort of an accomplishment, and part of the "to-do" list for people living a socially conscious life and it was encouraged by family, communities, and even media and celebrities. In addition many of the respondents noted that motivation for international volunteering can come from a need to be meaningful, and search for human connections instead of profit or material goods. Other motivational factors included personal growth, adventure, way to travel with structure, and learning and cultural exchange. Also "making a difference" and "giving back" were mentioned by the respondents. The volunteers had in addition been motivated by witnessing poverty, helping directly and contributing to a social cause.

4.2 International volunteering in children's homes

Through globalization the world keeps getting smaller for us and information of situation in other countries more visible. This has increased the desire for people to help beyond borders. Many people see children in challenging situations through the media, and with all the best intentions want to do something to better their state. International volunteering is often portrayed as a way to organise this by simultaneously gaining a new experience for yourself. All around the developing countries there are children's homes, often misleadingly referred to as orphanages - offering volunteering possibilities be it for a one day visit or a one year stay, and volunteering with children is among the main attractions for international volunteers.

The unfortunate side of the matter is that often good intentions in helping the vulnerable children may turn out to be even more harmful for them. UNICEF Cambodia has stated that they discourage volunteers to volunteer at residential care facilities for children, because the vulnerable children in the institutions may be subject to even more emotional distress in the case of getting attached to international volunteers who are subsequently set to leave. This is also not the only risk for the children. Volunteers often face no background checks when applying to volunteer with children; this means that the children are at the risk of being placed in the presence of people with questionable motives. (UNICEF Cambodia n.d.).

Even though many of the residential care centres offer international volunteering opportunities with the best intention in mind, there are also centres more concentrated on their personal benefit. Through the profit seeking travel agencies there has been a negative impact on children at children's homes in the developing countries. This has been caused by the travel agencies using children's homes as a tourist destination among others. Even the volunteers

themselves often recognize that the international volunteering is more beneficial and life changing for the volunteers themselves than the children. Yet they remain with the belief that the practice does contribute positively to the society, community, children's home and the children. (Better Care Network 2014).

4.3 Criticism towards international volunteering in children's homes

Albeit research of the children's perspective on the matter of international volunteering is harder to come across, there are several articles and academic papers criticising the effect that international volunteering might cause instead of being of help.

Berner and Welp (2015) wrote an article to Helsingin Sanomat about international volunteers who had gone to Tanzania in order to work with children. In the article returned volunteers told how they felt useless, their talents or skills were not utilized, but it rather seemed that they were there just for the money, not to help people. One of the volunteers stated it just a business among others. They said that:

"It is a business. Many companies do something similar. It really has no impact on anything that you go to an orphanage to make the children laugh for a couple of days".

One volunteer also made a notion, that because people have paid they expect to receive what they are paying for, meaning that going to an orphanage can be like going to an amusement park. Experts interviewed for the article state that work shouldn't be created for the needs of the volunteers; the volunteers cannot substitute the local work force and the motivation should not be in saving the world. The impacts of international voluntary work were stated to be rather indirect; intercultural learning and growth to global citizenship

Similar experiences were shared by a former volunteer themselves Papi (2013) in her article for BBC. She states that the good intentions of the volunteers are

not enough, claiming that “we must stop volunteering abroad from becoming about us fulfilling our dreams of being heroes”. She writes about the negative effects that orphanage volunteering has caused to Cambodia, where volunteering has become a big business and while the number of orphans has decreased the number of orphanages has been on the rise with the tourism. She states that people coming from the wealthier countries need to stop thinking that even without experience, adequate language or other skills, let alone any knowledge of the cultural context, they have the right or obligation to grant their goodwill on people. Instead their focus should be on learning and knowledge on how to have an impact on the long run.

In an opinion piece by Zakaria (2014) the author also criticizes the power relations of the international volunteers and the “helpless orphans”. How “immediate saviordom” at orphanages is seen more appealing than helping families to take care of their children, or making donations. The author states that the orphanage tourism is stepping over international standards on child protection, and makes an important notion saying that:

“No similar parading of children’s faces and stories occurs in materials for foster care agencies in the United States and other Western countries, which also have sizable numbers of orphans. Nor are these children made available to any and all volunteers seeking to salve their loneliness and need for touch.”

Richter and Norman’s (2010) article on aids orphan tourism states it a threat to young children in residential care. The article describes the way the international media and NGO’s portray the “AIDS orphans” and “children left behind” in need of care and the volunteer tourism industry that responds by providing philanthropic volunteer travel opportunities for Westerners to take care of them.

Their article looks at the phenomenon from the perspective of short-term volunteerism, and children identified by volunteer tourism operators as “AIDS orphans”. Richter and Norman argue, that terms used by the international media in responding to the AIDS crisis regarding children can be misleading,

and researchers have noted that in contrast to the picture portrayed, traditional family systems can and still do support a significant amount of orphans, which means that the number of children that are actually dislocated or without a family remains very small. It is internationally agreed, that institutional care should be the last option, but because of the misleading media image funding's are targeted at establishing children's care homes.

The article explains that long term institutional care affects children in several ways, even in their adulthood. Children may experience attachment issues, such as separation, influencing their sense of self, emotional functioning and social behaviour. The volunteer tourism opportunities are often advertised as possibilities to give care to children that have been abandoned, and the volunteers are encouraged to establish close relationships with formerly neglected, abused, and abandoned young children while taking part in their daily caregiving activities. Based on the article, the volunteer tourism operators have found their niche in the AIDS orphan crisis and tourists seeking for more authentic experiences.

The article argues, that children ending up at residential care have already been in difficult circumstances, and are in their current circumstances craving for attention among many others from their poorly paid caregivers, and volunteer tourists are encouraged to fill in the gap. Issues occur, when the volunteering positions are very short term, while the relationships encouraged to create are significant. That leaves many children that have already felt abandoned feeling even more so, affecting their short and long term emotional and social development. Observations have shown, that children in institutional care share characteristics of indiscriminate friendliness and an excessive need of attention that is primarily shown to caregivers, but in these settings also to international volunteers.

The writers suggest, that children who have experienced early adversity require a non-threatening, stable world where visitors don't awaken hopes that are again wrecked after a few weeks. In the case of international volunteers, after

short while this attachment is broken when a volunteer leaves, and a new one created when another volunteer comes. This far in any Sub-Saharan African country no formal regulations exist to protect children from this.

The writers define AIDS orphan tourism as a phenomenon that needs careful approach from policy makers, child advocates and potential volunteers, and the article highlights the importance of protecting the already vulnerable children over any other concerns. It recommends that firstly residential care should be the last option and the support should be given to the families, secondly children should have the right to be protected from harmful experiences such as broken attachments, thirdly welfare authorities must act against voluntourism companies exploiting children, and lastly potential volunteers should be made aware of the possible consequences of their involvement in such settings, be discouraged to take part in such tourist expeditions, and be given guidelines on how to manage relationships to minimize the negative outcomes for the children.

In 2014 the Better Volunteering, Better Care initiative conducted a report in order to evaluate and share existing information of international volunteerism practices in the alternative care of children in developing countries. They reviewed the practice of international volunteering in residential care centres, and conducted case studies about the situation of international volunteering in residential care in Cambodia, Ghana, Guatemala and Nepal. Their methodology included informant interviews with experts from child protection and volunteer travel sectors, literature reviews, internet analysis and volunteer surveys. The purpose was not to conduct a proper academic research on the matter, but to provide an overview of current perspectives. The report stated that there are negative impacts in international volunteering including vulnerability to abuse, normalising access of unqualified individual to vulnerable children, disrupted attachment, power imbalance, inappropriate behaviour from unqualified and unscreened volunteers, and cultural differences. In addition the report suggested that support for an inappropriate care model, and the organizations attempt to answer to the demand of volunteering experiences in children's

homes with the supply of children were some negative features of international volunteering in residential care. The report found also the support of questionable institutions to be an issue within the practice. The report concluded that practices on international volunteering at residential care should be changed, but there are barriers that exist in changing the practices. These were named to be for example persuasive assumptions about residential care centres being a positive solution for vulnerable children, and all well-intentioned volunteering having good outcomes. Mainly the issue was seen to come from the lack of understanding of child rights and child protection. This was seen as being one of the key factors that drives the expansion of residential care for children, as well as the growth of volunteering in such sites. In conclusion the informants had suggested that “working in a targeted way and understanding the nuances in the approaches of different volunteering groups” was essential in order to “create a wide-ranging social change”.

5 PREVIOUS STUDIES

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with the overlook on previous studies related to the research topic. The research is based on the orphaned and vulnerable children's experiences of international volunteering in Kenya. In this chapter I am hoping to enlighten the previous studies conducted in this framework and justify the reasons to conduct this study based on existing literature and findings. The starting point for the research was, that there are two realities present in the phenomena of international volunteering. There is the reality of the critics against international volunteering, and the reality of the international volunteers of their experiences. The purpose of the study was to find the reality that seemed left out; the perspective and the viewpoint of the children that are subjected to international volunteering. This was done with no set hypotheses, and with the purpose of seeking to understand the experiences and perspectives of the children.

For this research the interest lies in international voluntary work performed in children's homes in developing countries as it is seen by the orphans and vulnerable children living in the homes. The key sources for theoretical knowledge in this research were relevant literature, articles, webpages and existing research. Existing studies about this topic are challenging to find, especially from the social or community work point of view.

A lot of the research done of international volunteering in developing countries are based on the viewpoint and experiences of the volunteers. This includes on a national level for example research conducted by Kivekäs' (2010) about the motives and gained personal benefits of international volunteers, Ikonen and Katavisto's (2010) study about international volunteers motivational factors and experiences in Tanzania, Palonen's (2012) research about returned volunteers perceptions of their international volunteering experience, Astala's (2014) research on Liike associations international volunteers voluntary work experiences in Tanzania, and Aarnio's (2015) study on international volunteers

motivations and experiences of participating in international volunteer tourism in developing countries. On an international level the viewpoint and the experiences of the volunteers have been studied for example by Mangold (2012) who studied German youth's experiences of international volunteering in Uganda, Alexander's (2012) study on the international volunteer tourism impacts on the tourists in South Africa, Otoo's (2014) research on international volunteer's experiences in Ghana, and Bailey and Russel's (2010) research on the interpersonal growth of volunteer tourists.

In 2012 Voelkl did a research similar to this titled "developing an understanding of the experience of children with international short-term volunteer tourists - a case study in an orphanage project in Ghana". This was a qualitative research conducted in a children's homes in Ghana with similar intention as mine; study the less studied party of the international volunteering phenomena. The researcher used participant observation, participatory workshops and semi-structured interviews to collect the data to collect the data from the children and the orphanage founder and local coordinators.

Voelkl had four different research questions: 1. "How do the children perceive their experiences with international short-term volunteers?" 2. "What kind of relationship do they establish and what role does it play in their lives?" 3. "How does the experience affect the images the children have of themselves and the volunteers?" and 4. "What role do the volunteers play in supporting sustainable development of the orphanage and community?" Based on the results of the research Voelkl concluded that international volunteering projects are beneficial to the children because the volunteers offer the children with emotional care and attention, gifts, and variety of activities. Voelkl says that the children's horizons are widened by the international volunteers' presence, but at the same time strengthen the stereotypes of their own and the volunteers' realities. Voelkl argues that emotional attachment is not a major concern because the children get attached to the volunteers only superficially. She did however notice, that underlying structures, power relations and financial independencies create limitations to the sustainable improvements by the volunteers to the

development of the children and the communities. She felt that in conclusion the research gave an insight on the phenomena of international volunteering in children's homes as experienced by children, and contributed to the debate of using participatory methods with children in order to content the children's rights to participation.

The research of Voelkl shares the essential quest of this research by wanting to study the less studied side and perspective, and give a voice to the children being part of the international volunteering phenomena. The research is done in the context of a developing country, yet located in Ghana instead of Kenya. Her methods differ from mine, using more participatory methods and concentrating on a specific case. I found the study by Voelkl later on during the writing of this study, and it was interesting to see how many similar or different choices or perspectives we had made in studying the similar topic. Voelkl suggests that in the future international volunteer tourism projects should be studied more from the children, adults, and host communities perspective as is the intention of this research. She also suggests, that international volunteer tourism projects with vulnerable children could be studied more in order to find out if the research's' results are generally applicable.

