

Sharing their narratives

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A research project that explores the lived experiences of the children, parents and communities at the centre of alternative care provision in Thailand. The aims and objectives of the study are presented below...



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1. Learning from the children's voices



Aim: To gain understandings of the lived experiences of children growing up in the alternative care system in Thailand.

Objective: Use creative research methods to explore the experiences of children, from different alternative care settings in Thailand. For example, temples, residential schools, foster care, and orphanages.

2. Learning from the parent's experiences

Aim: To explore the lived experiences of the parents who have children that are placed in alternative care.

Objective: Undertake semi-structured interviews with parents to explore their experiences and decisions to place their children into alternative care.



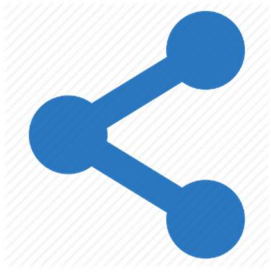
3. Exploring public perceptions of alternative care



Aim: To engage with the public in an action-orientated project to explore peoples' perceptions of alternative care provision in Thailand.

Objectives: Facilitate focus groups involving parents of high school children, in order to establish their views of alternative care. During the focus groups we will also present the findings from the research with children and parents and explore any changes in the parent's perceptions towards alternative care.

4. Sharing their narratives



Aim: A key aim of the project is to share the findings in order to inform practice and policy:

Objectives: A project report will be published in print and on a website. We will write academic articles. The key findings will be developed into accessible formats; illustrated essays and a short film. The project will finish with public workshops on alternative care, to be held in both Thailand and the UK.

There are an estimated 2.7 million children around the world who are growing up without their parents in residential care arrangements. Much of the existing research on alternative care has had a focus on measuring children's developmental outcomes. There are fewer studies that seek to understand the experiences of the children and their families. It is important to learn from people's narratives as they have the potential to shift public perceptions, and also influence future policy and practice.

This research will aim to collect and share the experiences of children in Thailand growing up in settings such as orphanages, residential schools and temples. A child rights perspective underpins this research, with the premise that research about children's lives needs to include children's voices.

The project has been planned and developed with valuable input from colleagues across the child welfare sector in Thailand and with colleagues who have an interest in alternative care across the world. This collaborative approach will continue, and we will develop an advisory group to meet regularly at Thammasat.

This project is kindly supported by the Martin James Foundation. It is a collaboration between Thammasat University and the University of Bath in the UK. The research team will be based in the Department of Social Policy and Development at Thammasat University in Bangkok. The project starts in October 2019.



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