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Book Review

Residential child and youth care in a developing world Volumes 1-4

By Tuhinul Islam and Leon Fulcher [Editors]

Publisher: CYC-Net Press

ISBN: 978-1-928212-21-8 (2016), 978-1-928212-24-9 (2017), 978-1-928212-37-9 (2018) and 978-0-6399718-7-2 (2021)

Years of Publication: 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2021

Reviewed by: Jennifer Brooker

Melbourne Polytechnic

Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World (2016 – 2020) is a unique insight into global residential child and youth care practice, which emphasises that the usually negative Western literature perspective that many of us read about is not the experience of the majority of those involved in care, whether as participants or workers. Rather, we are offered glimpses into residential care practices in geographies that are often unfamiliar and not often included in the surrounding discourse.

The editors, Islam and Fulcher (2021, p14) use Edmond's (2000; 2009) definition of residential child and youth care as '[a]ll ... living and learning environments (that) operate with 24-hour, activity-based life-space care and education, 7 days a week for specified periods of time – whether measured by cohort, semester, term, season or year', to present us with 71 case studies in this four-volume series. Divided according to the FIFA Football Confederation regions, each volume is distinct in its focus:

Volume 1: Global Perspectives (2016) – highlights the tensions created when western child and youth care systems, policies and practices are imposed onto non-western nations (18 case studies).

Volume 2: European Perspectives (2017) – the differences historically between western (institutions) vs eastern (community-based and



extended family) European practices in residential child and youth care (18 case studies).

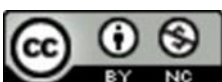
Volume 3: Middle East and Asia (2018) – how the impact of warfare, political instability and natural disasters has shaped residential care for children and young people in that region (25 case studies).

Volume 4: African perspectives (2020) – the important role of families and the impact of colonisation on how children and young people are cared for (19 case studies).

A unique collection of stories about resilience, triumph, and turbulence, this series allows the reader to pick and choose a country of interest or to read about a region from cover to cover. Highlighting the local and international standards, similarities, and differences in care options available to families, children and young people around the world, this series provides a fascinating overview and comparison. We are presented with a broader understanding of the concept of residential care that is often not available to those beyond a nation's borders, and, more importantly, runs contrary to the main Western literature perspective. Rather, we learn that in the developing world, community-based care is the most dominant form of residential child and youth care across the world.

Every contributor was asked to consider the following questions when writing their submission, creating a baseline that provides the reader with consistency in the information presented:

- What does child protection and youth welfare policy mean for children and young people where you live?
- What is the history of residential child and youth care practices where you are, and what values and aims operate within these places?
- Why do children and young people end up in out-of-home care where you are?
- What types of residential child and youth care are available?
- How many children and young people are in out-of-home care where you live and how many kinds of out-of-home care placements might be found there?
- What are the physical environments of residential child and youth care institutions or group homes like and what are the routines and rhythms of a typical day in the life of children or youth in care in these places?
- Think about a life story of a typical care leaver for a few moments and then ask yourself: what experiences did that child or young person go through while in care from the first hour of his or her first admission right through to a year after leaving care?
- What good child and youth care practices might others learn from what is happening in your places(s) in the world?
- Looking ahead, what are your thoughts on the future for residential child and youth care where you live – including hopes, fears, and challenges?



Presented uniformly, each volume follows the same format, of a preface, an introduction to the volume written by the editors, case studies written by a guest writer associated with residential child and youth care in that country, and a concluding chapter presenting a final overview of the volume, also written by the editors. Each chapter begins with an abstract, an introduction, and the author's contextual response to the eight questions posed by the editors, concluding with questions for small group discussion and reflective thinking, with the aim of furthering the dialogue and discourse prompted by each chapter. An author biography is also included.

Capturing some of the challenges and changes faced by those involved in child and youth residential care, the reader becomes aware of the history, cultural values and traditions that shape the care and education of children in each country, as well as the key issues impacting the identities of care leavers. Highlighted is the fact that care is everywhere – homes, orphanages, hostels, schools, centres, residential colleges, refugee camps, institutions - and is provided for a variety of reasons, including supporting families through the provision of education and care for a specific period of time.

Throughout the series we are also shown the significant value of those working with children and young people in residential care. Islam and Fulcher refer to them constantly as *influential healers and helpers in the young person's life*. Responding and intervening pro-actively and immediately to what is in front of them, residential care workers teach those in their care new ways of acting and experiencing the world around them. The inspiring stories found within the various case studies counter and remove the stigma and discrimination Western literature often imposes upon the system and those within it.

As a result of this series my own understanding of the provision of residential care for children and young people has broadened beyond my Western experiences. As a trainer to the industry in Victoria, Australia, this is very important, in providing global alternatives that workers I train rarely learn about or experience. This information will help to shape my own teaching in the sector. It has also provided a springboard for my own research into those who provide statutory care for children and young people around the world.

I urge you to read this series and be prepared to be challenged about what residential care looks like globally, and how it could be delivered from a more positive perspective in the West. I then encourage you to create a dialogue about the options presented to you in *Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World (2016 – 2020)* and how that information could be used to challenge the traditional western residential care system, enabling more positive outcomes for the children and young people who reside there.



About the reviewer

Based in Melbourne, Australia, and a leader in youth worker education, Dr Jennifer Brooker currently trains Victorian Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) workers in the mandated qualification required to work in the sector. A Senior Research Officer at the University of Southern Queensland, as well, she continues her many years of research and education with the youth sector around the world, providing training development and project management for those who work with and for the world's young people.

The publisher (CYC-Net Press) supplied copies of volumes 1-4 of this book for review.