To study the encounters that go on in the children's home settings Timonen (2012) did an ethnographic study on volunteer tourism with the title "Encounters in a Zambian children's home". In this study the research questions were "1. How is volunteering in the children's home perceived by a. foreign volunteers b. local staff? 2. What kinds of interface encounters are taking place in the children's home? a. what emerges as relevant in these encounters? b. what are the inner dynamics of these encounters?".

The method of this research was ethnographically inspired participant observation. The key concepts of this study are civil society and development, tourism and development, social work, development psychology and anthropology. Timonen's findings suggested that the motivations for international volunteers were similar to what has been established in research

before. From the findings it was also apparent that the volunteers lacked specified knowledge and experience in the work field. The findings also proposed, that even without proper education or skill set the volunteers were associated as part of advanced western knowledge and rationalization. The founding's furthermore brought up some power relations, when different ways of working were presented and the volunteers were eager to give out advises on how to perform some tasks differently. The power relations were also turned upside down, when the locals were able to care for the volunteers, when they were in a strange setting, and therefore the helping did not only occur from the "specialized experts of the West". The researcher suggests that because of this, international volunteering has the potential in providing more "humanizing force in increasingly technical world of global development". The findings presented some differences in the expectations that the volunteers, the children's home staff and the children have. While the volunteers were more concentrated on the cultural exchange and future advantages of volunteering experiences, the staff were more concentrated on the actual contribution that the volunteers had on the daily life of the children's home, and the children were more keen on the personal attention, such as cuddling and playing with the white people who seemed more willing to do that.

In her discussion the researcher suggests that there is room for improvements especially on regards of the benefits that the host community is gaining. The researcher suggests more structured work schedule, a contract between the volunteer and the hosting organization and more clearance in the faith base of the organizations. Power relations are seemed as most difficult obstacle in cultural understanding. For future research the researcher recommends research on how the constantly changing faces of the international volunteers affect the children and their psychological development, and what sort of encounters happen in the voluntourism field and what they can offer for research in terms of a different context in developing countries.

Orphanage tourism has also been studied by Guinney (2012) who conducted a study about orphanage tourism in Cambodia and Punaks and Felt (2014) about

the paradox of volunteering and combating child trafficking through ethical tourism. In a national level it was studied by Hanna Tuovinen (2012) who studied in her research titled “shadows of voluntourism and the connection to orphanage business in Asia and Cambodia” the more dark side of voluntourism, including orphanage business and child sex tourism. Key concepts were voluntourism, child sex tourism, Asia, Cambodia, Human rights, orphanage business, and sex tourism.

The research objectives of Tuovinen were “1. Is short-term volunteering harmful? 2. Are voluntourism organisations and travel agencies operations working in the best interest of the child? 3. Does the orphanage business and its profitability have a direct connection to the increased tourism in Cambodia? 4. Is exploitation and abuse of children really happening in orphanages? 5. What, if any, pre-experience activities take place?”

Tuovinen concentrates in this research in a more commercial side of the issue, voluntourism instead of international volunteering and tour operators instead of international volunteering NGO's, which presents a difference on the point of view than this research. The research method used by Tuovinen is desk research method. The key findings for Tuovinen's research where that the orphanage business has increased, the recruitment process of the volunteers, for example in checking criminal records, is not efficient enough, the experience of international volunteering should be made safer for the children, the travel agencies work with illicit orphanages, and that the global recommendation is to not approve of volunteering in orphanages because of there being evidence of many orphanages being profit making businesses that are not working for the best interest of the child. Regardless of that, Tuovinen says that it is possible to manage a successful volunteering experience, and based on the findings of the research she created a model for strategy for “travel agencies to reduce the illicit work and increase quality of life in the orphanages”. This included collaboration process between travel agencies and orphanages and volunteer experience process.

Tuovinen claims that the issue of the research on voluntourism is its concentration mainly on the positive aspects, leaving the negatives less researched. She suggests that more research should be made on the disadvantages of short-term volunteering, and that it would be useful to identify the exact skills needed from international volunteers volunteering with orphans and vulnerable children. She also calls for further research on the responsibilities of the host and sending organizations.

Based on the findings of the literature review put into effect to gather the previous studies it became clear that there is a need for more research on the matter of international volunteering in children's homes in developing countries. There are criticism over the issue and experiences of the volunteers have also been brought up effectively. However taking in consideration the extent in which international volunteering is practiced and how it is practiced with other human beings exposed to the effects of the practice it was truly alarming to notice how little there was research made about the topic from perspective of the "objects of the volunteering". This is especially from the point of view of vulnerable children in children's homes, a favoured destination for the international volunteers.

This observation gave grounds to conducting this study, giving the attention for the perspective so often left out. It should be noticed that international voluntary work done at a setting where vulnerable children are influenced should primarily be the issue of social work, as children's wellbeing is in general. That is why I found it significant to study the issue from a social work context, and from the perspective of locals, especially the vulnerable children themselves.

6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to answer to the question on how do children living in children's homes in Kenya experience and perceive international volunteering targeted at them. The ultimate aim being to seek to enhance the lives of the children by bringing these experiences accessible for anyone who is interested in international volunteering or offering international volunteering services. Through the research results and distribution the ultimate goal is to enhance the wellbeing of the children in institutions by improving the international volunteering practices. The research objective was to gain knowledge of the personal experiences and views that the children living at children's homes in Kenya have of international volunteering and volunteers.

Through two selected research questions I am hoping to find the answer to the question of how children living in children's home perceive and experience international volunteering and bring the children's perspective into discussion. In a matter related to children, especially vulnerable children, this should be the first issue and perspective to address, and through addressing it I am hoping to share this perspective with anyone interested in international volunteering in a children's home or working in an organization offering international volunteering opportunities in a children's home.

The research questions are;

1. How do the children living in the children's homes in Kenya experience and perceive international volunteering?
2. How do the children's homes employees rationalize hosting international volunteers based on their perceptions on the experiences of the children?

7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

One of the ethical norms that oblige the researcher and is the key in constructing a good research is the use of scientific methods (Haaparanta & Niiniluoto 1998, 86). This includes choosing, using, and justifying them in the specific case of the research in hand. In this chapter I will do this by explaining the research environment and target group, data collection methods, data collection process and data analysis.

7.1 Research environment and target group

The research data was collected during my three-month international exchange period in Kisumu, Kenya. The target group of this research were children living in residential care, as well as their caregivers and the children's home managers. The study is based on the perspective of the children, but the caregivers and managers of the children's home were also interviewed. The purpose of including them was to collect general information of the international volunteering in the children's homes as well as to hear their motivation to host international volunteers and their viewpoint on the children's perspective on the issue.

The data was collected from two children's homes in Kenya. The two children's homes were located in different cities within western Kenya. The children's homes were identified through Ogra Foundations HealtStart programme's networks. The children's homes were chosen based on their location in different cities in Western Kenya in order to gain variety of data while sticking on to the research budget. An active international volunteering programme and willingness to participate in the research were also key criteria in choosing the participating children's homes.

The first children's home I visited is a religious organization with health and social projects and it is located in western Kenya. The children's home I visited is referred to as "orphaned children welfare home" and it hosts children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. It is a home for 60 children. Based on the children's home manager the international volunteers come through the website, and an International sending organization. (Information gathered from the children's homes website, the source will not be presented for confidentiality reasons).

The second children's home I visited is a "children's home and early development centre" located in western Kenya and hosting 46 boys and girls. The children's home is under the umbrella of an abroad based international development charity. In the webpages of the charity they have detailed all the possibilities for volunteering at the children's home. One option is a school trip to Kenya, where you can "do lots of building projects and run camps with the children" while doing recreational activities such as climbing and safari's. Second option is "teaching non-examinable subjects such as music, sport, arts, ethics, plus running extra-curricular clubs and providing small group reading lessons, mentoring and group therapy work." The third option is a "ten week trip experiencing Kenya, undertaking exciting adventure travel and working on a number of (...) projects, you'll work with Kenyan teachers in the classroom and participate in range of clubs from sports to music and drama at one of the schools supported by (...). The final option is a charity volunteering trip; "small groups of interested people can offer to come out and do refurbishments on the school or help run a school camp, as long as it fits in with the school needs." (Information gathered from the children's homes website, the source will not be presented for confidentiality reasons.)

Both of the children's homes have donors, international volunteers and self-sustainable projects.

7.2 Children as research participants

This research process has started from an idea of hearing the perspectives of the children about a matter concerning them. Even though especially the ethical considerations have been made from the perspective of children as research participants, the research has otherwise treated the children as any research participant. This has been the case for example in choosing the data collection method; data collection of the research was done using traditional methods that seemed suitable. It has in fact been under discussion, that if researchers including children as research participants think that the children are competent social performers then why they do at the same time often seek after child friendly research methods. This can be often seen rather as a separating factor between adults and children by confirming the differences between a child and an adult. Instead of seeing adults as *being* and children as *becoming*, the differences, and therefore considerations should be looked at in an individual level. Therefore research methods should not be chosen based on the participants being children, as long as the unequal power structures and therefore the childhood's structural vulnerability is taken into consideration. (Strandell 2010).

Because my target group included vulnerable children who were interviewed the ethical pondering of ethical consideration regarding children as research participants became important aspect of the work. It is stated by Grodin and Glantz (1994) that

“Research with children presents a powerful tension between two sometimes conflicting social goals: protecting individual children from harm and exploitation, while at the same time increasing our body of knowledge about children in order to develop beneficial medical, psychological, and social interventions”.

The research where vulnerable children are interviewed should be carefully justified, and noticeably enhance the wellbeing of the children. It is however at the same time becoming increasingly acknowledged among researchers that children have their own voice and should be included and heard in a research

concerning them. (Borgers et al 2000). Special attention needs to be placed in the interview questions and situations. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child outlined in article 12 of the Convention that: “States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

For this research the comprehensive perspective taken is the perspective of children. This is why I find it necessary to interview children, seeing them as the experts of their own experiences and perspectives. As it is said by Borgers et al (2000):

“But only when we direct our questions to the children themselves, will we be able to understand the children’s social world.”

In addition the purpose of this research is to ultimately enhance the wellbeing of the children in question by bringing the data gathered available, therefore I believe the reasons for using children interviewees were justified. I interviewed vulnerable children, but took care they are in a just condition to participate in the interview based on their age, time spent at the children’s home and vulnerability. The interview questions concentrated on the experiences that the children have of international volunteering, not for example the reasons that have caused them to become orphans. Therefore not addressing questions that could cause the children more stress or trauma, but concentrating solely on topic of the research. Participating in the research was completely voluntary, and this was made clear for the participants.

In evaluating the ethics of the research from the child perspective I used “Ten topics in ethical research” as a guideline from Alderson (1995) and Alderson & Morrow (2004) constructed by Virginia Morrow in “The ethics of social research with children and young people – an overview”. The piece uses ten different topics in addressing the ethics in research with children. In each topic there is a set of questions that can be answered in evaluating the research. The topics

include the purpose of the research, costs and hoped-for benefits, privacy and confidentiality, selection of research participants, funding, review and revision of the research aims and methods, information, consent, dissemination and impact on children. In regards of this research it means, that the purpose for this research and in using research participants is justified based on the research aiming for enhancing the wellbeing of children and causing them no harm during the process.

During the process of writing the research proposal I visited four children's homes, two of which were used in the research. This helped me in altering the proposal, interview setting and interview questions at early stage.

7.3 Data collection methods

This is a qualitative research, which seeks to find an answer to a research question and understand a certain research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. When seeking to learn about culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular population qualitative research is especially effective (Family Health International 2005.) Bryman (2008) points out that qualitative research is about "seeing through the eyes of the people being studied". He states that in qualitative research the belief is that the social world can be interpreted through the perspective of the people that are being studied, instead of thinking that the people are incapable of forming their own reflections on the matter of what is a social world. For this research the whole starting point was, that the perspective that the children at the children's homes have on international volunteering is valuable, and that the children should be treated as participants rather than the objects of international volunteering.

Qualitative research has several options for data collection methods. For the purpose of this research I have chosen my data collection methods to be interviews and focus group discussions.

Interview as a qualitative data collection method is flexible, and the emphasis is on the interviewee's views on what is important. The interview as a qualitative data collection method has two main types of interviewing; unstructured interviewing and semi-structured interviewing. In the unstructured interviewing the interviewer has at most some topics they want to address, but the interview is otherwise closer to a conversation. The interviewer may ask just a single question from the interviewee, and then let them speak freely. In the semi-structured interview the interviewer has a set of topics or list of questions that they want to ask, but is not obligated to follow them to the exact point. The interviewer may also ask questions that are not pre-set but are based on what the interviewee says. (Bryman 2008).

In this research I chose to use semi-structured interviewing. Semi-structured interviewing gives room for the interviewee to express their views and for me to grasp into what they have expressed. This will happen while remaining with a structure, and being able to deal with the set topics in order to answer the research question. The interviews were used with the children's home employees in the purpose of gaining A. general knowledge of international volunteering practices at the children's homes as a background and a setting for the research and B. their motivation to host international volunteers based on the perception they have of the children's perspective on the matter.

Focus group as a qualitative data collection method is a form of group interview with several participants. The original idea behind is that people who have shared an experience can be interviewed about the experience in a comparatively unstructured manner. In this method the participants are able to bring out issues they deem important in the topic. Instead of an interviewer the focus group is hosted by a moderator. (Bryman 2008). Based on Kitzinger (2005) focus groups are "ideal for exploring people's talk, experiences, opinions, beliefs, wishes and concerns." Approach, which seemed most suitable for hearing out the children's perspective – experiences and opinions of international volunteering. The difference to interview is that the participants talk to the researcher as a group while engaging into dialogue with each other.

7.4 Data collection process

All together 28 children participated in the focus group discussions, in 4 groups with 7 participants in each. There was an equal amount of focus group participants from the two children's homes - two focus groups of 7 participants per children's home. The caregivers of both of the children's homes were interviewed. In the second children home the interview was done one-on-one with the caregiver who was the only caregiver present at the day. In the first children's homes the interview was performed in a group of 7 due to tight schedule. Also two managers, each from one children's home participated in the one-on-one interviews. The participants were chosen based on the sample criteria and their voluntary willingness to participate.

For choosing the sample purposive sampling was used. In purposive sampling the participants are chosen based on criteria relevant to the research question (Family Health International 2005.) In this research participants for focus group discussions were picked based on them being children living in a children's home in Kenya, being influenced by international volunteering and being 11-17 year old. For the interviews participants were chosen based on them being caregivers or management at the children's homes. Children interviewed were between the ages of 11-17 because this is the age where labelled development of formal thought is constructed (Borgers, de Leeuw, Hox 2000.) In purposive sampling sample sizes may not be decided beforehand and depend on resources, available time and study objectives (Family health international 2005.) In the case of this research the data collection was finished after focus groups with the children and interviews with caregivers and management were conducted in two children's homes. The data collection was finished because the saturation point of not finding new information was reached with the used methods and context. In the initial part of the process I visited four children's homes, from which in two of the best suiting (amount of children, location, staff, volunteering policy, and interest in participating) I decided to conduct interviews at.

The interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded. In addition some notes were made. At this stage I transcribed the data. The recordings were transcribed verbatim, meaning they were copied word-to-word. I started transcribing immediately after completing the interviews, which helped in the process since the memory of the interview situations was still fresh in my mind. In conclusion I generated 52 pages of transcribed data.

7.5 Data analysis

The process of qualitative research is data driven, meaning that hypotheses and theory is generated from the data (Alston & Bowles. 2013, 272.) As this research relies on qualitative data instead of quantitative, also the analysis is based on interpretation. In analysing qualitative data there are no set agreements and rules on how the analysis should be made, in opposite to analysing quantitative data. Qualitative data is always analysed during the process rather than in the end of it, and different methods can be used in the analysis. Even though there are no set agreements and rules for analysing the qualitative data, there are however agreement on the processes undertaken, even though these processes can be interpreted in different ways by different researchers. Qualitative analysis is an attempt to capture the meaning and relationship involved in the complexities of social reality. In qualitative analysis part of the researchers' objectivity comes from including themselves in the research. This can be done by taking also the researchers' experiences and skills into account when analysing the data (Alston & Bowles 2013, 267-272.)

There are plenty of different approaches and strategies to analyse qualitative data. The method of analysis should be based on the research design and research question, in addition to what is wanted to explain through the analysis. The approach for the data analysis of this study is exploratory, content-driven, which means that there are no set hypotheses and the codes or analytic categories are not predetermined. This also means that the data is read and re-read looking for key-words, trends and themes before analysing the data.

Exploratory approach is mainly based on purposive sampling and use of primary data as I have chosen to do in this research. (Guest & MacQueen 2012). The data collected for the research was analysed through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis seeks to find patterns and themes appearing in the data through coding different words or phrases (Harvard University 2008.) Thematic analysis is theoretically flexible, and it suits well in questions related to people's experiences, views and perceptions, as is the case in this research. The approach to the thematic analysis in this research was inductive, which is a way where the content of the data directs the coding and the development of themes (The University of Auckland n.d.).

Braun and Clarke (2000. Cited by Blaxter 2006) have stated 6 steps to thematic analysis, which I followed in analysing the gathered data. The steps are written in italics and numbered in the text in order to guide the reader through them.

After the interview transcriptions were completed I *familiarized myself with the data (step 1)*. The data that was generated from the interviews was read and re-read, and some initial notions were made. After going through the interviews on several occasions I started to *generate initial codes (step 2)* in a more systematic fashion. I read through the data set, disregarding all the irrelevant information, and coding all relevant parts. The coding was done in order to simplify the data processing. Through coding I was able to find and categorize similar and dissimilar concepts in the data set through the code selection.

I held a list of codes, so every time new concepts were found I invented a new code, listed it, and numbered it. This made it easy to code the text using numbers. I coded the entire data set in Microsoft Word using the "comment function" by adding the number of the code as a comment to describe and categorize specific answers. All together I used 43 different codes. Some of the codes were used only in few occasions, some frequently. I used numbers to mark data relevant to each code. The codes can be seen in *figure 1*.

CODES		
1. Money/Material	2. Experience	3. Exposure
4. Learning	5. Tourism	6. Project
7. Purpose	8. Sustainability	9. Return
10. Help/Support	11. Activities	12. Volunteers choice
13. Good will	14. Interaction	15. Pleasing the volunteer
16. Continuing coming	17. Bad Habits	18. International volunteer
19. Caregiver	20. No purpose	21. Happiness
22. Sadness	23. Love	24. Cultural exchange
25. Improvement	26. Skills	27. Appreciation
28. Equal treatment	29. Keeping in contact	30. Time spent
31. Freedom	32. Language barrier	33. Suffer
34. Family	35. Professionals	36. Friendly
37. Relationship	38. Issues	39. Building
40. Medicine	41. Advocate	42. Difference
43. Health		

Figure 1 Codes used for the data analysis.

After coding the entire data set and having the full list of codes I started to *search for themes (step 3)*. I did this by going through the codes and combining them with similar ones, such as “exposure” and “cultural exchange”. I tried to find the meaning behind the codes, and what they represent. I also reflected the codes and potential themes into the research questions to know what sort of themes would in the most throughout way showcase the coded data. I worked from small details towards larger meanings: meaning that first I had the codes, then developed the subthemes, and then the themes. The process can be seen from *figure 2*.

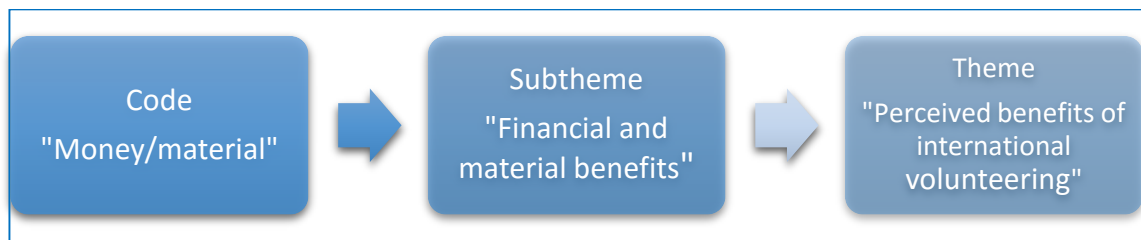


Figure 2 The process.

After formulating the themes and subthemes I made a chart where I combined the themes and subthemes with relevant codes. Some of the codes were overlapping, and linked to more than one theme.

After I had invented the initial themes I started to *review the themes (step 4)*, testing whether the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. I did this by generating a thematic map in the form of a chart. Example of the chart can be seen in *figure 3*.

THEMES	SUBTHEMES	DATA EXTRACTED
PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS	Perceived profiles and motivations of international volunteers	M 1: <i>"Their main reason of coming here is only to help these children."</i>
		CG 8: <i>"He's in a holiday so he decide to let me go and do my volunteer somewhere else in Kenya or Africa just to waste my time because I don't have any place to go. So when they are here that's how they are."</i>

Figure 3 Part of the thematic chart

Creating the chart and combining the themes with the actual data extracts, as well as reviewing how the themes and data respond to the research question were an important part of the analysis. They helped me to see if a theme or a subtheme would constrain the objective presentation of the data set. Therefore as an ongoing analysis I kept *defining and naming (step 5)* the themes and subthemes in relation to the data extracts and the research questions. In the end I managed to find themes and subthemes that correctly presented the

findings from the data in relation to the research questions. The final themes and subthemes can be seen in *figure 5*.

THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Perceptions of international volunteers	Perceived profiles and motivations of international volunteers
	Children's images of themselves and the caregivers in relation to the international volunteers
Relationships between the children and the international volunteers	Interaction between the children and the international volunteers
	Children's feelings upon arrival and departure of the international volunteers
Perceived benefits of international volunteering	Financial and material benefits
	Benefits on the welfare of the children
Exposure in international volunteering	Cultural exchange and mutual learning
	Negative exposure
Sustainability in international volunteering	Continuity
	Dependency on international volunteers
Future perspectives into international volunteering	International volunteering in the future
	An ideal volunteer

Figure 5 Final thematic chart

Initially I gathered all the data extracts into one chart, but later I separated the answers of the children and the employees to their own charts in order to clarify the different point-of-views.

As the final stage of the analysis I *produced the report (step 6)*. The report was based on the themes, subthemes, and data extracts through which I showcased the main findings. The report can be found in the following chapter 8.

8 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to find out an answer to two research questions. The first question was “How do the children living in children’s homes in Kenya experience and perceive international volunteering?” and the second question was “How do the children’s homes employees rationalize hosting international volunteers based on their perceptions on the experiences of the children?” Thematic analysis was used in analysing the data. The themes derived from the data were established in reflection to the research questions. There are six themes with additional subthemes that were chosen to reflect the collected data and answer to the research questions. The 6 main themes are 1. Perception of international volunteers, 2. Relationships between the children and the international volunteers, 3. Perceived benefits of international volunteering, 4. Exposure in international volunteering, 5. Sustainability in international volunteering and 6. Future perspectives into international volunteering.

Because both the children and the employees of the children’s homes were interviewed the research findings will be presented under each theme first from the children’s perspective and then from the employee point of view. One of the main driving aims of this study was to have the children’s voices, experiences and point-of-views heard. Thus I have wanted the representation of the findings to be rich in data extracts from the interviews. I did not want to let the text rely solely on my interpretation of the children’s answers, but rather let the reader see the answers from the children for themselves. The answers from the children and the employees are coded with the purpose of recognising the interviewee while remaining from disclosing their identity. The codes are presented under each quote for example as “Boy C5” or “Manager 1.

In this chapter that covers the findings through the six main themes I am providing the reader with an objective overlook to the research findings. I will be explaining what was found from the data and supporting it with data extracts from the data set to showcase the ideas behind the answers. This chapter

should be seen as a showcase of said answers. A more critical analysis, interpretation of the results, and reflection between the data and the theory will be conducted in the 9th chapter titled “Discussion”.

8.1 Perceptions of international volunteers

The children’s homes have hosted both short-term and long-term volunteers, as well as volunteers with different missions. Some of the international volunteers have entered the children’s homes as professionals - for example in education or health care, whereas some have come with no experience or skills related to the work. A part of the volunteers have come in groups, a part individually. For the children it was difficult to make a distinction between the different types of volunteers, and therefore their answers are a reflection of the different types. The theme “perceptions of international volunteers” was derived from the data when I noticed that many of the answers described how the volunteers are like or what are their supposed motives. In this chapter I am representing answers that have described the children’s and employees perceptions on how is a “typical” volunteer like, and what are their motivations to come volunteer at the children’s home.

8.1.1 Perceived profiles and motivations of an international volunteer

Based on the children’s answers international volunteers stay at the children’s home from only some hours up till three months. Some may stay for some days or weeks, and children felt it also depends on how big the group is. The caregivers seemed to agree with the children, stating that it depends on the individual, but most of the volunteers stay for some days or weeks. One of the caregivers said the typical time period for an international volunteers stay is from one to three months

“Those people yeah when they came or when they come they vary some may stay long and some may just for some few days or

months then they disappear. Then some I think they go back and come again.” (Boy C5.)

The children saw volunteers as good, friendly, supportive, compassionate, loving and never aggressive.

“Ok I can say like this, those who have come they are good. They just give us the positive picture of helping others.” (Boy C3.)

When it comes to the volunteers perceived motives the answers from the children were many. The volunteers were seen to come to support and help the children and the children’s homes, and also provide financial and material benefits. Many were seen as wishing to donate money, clothes, or other items.

“I have seen others opening orphanages. And helping the poor and the needy in the society.” (Boy C6.)

The children thought the volunteer’s motives were also to come teach, play, build and organize activities. The volunteers were also seen as wishing to start up projects, give out their knowledge and eradicate poverty. Even though the children listed many types of reasons and motives they thought the international volunteers to have, some of the motives were also seen as slightly vague.

“I think the international volunteers are here for because they do work... Ok they are with... According to how they will like it it’s what they come to do. There’s nobody who sent them they just decide to do it personally.” (Boy C2.)

While the children saw the international volunteers motives as mainly altruistic there were quite a few answers suggesting that the motivations might have been also for personal benefit. The children felt that some of the international volunteers only come as tourists to enjoy the beach, sun and sights. The dialogue below happened when the children were asked what they think is the reason for the international volunteers to come there.

Girl C7: *Some come for tourists. For tour.*

Girl C8: *Some are tourists.*

Interviewer: *And those who come as tourists what is the difference then to those who do not come as a tourists or for a tour?*

Girl C8: *Tourists only come to enjoy but not to help.*

The international volunteers were also seen to come out of curiosity for the children's home, culture, Kenya and Africa, and the Kenyan people.

"Some of them come to see how the Africans are" (Girl C2.)

"Some come to see our color, the way we are black." (Girl C7.)

The personnel of the children's homes did not state so many different reasons for the volunteer's motivations to come as the children, and their answers were not on all parts in line with each other. The overall picture that came across from the answers was however somewhat consistent with the perception that the children had of the volunteers motives. One of the managers said that the volunteers come to learn, and also to know what is going on in Kenya. With the experience the volunteers have gained they will then go back and tell their stories, bringing in new volunteers. Another manager was very strict on the perceived motivations, stating that:

"Their main reason of coming here is only to help these children."
(Manager 1.)

The possibility of international volunteers to have secondary motives was however claimed by one of the caregivers.

"He's (volunteer) in a holiday so he decide to let me go and do my volunteer somewhere else in Kenya or Africa just to waste my time because I don't have any place to go. So when they are here that's how they are" (Caregiver 8.)

The answers by the employees, as the answers by the children state the international volunteers to have both altruistic and personal motives, wish to learn and help, and an interest to know about the culture.

8.1.2 Children's images of oneself and caregivers in relation to international volunteers

The children's images of international volunteers in relation to caregivers were quite realistic in seeing caregivers as the primary providers of care and protection. The caregivers were seen as stable providers of wellbeing in the everyday life of the children, while the international volunteers were perceived as coming and going.

*"Caretaker just live here taking care of us. But international volunteer just offer some things and go back to his or her country."
(Girl U2.)*

The different roles between the two were also described by one child who said that volunteers help the caregivers in their jobs only by giving money that the caregiver can then use in their work of taking care of the children. The perceived altruistic motives of the international volunteers were nevertheless seen in the answers as well. The children said that the caregivers do the work because they are employed and paid to do it, while the volunteers do it out of their free will and without a pay.

"I think the volunteers they just do it within them but the mothers (caregivers) are being paid to do it." (Girl C2.)

During the conversation about the differences between international volunteers and caregivers it was also the first time when the children equated me and the international volunteers.

"They do the work but they are paid. But those who are like you, you do it freely without being paid." (Girl C8.)

This happened even though I was there only for the day conducting research interviews and I had also stated it clearly. My sole appearance categorized me as an international volunteer.

“They want us to be like them in the future.” (Girl C7.) “Like now you come here. We will follow your footprints.” (Girl C6.) “As you have come here you have studied enough. Even us we want to be like you and even more than you.” (Girl C8.)

As it can be seen in the above quotes the perceptions of international volunteers are quite high. It was apparent in few of the answers, that the international volunteers are seen as coming “from the high” and being highly educated. When asked about advices they would give for someone who wants to volunteer in the future the children said there is no need telling them, because the international volunteers are “from the high” and know already. In some of the comments the children were also giving the international volunteers some sort of expert status in all areas related to welfare, stating that:

“They should bring curative drugs of AIDS. If there is.” (Girl C8.) “And Ebola.” (Girl C4.)

Even though the images the children have of the volunteers seem slightly excessive, some of the children seemed to take it as encouraging rather than differentiating, and did not feel it would be out of their reach to be and do like the volunteers. The children were especially eager in their wishes to help other people based on the example of the volunteers.

“I would like to one day go to their country.” (Girl C3.) “And do that work there. Me I like their work because they care a lot about other people.” (Girl C8.)

What was however often apparent was how the children referred to themselves. Even though they did feel that they could be like the international volunteers and even more, the way they spoke about themselves seemed very condemnatory. The children were expressing how they were the ones in need of the international volunteers help, mercy and support. They were also often referring to themselves as poor, needy and vulnerable.

“I feel it’s a good thing. Because they come to help and support the vulnerable children” (Boy C5.)

8.2 Relationships between the children and the international volunteers

When interviewing the children about the relationships they had with the international volunteers they did not very straightforwardly vocalise their attachment. The 11 to 17 years olds that I interviewed did talk about their relationships with the international volunteers and the strong emotions they had upon the arrival and departure of the international volunteers. They were however very logical in their attachment, waiting for the volunteers to come to them and holding back if they knew the volunteer was not planning to stay long. It was apparent for both the caregivers and the interviewed children that the international volunteers often spent more time with the small children. This seemed to cause some jealousy among the older children. The older children were not as unreserved with the volunteers as the small children, who were almost at instance ready to interact with the international volunteers and open up to them.

8.2.1 Interaction between the children and the international volunteers

Most of the children talked about enjoying the interaction and company of the volunteers. They say that they are happy about the volunteers' presence, because the volunteers are kind to them and show them love. They talked about spending a lot of time with most of the volunteers, and interaction is what they also expect from the volunteers. The favourite activities for the children appeared to be playing, singing, dancing, and arts and crafts.

“Ok we usually enjoy playing with them and just to be sort of happy, share happiness with them for the time that they are staying with us.” (Boy C3.)

In some cases there were language barriers. Some of the international volunteers did not speak even English, let alone Kiswahili, or the local mother tongue Luo, whereas especially the younger children did not know any other language than Luo or Kiswahili. The children seemed however positive that

language barrier is not a problem that could not be overcome, and they could teach the volunteers their language.

The children interviewed were from 11-17 years old and their experiences probably differed from those of younger than that. Even during my short visit at the children's homes the small children were always very eager to come close and get to know me, while the older children stayed back and waited for me to approach them. This was also visible in their answers, as one of the children said about scouts referring to the smaller children:

"I don't want her to spend much of her time with the scouts. Because some when they come they just spend time with the scouts but they don't mind us." (Boy U3.)

It was interesting that the children themselves did already recognise that some of the volunteers were there only for a short visit. It seemed like this affected also their interaction and attachment to the volunteers. The children said that some of the international volunteers are there only for such a limited time, that it is not enough for the children to play with them. This also had its effect on the sort of bond and relationships that were created between the children and the volunteers.

"When they are coming it varies with the time they have decided to stay. Those who will take long they may offer me relationship, but these short time that may come for a week only to greet and do their work that one you may just say hi hi." (Boy C3.)

The interaction was seen quite similarly by the children and the caregivers. Both recognised the language barrier, and the issue of international volunteers concentrating on the small children. The caregivers of the children's homes seemed to be encouraging very close interaction with the international volunteers and the children, and criticised volunteers that were not very free with their interaction with the children.

"The black side is not all the volunteers are good. There are some that they will be just there. They just come to do volunteer. But they

are not that, they don't want to be so close with the kids. So if you want to tell them like ok can you play with the kids can you maybe interact with the kids they find maybe it is hard or maybe you are bothering them. That is another hard thing for some international volunteers.” (Caregiver 8.)

As I mentioned earlier the smaller children were very straightforward with their interaction with me even though I only spent few hours among them. When the caregivers talked about how long it would take to create a bond and get to know the children they also mentioned the differences between the way the younger and older children interact and get accustomed with the international volunteers. Other than differences between the younger and older children, the sex of the older children seemed to be a determining factor. Based on a caregiver the older girls were more eager to interact with the international volunteers, whereas older boys kept to themselves.

“To know all of the kids to know what they like, what they like to interact with things like that. So maybe like a week. But when you come for like small kids just for small kids is just a day, the day you just arrived that day the small kids will be there for you. What the kids want to normally do they just want to see if you will be interacting with them or you will just interact with these small kids. But if you will interact with all of them they will be just close also with you. But if you ignore them if you will just be interacting with the small kids they just stay away from you. It's not that they don't want you but is that maybe they just becoming afraid of you. They say maybe he doesn't interact with us he just wants to interact with the small kids.” (Caregiver C7.)

8.2.2 Children's feelings upon arrival and departure of international volunteers

As it could be seen from the previous answers the children, at least the older ones, were able to hold back their attachment if they knew an international volunteers is going to stay for only short while.

There were however strong emotions mentioned by everyone, when asked about the feelings they had upon arrival and departure of the international volunteers. Upon the arrival of the international volunteers the children mentioned being mainly happy, glad, excited, grateful and feeling good. For specific reasons of being happy the only one mentioned by the children was because the international volunteers arrived to help.

“Just feel happy... That they come to help us.” (Boy C2.)

The feelings upon the departure of the international volunteers were on the other side of the spectrum. The children mostly mentioned being sad, unhappy and crying.

“You feel you are lonely.” (Boy U5.)

The children also saw that the departure of the international volunteers as the most negative factor of international volunteering altogether. They also said, that the sad part is if the volunteers only come for a short time, because the children will miss them. For some of the children it was all depending on the relationship that had been created between the international volunteer and the child.

“Well it depends on the relationship with them, you know after making friends with them and they leave you now feel bad.” (Boy C5.)

The caregivers also felt that the children were very happy, jovial, and well behaved when the volunteers arrived. They however felt that the way the children reacted to the arrival was again dependent on the age of the child.

“The bigger ones now they are very shy. They are happy but they don’t show. They are just happy but they don’t show very much the way they like visitors. But the smaller ones they will go and dance. Greet them.” (Caregiver 2.)

The caregivers saw that opposite to the arrival of the international volunteers, the children were very sad when the volunteers left. They mentioned that many

of them were crying, not knowing when they would see the volunteers again. The caregivers felt that feeling sad, crying, and missing each other was shared among the volunteers and the children. They also mentioned, that because of this love that the volunteers felt for the children many of them had promised to return.

8.3 Perceived benefits of international volunteering

The theme “perceived benefits of international volunteering” appeared from the data quite easily through the coding. The most used codes were money, material and support related issues. These were also seen as issues that according to the children and the employees benefitted the children and the children’s homes most. Most importantly these were seen as benefits that supported the children and were the main reason why the children’s homes were running in the first place. Through the answers in the data it was quite apparent that most benefits came through the international volunteer’s provision of money and/or professional skills. Sometimes the international volunteers were in fact called sponsors or donors, and their motivation to sponsor, fundraise, and donate were told to come through seeing the conditions of the children.

8.3.1 Financial and material benefits

Financial and material benefits, money and all sorts of material goods were the most talked about topic of the interviews and by far the biggest perceived benefit. Provision of said goods were also expected from the volunteers, and one of the children even said that their least favourite thing about volunteers is when they come without anything. Another child said that their least favourite thing is when the volunteers don’t help the poor. The children mentioned several times receiving clothes, food, money, and presents as the main benefits. They also said that the international volunteers money is used to support them, fund education, support the children’s homes, build, and bring

furniture. Based on the children it seemed that the money from the volunteers was what gave them food to the table, a roof over their head, and clothes to wear.

“Sometimes if you have no food they help you. Or even give you some money so that you can also earn for yourself. And they build you. They give you many so that you can work on your business on your own. For us to get money and not starve again.” (Girl C8.)

According to the caregivers answers the international volunteers are the ones who provide the money that pays for the children’s basic needs, clothes, education, and food. They said that the children do not receive money directly, but it is used to support them. Some of the caregivers felt the money also supports them.

“They are helping with the children. They are helping with their education. Some they don’t have anybody at home to take care of them, to pay their school fees, so when these people comes the children are able to go to school. And even us mothers, they are very good for the work we are doing. When they come they encourage us. Mm.” (Caregiver 3.)

As well as the children the caregivers also expressed expectations about volunteers bringing in money and material that was used to support the caregivers themselves. They in fact criticized volunteers who did not support them as well.

The manager of one of the children’s homes was very clear, that money is the main reason for hosting volunteers. They claimed it is the money that runs the children’s home and provides the necessities.

“Yes, ok the reason why we host international volunteers. Maybe the greatest one. When they come, there is a certain amount of money they pay, that is the money that is used to run the orphanage, pay the staff, buy the necessities for the children.” (Manager 1.)

In addition to providing money or materials right at the site for the children’s home and the children, one manager at the children’s home said that the

international volunteers decide to send money or goods from their home country. The manager felt that this is because they have seen the needs of the organization and the children.

“Some of the volunteers when they come they see the challenges we have. Maybe the kids they don’t have shoes, the clothes are torn. (...) So when he goes he tries to look for them and then send to us. (...) We benefit for so many things. The kids. And maybe when he goes back he can say and go raise more money to help this organization. For like maybe I can go and raise more money so that money can go to the organization and that organization can give that money to feed the children, buy the clothes, buy the children to school. So we benefit through the international volunteer.” (Manager 1.)

It was often quite evident, that the experiences that the international volunteers had during their visit were very important regarding the future of the children’s homes and the children. Having a good visit and seeing the needs of the children seemed to have an impact on the international volunteers’ actions even after they had left. This could be either by telling stories that bring in new volunteers, sending materials or money for the children, or fundraising money for the organization. Based on this it is no wonder that often the answers of the managers side-tracked to concentrate more on the international volunteers experiences at the children’s home and the benefits it provided for the volunteers. Even if the question had been about the children.

8.3.2 Benefits on the welfare of the children

Due to the financial benefits that the international volunteers bring to the children’s homes there are also some benefits on the welfare of the children. According to the children these include improvement and access in education and healthcare, good shelter, balanced diet, and improved medication. It has also included provision of basic needs and overall support. The children felt there has been an overall improvement in living standards, and that the volunteers have also taught them life skills. Volunteers were also seen taking care of sick people and those special in their needs. What should be noticed, is

that this part of the interview was the part where international volunteers that had a profession were most often mentioned. Teachers, doctors and engineers.

“Because some of them are doctors and some are teachers. The doctors can treat us. The teacher can teach us. And the kind support that they give us.” (Girl U1.)

The caregivers seemed to agree that international volunteers have supported or provided the children with improved education, nutrition and healthcare, on top of the basic needs.

“Because all of them came when they were... Some are coming when they are totally weak. Undernourished. But after some time they get good diet here. They have done a lot in their lives. Through their support.” (Caregiver 4.)

Based on the answers it seems quite evident that most of the improvement on the welfare on the children was either provided by the international volunteer's financial support, such as provision of school fees, or their professional skills.

8.4 Exposure in international volunteering

Even though the previous chapter provides the picture that the children and the staff saw all the benefits from international volunteering to be money, material, or skill related, there was one claimed benefit where those were not needed. Both the children and the employees saw exposure, cultural exchange and mutual learning among the benefits and reasons to host international volunteers. Exposure and cultural differences were however also among the reason that caused most criticism. Exposure is defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary (n.d) as the “fact or condition of being affected by something or experiencing something: the condition of being exposed to something”. In the context of this research it means the way the children are affected by the presence of the international volunteers.

8.4.1 Cultural exchange and mutual learning

Exposure on other cultures and mutual learning was mentioned by the children and the employees of the children's homes as one of the benefits of international volunteering. The children were talking about what they had learned from the international volunteers, such as new knowledge, ideas, and sharing cultures. They were also telling about what they had been able to teach the volunteers.

"We sing, we swim, we play. We chat and laugh. We dance. We even read the storybooks. We even tell riddles. We even teach them what we are doing. We teach them our mother tongue. And then also the games we know. They also teach us songs. Games. We also tell them the types of food we eat here. They too tell us. Exchange of ideas. They also tell us their characters. Their culture. We drink soda with them. Ice cream. Sweet lollipops. Chocolate."
(All girls C.)

The children did recognise exposure in the form of mutual learning and cultural exchange as important factor, but it was nevertheless evident that the employees of the children's homes were the ones more vocal about it and its assumed benefits. The employees saw the exposure benefitting both the children and the international volunteers. They felt that they were both able to learn from each other, share ideas, and gain knowledge about each other's cultures. The employees also felt, that they as an organization were able to learn from the international volunteers as well as teach them. They also saw learning as something sustainable that lasts beyond the international volunteers visit.

"Some of the songs they teach the kids, they go but they are still singing them. Some of the games, they went but the kids are still playing them." (Manager 2.)

The employees also felt that this mutual learning can have a great impact on all parties. The volunteers may learn new skills that they can practice at home, and the children may learn about issues that can improve them. In general the

employees felt their interaction brings out curiosity, mutual learning and personal improvement.

“After they normally learn from them they can practice what they have learned. Like let’s say when a volunteer comes a volunteer will tell them don’t do this, maybe stay away from sex, stay away from drugs. I see most of the kids normally follow the instruction they were given by the international volunteer. And I can see I normally see there is some improvement in kids.” (Caregiver 8.)

8.4.2 Negative exposure

Exposure can its best be a way to learn and improve, but it may also come with a more negative side. Exposure opens a person for outside influences, and always these influences are not beneficial for them. Children are especially vulnerable and open to outside influences, and in that way exposure can turn out to be even harmful for them. The children were overall very hesitant to criticize the international volunteers, but some did see the way the international volunteers were behaving as negative. This came out for example in the way they saw some of the international volunteers dressing seeing it as inappropriate. One of the child even said that they don’t want the volunteers to come at all, because they won’t attend the church with the others. Similarly how the employees saw positive exposure as something that lasts beyond the international volunteers stay, one of the child saw negative exposure to have the same effect.

“Sometimes I think that the way they were themselves is sometimes bad. So sometimes when they live with us most of us will learn their behaviors. And when they go to their country we will start copying their behaviors.” (Boy U2)

Some of the managers had noticed the possibility of negative exposure as well. Their main worry was about international volunteers exposing the children to negative habits such as smoking and drinking. They expressed that for some of the volunteers it was their first time outside their parent’s care, and therefore some limits and boundaries were pushed with the new found freedom.

“You see most of the volunteer when they come (...) they are young. Some of them will tell you or most of them will tell you that back home in their country their parents or who they are staying with they don’t have that chance to maybe smoking a cigarette or drinking alcohol or going out. So you see when they are coming here what they normally do. If an international volunteer come what they need to improve is that place of maybe smoking and drinking alcohol. Yes, here you can just come maybe if you want to drink you can go to pub and drink alcohol. But you cannot come and you say you want to drink and you want to drink in front of the kids that one. That is not improving. For improving you need to drink far from the kids or smoke far from the kids.” (Caregiver 8.)

8.5 Sustainability in international volunteering

When reading the interview data there were issues concerning sustainability that were shared by the children and the employees of the children’s homes. Both the children and the employees were wishing for continuity and sustainability from the international volunteering practices. At the same time they however recognised that there were issues in those exact areas with unfinished projects, volunteer work without a purpose, cutbacks in the donations and international volunteers who left and never returned.

“An international volunteer when you are coming to do your international volunteer to Africa to any or in Kenya, what you need to do, what you really need to do is you need to know the reason why you are here, the purpose why you are here.” (Caregiver 8.)

8.5.1 Continuity

Both the children and the employees of the children’s homes recognised that there is always not continuity in international volunteering. The volunteers may return, send money or gifts after returning home, and have remaining impacts beyond their stay. Equally there are however unfinished projects, and volunteers that go without ever returning or contacting the children’s home again. Especially the children were concerned about different projects, saying that some volunteers may start projects but never finish them. They also

expressed that if international volunteers were to come to Africa they should have different projects that they come to do.

“Some may start a water project but then in the process they there is lack of finance so...” (Boy C5.)

From the employee side there was also a wish that international volunteers coming would have some sort of purpose and reason why they are doing the volunteering. They also articulated shared worry with the children about unfinished projects. Some of the international volunteers providing support on site had stopped after returning home, and some groups with projects had finished undone withdrawing in the middle of the project. Throughout the interviews it seemed that a sustainable impact was sought after. Both of the managers talked about projects that international volunteers had started that had kept on going even after the volunteer had left. These projects, such as bead bracelet, poultry house, or vegetable garden were small scale projects that had had a lasting impact on the children’s homes and had been used to fund for example school uniforms.

“The projects. Some of the volunteers come and they start some small project. Like vegetable gardens. At least they leave some mark. So even if she returns or he returns we still continue with the project and the projects also help us.” (Manager 1.)

8.5.2 Dependency on international volunteers

What seemed quite apparent throughout the data set was the dependency that the children’s homes had of international volunteers. It was made very clear by the employees that international volunteers and especially the financial and material benefits they provide are the reason that the children’s homes are running.

“Yes, I think they are the main reason why we run. Yeah why we are still on toes. And the more they come the more we thank god.” (Manager 1.)

A lot of weight were given to the volunteers continued arrivals and especially their donations. Disappointment was evident when the international volunteers would not meet these expectations. In the quote below a caregiver explains how they are asking for personal donations from volunteers, and criticises those who do not give anything.

“There are some issues which don’t work nicely. Like for example, we work here and as we are here we also have families at home. Now like these days things are very expensive. Now at times we do tell them (volunteers) “Aa, add us something small” that they don’t want! They don’t take any action. So we get disappointed and discouraged so it gives us very hard time.” (Caregiver 2.)

Most apparent the expectations and disappointment were in the interviews with the employees. They did reason this by saying that without the donations it would be impossible to support the children, but also that the donations are the reason why the children’s homes run. This includes also the wages of the employees. The children did however vocalise their expectations from the volunteers as well, and the disappointment when the expectations were not met. This was expressed for example by saying that the worst part about international volunteers is when they come without anything, or when they don’t help the poor. For one of the children the reason for feeling bad upon the departure of international volunteers was that they would be now missing the services of the international volunteers.

“Yeah we feel bad cos we are missing their services.” (Boy C3)

The children’s homes employees also felt that the wellbeing of the children is in the hands of the international volunteers. It was also affected greatly by the very essence of volunteering – voluntariness. On several occasions the employees expressed worry over what would happen to the children without the international volunteer’s donations. During the interviews even I was asked to bring in support, donations or new volunteers, since according to a children’s home manager I had now seen their needs and could help.

“We will be just very happy if they can come. And help the organization. See the organization would be moving to collapsing. The children they will suffer. If they go back home there is nobody taking care of them. There is nothing they can eat. So if they are left like that it will be very challenging. So if there’s any volunteers we can welcome twice and trice. Long before the children when they passed their form four. Some of them go to university. They were being supported. But it reaches a time where the money was not there. So sometimes if you reach from four, you are left there, nowhere to be taken. So sometimes it’s very difficult for the children to survive. But they are trying.” (Caregiver 2.)

As has been previously mentioned the children’s homes were very eager to please the international volunteers in hopes of donations and new volunteers. This was visible in the way they gave the volunteers a lot of freedom in their working hours and job description, mending to their suggestion to make the experience better for the volunteers.

“So we ask them what time do you want to wake up, what you can do, what can you help. So they are the one who normally tell us we are going to wake up at this time.” (Caregiver 8.)

In one of the children’s homes the freedom to choose extended to choosing “your child” Every donation was seen as a contribution, and the volunteers could choose not only the amount of money they want to donate, but a child they will donate to.

“One can just choose a child. Here. And then they say that I want to help this child. So after some period he just starts sending the contribution or the amount of money to help that child. So most of these children are being picked like that. Some they just come that I want this child. From today this child is mine I will help the child. So when he goes back he sends some donation to the child. So that is what they are doing. So all the clothes which the children are using are coming from the volunteers.... Sometimes they decide that I will buy food for those children for one month. He send the money. Through the (...) and then the food is being cooked.” (Manager 1.)

Qualifications or relevant skills were also not a criteria to choose volunteers, or expected from them. Anyone with an interest or a good will to help was allowed to enter.

“Everybody is blessed with his or hers. So for qualifications, anybody who has a good will to help the children, just to participate is ok.” (Manager 1.)

8.6 Future perspectives into international volunteering

Future perspectives into volunteering were present in the data set in two ways. The first way was the wish that volunteers would continue coming, and the expectations there were for the future regarding international volunteering practices. The second way was the idea and an image of an ideal volunteer that the employees and the children of the children’s home would want to have volunteering in the organization.

8.6.1 International volunteering in the future

Most of the children and the employees felt that the international volunteers should continue coming. The emphasis from the children’s side was on encouraging the international volunteers to continue helping orphans and street children, and campaigning about the importance. They also wished for campaigning about issues such as children’s and girl’s rights, AIDS, Ebola and other diseases, disability, and education. Some of the children also said the volunteers should come whether it is for helping or coming to share their culture or ideas. Evident however was, that there was also a wish for continuity and sustainability. A hope for the international volunteers to “help more and more”.

“I think if they have that spirit and ability they should just be able to come frequently. Come frequently so they may continue the work that they started. And also others to chip in. That can help.” (Boy C3.)

“They should also continue working without being paid because even god is not blind he will reward you.” (Girl C8.)

The employees of the children’s home were on the same line with the children, wishing the international volunteers to come more and do more. The volunteers were wished to keep up the help in supporting the children. One of the

organization manager said they are also ready to improve based on the international volunteers' suggestions.

"I just think and wish the volunteers come more and more. And as an organization maybe we see the loops. According to their suggestions. We try to fit, we try to mend their suggestions." (Manager 1.)

In addition to helping the children and the organization one of the caregivers also added, that the volunteers could in the future help also the children's families back at home.

"I think it will be good if the volunteers... Because some of the children here, they come from very poor families. And those who go back there. So the volunteers if they are taking care of the child here, they consider about the people at home also. They don't even have something to eat. So they can give those people at least something to eat." (Caregiver 2.)

8.6.2 An ideal volunteer

The children had a lot to say about the ideal of an international volunteer. There were many adjectives they used to describe the ideal volunteer such as happy, co-operative, free, helpful and loving. Merciful, loyal and jovial were also some of the adjectives used.

"They should just be happy of what they are coming to do" (Boy C3.)

Understanding the culture of the children as well as their disabilities were likewise wished for by some of the children. Willingness to "do good" and help, dedication to the mission, and punctuality were also asked for. International volunteer's good manners were also seen important by the children.

"They should lead people to good life instead of leading people to a wrong life." (Boy C1.)

A last wish by one of the children was for the international volunteer to have a purpose for coming.

“I want to say that when they are coming in Africa they should come with different types of projects.” (Boy C5.)

The interviews with the employees revealed that they were agreeing with the children especially about the international volunteer having a reason for their stay and helping with all their power.

“As long as you know why you are there. The reason why you came to that place.” (Caregiver 8.)

The employees also felt that the volunteers should be open and free with the kids and make effort to interact and get to know the children. One of the caregiver also wished that the international volunteers would come to the caregivers to ask for different tasks to do. Helping with school work and sharing about culture were also wished for from the volunteer. One of the caregivers also expressed, that not all of the volunteers seem to even like children and that is something where they should improve. They also felt that knowing about the culture and country they have come to is essential. Most importantly they felt, that when a volunteer does come they do the volunteer work with all their strength.

“And if you are here to do volunteering work please do it. Help with your all strength. Do it like you will not do it tomorrow. Help the kids in any way, help the society in any way. Be free with anyone.” (Caregiver 8.)

9 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to study the experiences and perceptions that children living in children's homes in Kenya have of international volunteering. Aiming to find that out I had developed two research questions that I wanted to answer through gathering data from interviews and focus group discussions with the children and the employees of the children's homes. The research questions were 1. How do the children living in the children's homes in Kenya experience and perceive international volunteering? And 2. How do the children's homes employees rationalize hosting international volunteers based on their perceptions on the experiences of the children?

The previous chapter was a representation on the findings of the data set found through a thematic analysis and presented under each theme. In this chapter I will take these findings and analyse, reflect and discuss them against the existing theory and background of the phenomenon that has been discussed in the chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. The discussion will be followed by a conclusion to the throughout study, ethical considerations and reliability, recommendations for further research and practice, and finally a reflection of my professional development.

According to the findings the children's homes host a wide variety of different sorts of international volunteers. The volunteers vary from professionals to unskilled and unexperienced, individuals and groups, and from mere visitors to mid- or long-term volunteers. Based on this the volunteers could be called either international volunteers or voluntourists, between whom the children do not really make any distinction of. This affects also the outcomes of international volunteering to the host communities, since it is recognised that the longer the volunteers can commit the greater the impact is (Morgan n.d.) The perceived motivations of the international volunteers differ from altruistic motivations of helping to more selfish ones, such as coming as a tourist and seeing the children's home as an tourist attraction among others. This is in line with the

overall findings of motivations that drive people to do voluntary work: both altruistic motivations of wanting to help others, to selfish motives of self-development through getting to know new people and things have been present in all sort of voluntary work motivations (Nylund 2008.) The children's image of the volunteers was mainly positive. Volunteers were seen as good people. In comparison to the caregivers of the children's homes the volunteers were also seen as people that do the work out of their good will, unpaid and voluntarily, while caregivers do it for the money. On the other hand the caregivers are nevertheless seen as the ones that provide the day-to-day care of the children, while the international volunteers are there only to visit. The international volunteers were seen taking part in the caring of the children mainly by providing money for a caregiver to actualize the care.

Introducing myself as a researcher to the children I was on several occasions associated by the children as one of the volunteers. Thus it is safe to make an assumption, that the image the children hold of an international volunteer is that of a young, white, female. This was established also on the study of Voelkl (2012), stating that "The children conceptualise volunteers as white, mostly female young students, who enter their lives in order to distribute things and spend time with them." In addition to these physical attributes, for the children an international volunteer is always someone highly educated and high class, who comes baring gifts. Voelkl (2012) notices this in her study too, claiming it re-enforces the negative connotations of such encounters, such as the power imbalance and the stereotype of the giver and the receiver. This narrative is strengthened in the way the children refer to themselves, creating the image of themselves as poor, vulnerable and needy children in need of the international volunteer's mercy and support. This is no wonder, since the image is supported by the employees, who also refer to the children as vulnerable orphans in need of the support of the international volunteers. This supports the statement by Holmberg (2014) of the narrative where the children are seen as poor but happy orphans.

The relationships between the children and the international volunteers were not vocalised as extremely strong or attached. The interviewed children were between 11 to 17 years old and seemed rather rational in their interaction and attachment to the international volunteers. They seemed to be realizing that the volunteers were subsequently set to leave, and created a stronger bond only with the more long term volunteers. This was something that also Voelkl (2012) had noticed in her study, stating that the children had already gotten accustomed to the international volunteers to come and go, learning not to get too attached. Then again in this study it was noticeable, that even though the children did not vocalise their attachment, the feelings expressed at the arrival or departure of the international volunteers were that of a strong nature. It can be also pondered, that are the children in fact rational in deciding not to get attached to the international volunteers, or have the constantly disrupted attachments caused them to refrain from getting attached in general.

Richter and Norman (2010) state that some of the residential care centres host volunteers with the purpose of them giving care, love and support to the destitute and disadvantaged children, and encourage the volunteers to seek personal fulfilment by doing so. This was apparent in the findings of this study as well: the caregivers and the organization were strongly encouraging the volunteers to have a close connection and plenty of interaction with the children, criticizing volunteers who did not do so. The older children were in addition slightly jealous for the younger children who were seen to spend more time with the international volunteers and who had been favoured by volunteers. The younger children were perceived as interacting and creating bonds with the international volunteers very quickly and easily. This relates to the issue of attachment that has faced a lot of criticism. The fact that international volunteers are subsequently set to leave from the lives of the children are encouraged to create strong attachments with children who have already faced issues in attachment, which is extremely harmful especially for the younger children in care. (Richter, Norman 2010).

Sherraden, Lough, and McBride (2009) make a claim that international volunteering can create positive outcomes for the host communities on social, environmental, economic, and political conditions, host organization capacity, intercultural competence, international knowledge and understanding, civic engagement, and international social networks. Sherraden et al. however acknowledge that the international volunteer selection has great impact in the realization of these outcomes. Looking at the perceived benefits of this study there are three main benefits that rose over others for the children and the children's homes. These are benefits on the welfare of the children, financial and material benefits, and exposure.

Benefits on the welfare were mainly provided by A. professionals or B. International volunteers donations. In the current situation where everyone with a "good will" is allowed to enter with no experience, qualifications, or background checks the benefits on the welfare can be said to be depended mostly on donations. Those donations, financial and material benefits were seen as the main reasons and benefits to host international volunteers. Money and material were highly expected from the volunteers, while disappointment was evident for international volunteers not providing those. Financial and material benefits provided by the international volunteers were seen as what kept the children's homes running. Those were also seen as the tool to keep helping the children, providing them with their basic needs and increased welfare. Money and material were mainly seen as benefitting the children's homes and the children, but some of the caregivers felt it was there to support themselves as well. Financial and material benefits however come with two major issues. Continuity and dependency. International volunteers whose core essence is voluntarism and who may discontinue at any time and pull out from projects or from donating do not seem like the correct answer to financial need to gather for the continuous and stable needs of the children. Especially, when international volunteers are in principle looking to donate their time instead of money.

Continuity and sustainability were expected from international volunteering, and some of the sustainable projects created by the international volunteers were praised upon. Praising of those projects was done with the same strength as disappointment in the several unfinished projects. The children and the children's homes were seeking sustainability from international volunteers, whose main essence unfortunately was voluntarism. This left gaps in the practice of the children's homes and in the support the children were receiving. This was increasingly evident in the light of the dependency the children's homes had of the volunteers in forms of financial and material support that was seen critical in the continuity of the children's homes.

When an organization is depending on international volunteers financially, it needs to be addressed what is the factor that is getting the main concern. I believe that a major worry is that at this context the organizations best interest may overcome the child's best interest. One of the third guiding principal of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is article 3, the best interest of a child. A child care institution concerned of the benefit of the organization over the benefit of a child would be violating this article in the most profound way. (Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989).

If international volunteers are seen as donators, who donate for what they see for themselves, we can soon start talking about clients who pay for the experience. Highlighting the experience of the international volunteers was very important for the children's homes who were very willing to mend based on the international volunteers' suggestions. They were also providing the volunteers with a lot of freedom. This was also noticed by Timonen (2012) stating that the volunteer's freedom to choose for example their working hours and tasks was an essential part of the volunteer experience. Because of the dependency on international volunteers and wanting to attract as many volunteers as possible the quantity can also easily exceed the quality, allowing anyone to enter the children's homes. With the increasing interest in international volunteering and preference to work with children this can mean that the children become a business where the organizations try to answer for the demand with a supply.

This has already happened in countries, where number of orphanages are increasing while number of orphans is decreasing (Unicef Cambodia 2013).

The children enjoyed admittedly the company and activities of the international volunteers enjoying shared ideas, exchange of cultures and mutual learning. Exposure including those aspects was however most vocally claimed as a major benefit of international volunteering by the employees of the children's homes. Exposure was seen as something lasting beyond the international volunteers visit. Other than its benefits exposure was also seen as negative by some of the children and one of the caregivers. Equally lasting beyond the volunteers stay, negative exposure was seen as the children catching some of the bad habits from the international volunteers. Another issue to the theoretically beneficial exposure came from the perceptions the children held of international volunteers and themselves. Based on the images the children had international volunteering only adds to the image of the orphan and the saviour complex, instead of providing mutual cultural understanding. When in addition international volunteers are called in by media and organizations to "help the poor orphans", the volunteers are given a higher status than the children – the one of a helper and the helped. This setting already creates power imbalance, where cultural exchange or mutual learning will not be enjoyed from an equal position by the children and the international volunteers. This follows the same pattern that is mentioned by Sin (2009) who states that because of the pre-existing image of the division between well off North (first world) and poor South (third world) there is an idea that the first is responsible for the latter because of attaining their privileges through the expenses of the South. At the same time the South is seen incapable of dealing with the problems of for example poverty, being in need of Norths help. Sin explains that this mind-set causes issues in forming caring relationships from an equal point of view, since the carer, in this case an international volunteer has already taken the role of attained privilege and power. This pattern is also noticeable in the way the international volunteers easily attain an undeserved expert status, even though they might not have any knowledge of the context, or experience and skills

necessary. In this research this could be seen for example in the children's wish that the international volunteers would bring a curative drug to AIDS and Ebola.

Considering the dependency and expectations from the international volunteers it was not a surprise that most of the children and the employees of the children's homes would want the international volunteers to keep on coming and helping more and more. In regards of the ideal volunteer the children and the employees sought after continuity and purpose. The international volunteers were also wished to help with all their strength and effort, and continue to do so without a pay. Dependency such as this can be the outcome of volunteering that can through the well intentioned volunteers reinforce the existing rich-poor division where both the carer and cared, volunteer and host act their part. This can cause the host organization becoming passive in their own development and improvement, relying on the help of outsiders. When many volunteers in addition want to work with the most unprivileged, it may tempt organizations to appear as such. (Sin 2009.)

During the interviews one of the caregivers expressed a wish for the future volunteers to support the children's poverty stricken families at home. This brings us to the question of orphans and orphanages, as the children's homes often refer to themselves. This is part of the phenomenon where the international volunteers are given an image of orphaned children residing in an orphanage, instead of children who are at the children's homes for example because their families are not able to support themselves let alone the children. This is where the criticism of international volunteering is often toward; international volunteering financially supporting and promoting residential care for children, regardless the harmfulness compared to family-based care. Instead of giving the notion and support for family-based care models and supporting communities and families to be able to take care of the children, the international volunteers support institutions where families may send their children after better possibilities. (Better Volunteering, Better Care 2014).

In the chapter 5 “previous studies” I introduced a study by Voelkl (2012) who studied experiences that children had of international short-term volunteers in Ghana. In her conclusion she established that it would be beneficial to find out if her findings on the experiences would be generally applicable. Therefore reflecting the findings of this study to hers was interesting. Based on the results of the research Voelkl concluded that international volunteering projects are beneficial to the children because the volunteers offer the children with emotional care and attention, gifts, and variety of activities. In this study the emotional care of attention were not emphasised, but gifts and over all material and financial support, activities, and exposure were seen as main benefits. Voelkl says that the children’s horizons are widened by the international volunteers’ presence, but at the same time strengthen the stereotypes of their own and the volunteers’ realities. This notion was applicable to my findings as well - exposure and cultural exchange were seen as beneficial, but simultaneously the stereotypes were not appearing to fade by the international volunteers’ presence, but rather strengthen. Voelkl argues that on the contrary of Richter and Norman’s (2010) worry over the emotional attachment her findings suggest that this is not a major concern because the children get attached to the volunteers only superficially. I partially agree with her notion based on the interview data gained with the older children who vocalised similar experiences, but partially disagree because of the raised concern over the smaller children who were seen getting attached to the volunteers more, but did not participate in the interviews. I also question whether the children not getting attached is a sign of healthy attachment model, or whether the children have already been affected by the disrupted attachments in such way, that they are not able to create attachment to other people anymore. Voelkl states, that underlying structures, power relations, financial independencies and lack of long-term commitment create limitations to the sustainable improvements by the volunteers to the development of the children and the communities. This is the core finding of this study as well. Power imbalance, inequality and the organizations dependency in relation to the lack of commitment were issues limiting any sustainable development, even though it was wished for by the organizations and the children. Overall the findings are similar regardless of

different methods, improving the reliability and the applicability of the research findings.

9.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to study the perceptions and experiences the children living in children's homes in Kenya have of international volunteering, and the rational for the children's homes to host international volunteers based on the way the employees perceive the children's perceptions and experiences. The data was gathered from two children's homes and is not therefore generally applicable, but I believe it to have answered the research questions. I believe also the aim of providing knowledge about the children's experiences was achieved. In addition I see the findings to correlate well with the existing research, while also adding important insight about the phenomenon, having the potential to increase knowledge about the practices and create positive change in international volunteer work and therefore the lives of the children.

According to the experiences and perceptions of the children international volunteering in children's homes holds both positive and negative aspects to it. The children highlighted the financial and material support, activities and exposure. The employee's experiences are similar; they rationalize hosting volunteers with the main purpose of financial and material benefits, benefits on the welfare of the children, and exposure. When reflecting the interview data to the existing theory the consensus is that even though the children and the employees see the beneficiaries in the practice and wish for it to continue, many of the risks established by the critics and in previous studies were present in the international volunteering practices at said children's homes. As it has been debated by the critics (Lager et al. 2009), I as well, was therefore left wondering that do the benefits expressed by the children and the employees overcome the risks that the critics have claimed the volunteering practices to have on the children. According to my assessment in the context of the current form of international volunteering I believe that the risks exceed the benefits. The

context is that of international volunteers and voluntourists, professionals and unskilled, and short-term and long-term volunteers who are all welcomed with open arms after financial and material benefits. Due to all of the issues established in the discussion chapter; power imbalance, inequality, lack-of-commitment, attachment issues, and unsustainability, I cannot see the benefits of international volunteering, even though recognised to exist, to overcome the risks by no means.

International volunteering in children's homes is currently practiced with an open door policy that can be a hindrance to positive impact to the host communities. Benefits are found from financial and material support, skilled volunteers and exposure. For these to however actually contribute to a positive change there should be consistency, long-term commitment, and quality criteria in all international volunteering practices. This should also be realized on a collective and global level, and happen in theory and practice. It would also mean that the power imbalance and dependency should be non-existent, and the work would be done from an equal standpoint with the child's best in mind. If these aspects are not realized, international volunteering in children's homes as it is in its current state creates more risks than benefits, and potentially causes more harm than good. This is especially in a case of involving vulnerable children. One way to add to a positive change would be through supporting organizations that work to support families and advocate family-based care for the children. Volunteering in itself is a very positive practice, and targeted right it can create a lot of influence and benefits in the lives of people. When vulnerable people such as children are involved we may not however depend onto phrases such as "at least I am doing something" or "it's the good intentions that matter". In any case, the best interest of the child should be held as primary concern over the best interest of the organizations or the international volunteers. It needs to be accepted that sometimes our good intentions may in action turn out to cause even more harm to the very same people we were so eager to help.

9.2 Ethical considerations and reliability

Ethical considerations in research are about bringing “integrity, fairness, and honesty to your work, and to do right by all potential stakeholders, treating them with dignity, and with respect for their welfare, rights and safety” Cottrell (2014, 106) Research ethics are a part of the research process from the idea phase to the publishing of the study. Research ethics mean collectively agreed rules about how research is made, and good scientific practice means that the researchers use ethical data acquiring and research methods. The research should provide new information, or show how the old information can be used differently. The researcher needs to show honesty, accuracy and carefulness in their research work and in publishing the research. It is also necessary, that the researcher is sincere and honest in relation to other researchers; taking into consideration and respecting their work and achievements by using references and showing the words of their own and the other researches in true light. (Vilkka 2005, 29-31).

In evaluating the ethical considerations I used the checklist by Cottrell (2014, 112) The impact on children has been carefully evaluated throughout the research with the choice of questions and language used, and by seeing the children as best informants on issues considering their own life, respecting the view of the children. Including children as research participants was the most carefully considered aspect of the ethical considerations of this study and it is discussed in detail in the following subchapter. In this research I have secured the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. I have secured the data, and I have also not given any false promises about anonymity or confidentiality in focus group discussions or group interviews. No outsider to the situation has any access on the information of the research participants.

Throughout the study I have acknowledged all the sources I have used and respected other people’s intellectual property. I have not presented any words or ideas of others as my own. The finalized research will be shared through and

to theseus.fi, Ogra Foundation, and also hopefully in the future international volunteering organizations.

I have stayed honest and true to my research and striven to remain objectivity through unbiased reporting of the findings. I have no conflict of interest in the matter, and I have stated clearly my starting point and connection to the research topic. My own prejudices and set perspectives have been discussed during the process and for example interview questions that would be biased have been altered. Reliability was assured with open co-operation with different parties. The research has been under constant evaluation with the help of more experienced researchers. The research will cause no harm to the children's home, the names of the children's homes will not be revealed at any form in this study.

Conducting the research has created no threat to the environment and the research has not been of any kind of threat to anyone's health and safety.

All the participants of the research were informed of the purpose of the research through an invitation to participate in the research (APPENDIX 4.) when considering to participate, and second time as an introduction at the beginning of the interview situations and before signing the consent (APPENDIX 1, 2, 3). All the research participants were asked for their written consent or a consent or their carer in case of a child (APPENDIX 5, 6.), and it was clearly explained to them that not participating in the research will not be held against them in any way.

The participants were offered refreshments and snacks among all the other children and the children's home staff as a collective gratitude for their time, but no one gained any personal benefits even if participating in the research, and they were explained that participating in the research offers them no benefits on a personal level. The refreshments and snacks were also not used to attract any participants, they were offered to everyone collectively, whether

participating on the research or not. It was done solely as a sign of gratitude for all the members of the children's home.

The research proposal and the data collection were from the beginning formulated together with monitoring, evaluation and research manager David Onguko and HealthStart program manager George Ariya from Ogra foundation and it was under constant evaluation of Ogra foundations deputy director Dr. Steve Okello. This has been an ensuring factor in creating the research proposal and the data acquisition in an ethical manner with the research participant's best in mind, and in a cultural context that the researcher is not as familiar to as the locals. As this research is a thesis for a bachelor's degree programme I am studying in Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, the research has also been evaluated through the thesis process of these studies and the researcher will be held accountable of the research.

The challenge of evaluating the validity and reliability of this study comes from the fact that it is a qualitative research and the measurements have been originally developed in natural sciences better suiting quantitative methods. Whereas human subjects are thinking and living creatures that do not always act in a rational manner, objects in natural sciences do not behave in a similar way. (Kananen 2011, 66). Reliability of qualitative research is most dependent on the researcher and their honesty. Under the evaluation are the choices, actions and solutions the researcher has made. The researcher needs to evaluate the reliability of the research in relation to every choice they have made during the research process. It is done in relation to theory, method of analysis, grouping of the research material, classification, researching, interpretation and conclusions. The researcher needs to describe and justify in their text that from what group of choices the choice has been made, what were the choices, and how did they result in these choices. The researcher also needs to evaluate the expediency and functionality of said choices. (Vilkka 2005, 158).

Throughout the thesis I have sought to be open in documenting every action and choice I have made. I have also been honest in any changes or obstacles encountered during the process. The choices have from the beginning been under the constant evaluation by other parties, my supervisors in Ogra foundation and Diaconia University of Applied Sciences. I in all honesty admit that my personal knowledge base of choosing the correct research methodology and collecting data in an unfamiliar cultural context would not necessarily have been enough at this stage to ensure the full reliability of this research. This is regardless of my efforts of acquiring the correct theoretical knowledgebase. Therefore I am grateful that the reliability of this research has significantly improved with the help of my more experienced supervisors.

A matter that was considered a major liability issue of the research were the interview situations. Due to budget and valuable practice the interviews were decided to be conducted by myself. The issues this was thought to pose were in communication, in the otherness of the researcher, and the expectations that the participants may have had of the outcome of the research. These issues were tried to be minimized by the careful selection of interview methods and situation, fluent English skills of the research participants and well-constructed introduction where it will be clearly stated, that the participants of the research will gain no personal benefits for participating in the interviews.

Regardless of preparing for the liability issues and trying to minimize the issues to be realized during the interviews, at the first children's home I noticed, that the issues I had thought about concerning the liability of the research were coming true. I noticed this mainly through the interview participants behaviour towards me; they strongly identified me as "one of the volunteers", and I had a feeling that this might affect their answers, especially in presenting any criticism against volunteers or volunteering. At times it also seemed, that because they seemed to identify me as one of the international volunteers, they had distorted picture on the outcome of the research. It appeared that the interview situation was from time to time used as a promotion for attracting new volunteers or support for the children's homes. One of the children's homes manager finished

the interview situation by saying that *“To me I just ask through you. If I told you can... See or you can meet volunteers who can come and help. (...) Even if they don’t come but they can help through you. You have come you have seen the place and you have seen our needs. So through you if you can help us. Even to support. Just make any support. Then which they can try through you. We are really appreciating all those things.”* The action I took at this point after the first set of interviews was to hire a local enumerator with the help of Ogra foundation. The enumerator conducted the interviews at the second children’s homes as per my instructions, and I did notice it affected the interview situations through added criticism towards international volunteers.

9.3 Recommendations for further research

In regards of future research I would suggest more in-depth study on international volunteering practices from the perspective of the communities and in the practice of creating sustainable development.

It would be especially important to study the attachment between international volunteers and the children and the impact it has on the development and wellbeing of the children. The findings of this study suggest that the smaller children are often favoured by the volunteers, while at the same time creating a bond with the international volunteers very quickly. Therefore I would find it significant to study the experiences that particularly the younger children have of international volunteering and the impacts the practice has on them.

During this study it became apparent that many of the children have families back home. I would find it important to study the ways in which the children could be supported in staying at the care of their families instead of residential care.

In addition I would recommend studies on how the positive impacts of international volunteering such as cultural exchange could be attained in an

equal setting and without the risks and potential harm it currently holds for the children.

9.4 Professional development

The professional development attained during the course of the thesis process has been significant. I started with no prior experience in conducting a research and therefore achieved an enormous amount of both theoretical and practical knowledge in research methods and research writing. Choosing the data collection and analysis methods as well as writing the thesis proposal and the actual thesis demanded a lot of work, but the knowledge gained will be extremely beneficial in the future in the field of social work and when reaching for new academic heights.

I gained substantial amount of knowledge on children and their rights, Kenya, different forms of care for children, international social work, international child welfare, and international volunteering. I was also able to gain information on ethical traveling that will affect also my personal travel choices in the future. At the same time I also understood how limited my knowledge is, and how every day is a possibility to learn something more. I realized that unlike the thesis, professional development is not anything with a deadline, nor something that I will someday achieve or finish - it's a lifelong process.

I learned about my limitations, but also about my strengths. Conducting a research has developed my objectiveness and criticality after constantly evaluating why I am choosing to say or do something, and at the same time critically analysing the work of others. The research process has also impacted my professional confidence. I have managed the process on my own, and most importantly I have been able to be opinionated in important matters that I have based on rationalized information. The process has in addition provided a significant improvement in my English skills, especially in academic English.

I have learned in theory, and in practice. From literature and from great professionals. I have learned with one try, and I have learned through mistakes. The thesis process has overall developed me into a critical and confident professional, with a motivation to life-long learning and development.

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APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CARETAKERS

My name is Anna Joutsijoki and I come from Finland, I am a student of social services in Diaconia University of applied sciences and I am conducting a study on the experiences that orphaned and vulnerable children in Kenya have of international volunteering. I would like to ask you a few questions about international volunteering as seen at this children's home and from the perspective of the children. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes.

1. When did you start working at the children's home?
2. Can you remember how many international volunteers have there been at the children's home during this time?
3. How frequently does the children's home host volunteers?
4. How many volunteers do you normally host at the same time?
5. For how long do the volunteers normally stay here?
6. What are the working hours for the volunteers?
7. What do the volunteers do with the children on daily basis?
8. How much of the work of the volunteers is interaction with the children?
What does this include?
9. How in your opinion is this interaction working out?
10. Are the volunteers often staying in contact with the children after they have left?

11. How do the children react when volunteers come to the children's home?
12. How do the children react when volunteers leave the children's home?
13. In your own opinion what works well with the volunteers?
14. In your own opinion what does not work well with the volunteers?
15. Do you believe that the volunteers have made a difference in the daily life of the children's home?
16. Do you believe that the volunteers have made a difference in the lives of the children?
17. Is there any advice you would want to give to a person wishing to volunteer with these children?

APPENDIX 2. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MANAGEMENT

My name is Anna Joutsijoki and I come from Finland, I am a student of social services in Diaconia University of applied sciences and I am conducting a study on the experiences that orphaned and vulnerable children in Kenya have of international volunteering. I would like to ask you a few questions about international volunteering as seen at this children's home and from the perspective of the children. This interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

1. For how long have you been working in this children's home?
2. Since when have you had international volunteers at the children's home?
3. What is the number of international volunteers you have hosted since the beginning of hosting volunteers?
4. Through which channels do the international volunteers come to volunteer in your organization?
5. Are you working in co-operation with any international voluntary organizations?
6. What was the original reason behind hosting international volunteers?
7. Have you been satisfied with the decision of having international volunteers?
8. What kind of costs are there for the volunteers to cover when coming to volunteer at the children's home?

9. What is the job description of the international volunteers?
10. In what way is the job description being formulated?
11. What sort of criteria do you have for choosing the international volunteers?
12. Which, if any, qualifications are needed from the international volunteers?
13. Do the children participate in discussing the issues concerning international volunteers?
14. In what way are the volunteers trained for their job?
15. Is the effect that the international volunteers have at the children's home evaluated in some way? If yes, in what way?
16. What sort of additional value have the international volunteers brought to the children's home?
17. What sort of additional value have the international volunteers brought to the children's lives?
18. Have you been satisfied with the international volunteers?
19. What do you believe to be issues to develop in the future regarding international volunteering at this children's home?

APPENDIX 3. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS OF THE CHILDREN

1. Welcome

2. Overview of the topic

3. Ground rules

4. KNOWLEDGE OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

4.1. Do all of you know what an international volunteer is?

4.2. Could you tell me that what does an international volunteer do?

4.3. What is the difference between a caretaker and an international volunteer?

4.4. How often are there international volunteers here at the children's home?

4.5. How long do the international volunteers normally stay here at the children's home?

5. HEARING OUT OPINIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

5.1. Have you been asked if you would like the volunteers to come to the children's home?

5.2. How do you feel about the children's home taking in international volunteers?

- 5.3. Have you been asked what sort of activities you would like to do with the international volunteers?
- 5.4. What do you think is the reason for the international volunteers to come and volunteer at the children's home?

6. ENCOUNTERS WITH THE VOLUNTEERS

- 6.1. What sort of activities do you have with the international volunteers?
- 6.2. How do you think that the international volunteers are with the children?
- 6.3. Do you feel like the international volunteers spend time with all the children in the same way and for the same time?

7. OPINIONS OF THE VOLUNTEERS

- 7.1 What are your opinions of the volunteers?
- 7.2 What difference have the international volunteers brought to living at the children's home?
- 7.3 What do you like most about the volunteers?
- 7.4 What do you like least about the volunteers?

8. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE VOLUNTEERS

- 8.1 What sort of relationships are formed between you and the international volunteers? I.e. Friendship.

8.2 How does it make you feel when a new international volunteer comes to the children's home?

8.3 How does it make you feel when an international volunteer leaves the children's home?

8.4 Do the international volunteers keep in contact with you even after they have left? If yes, in what ways?

9 IDEALS OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

9.1. If a new international volunteer was wishing to come and volunteer at the children's home is there something you would like to advice or tell them?

9.2. If you could decide how the next international volunteer coming to the children's home would be like, how would they be?

9.2. Is there anything you would still wish to say about the topic?

APPENDIX 4. INVITATION LETTER

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN KENYA

Dear Mr/Ms,

My name is Anna Joutsijoki. I am a student of social services from the Diaconia University of Applied sciences in Finland. I am currently in Kenya for my practical training at Ogra Foundation. As a part of my studies I am conducting a research, and I would like to invite you to participate. I will conduct interviews with 1-2 persons from the management, 2-4 caretakers and 14 children between the ages of 11-17 distributed to 2 homogenous focus groups of the size of 7 children in each.

If you decide to participate/allow a child to participate, you/them will be asked to meet with me for an interview (if a member of staff) or focus group discussion (if a child) about international volunteering from the perspective of orphans and vulnerable children. In particular, you will be asked questions about background of the international volunteering programme, encounters, relationships and activities between international volunteers and the children, and the benefits and negative impacts of international volunteering.

The meeting will take place at the children's home at a mutually agreed time, and should last about 30-60 minutes for each participant or focus group. The interview will be audio taped so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tapes will only be reviewed by members of the research team who will transcribe and analyse them. They will then be destroyed.

You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to. Although you probably won't benefit directly from participating in this study, we hope that the children living at children's homes will benefit in general by this research

seeking to enhance the international volunteering at children's homes and therefor the wellbeing of the children.

Participation is confidential. The results of the study will be published or presented to organizations related to the issue and the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, but your identity will not be revealed. For children participating in focus groups others in the group will hear what you say, and it is possible that they could tell someone else. Because we will be talking in a group, we cannot promise that what you say will remain completely private, but we will ask that you and all other group members respect the privacy of everyone in the group. Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also quit being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. Participation, non-participation or withdrawal will not affect you in any way.

If willing to participate you will be either asked you oral consent if you are a member of a staff, or written consent if you are a legal guardian of a child or a child. The consent may be given in the beginning of the day of the interviews.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at anna.joutsijoki@student.diak.fi or +254770087734.

Thank you for your consideration.

With kind regards,

Anna Joutsijoki

+254770087734

anna.joutsijoki@student.diak.fi

APPENDIX 5. PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

Study Title: INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN KENYA

Researcher: Anna Joutsijoki

I have read the information contained in the letter/memo about the above titled study, which describes what my child will be asked to do if (s)he wants to participate in the study; and,

☐ Yes – I give permission for my child to participate in the study.

-OR-

☐ No – I do not give permission for my child to participate in the study.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Child's Name

Age

APPENDIX 6. A WRITTEN CONSENT

Assent (for children of 14-17 years)

I have read the information contained in the letter/memo about the above titled study, which describes what I will be asked to do if I decide to participate. My parent/guardian has given me permission to participate. I have been told that the decision is up to me, and that I do not have to participate, even if my parent/guardian says that it is okay. I have been told that I can stop participating at any time I choose, and no one will be mad at me.

☐ Yes – I want to participate in the study.

-OR-

☐ No – I do not want to participate in the study.

Child's Signature

Date

Age