
by

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Deakin University
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I am the author of the thesis entitled *Child Sponsorship NGOs: Origins, Evolution and Motives for Change.*

submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACFID</td>
<td>Australian Council for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADP</td>
<td>Area Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCCD</td>
<td>Child Centred Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>China Children’s Fund, later Christian Children’s Fund and then ChildFund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCS</td>
<td>Community Development Child Sponsorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>Children International</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Child Sponsorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFCS</td>
<td>Individual/Family Child Sponsorship</td>
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<td>IICS</td>
<td>Individual Institutional Child Sponsorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGDO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Development Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBA</td>
<td>Rights Based Approach</td>
</tr>
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<td>RBCS</td>
<td>Rights Based Child Sponsorship</td>
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<td>S.C.F.</td>
<td>Save the Children Fund (UK)</td>
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## Working Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS (Child Sponsorship)</th>
<th>An act of regular, often long-term giving for the benefit of identifiable children, youth or their communities in an exchange-based relationship.</th>
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<tr>
<td>IICS (Individual/institutional Child Sponsorship)</td>
<td>A sponsorship model that typically links individual donors to individual children, for individual support, such as in schools, orphanages and institutions. Often children are supported in isolation from their communities or families, or without directly assisting the child’s communities or families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFCS (Individual/Family Child Sponsorship)</td>
<td>A sponsorship model that typically links individual donors to individual children, for individual support, with at least some project benefits accruing to the family of the child. In some instances this model involves direct payments to a family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCS (Community Development Child Sponsorship)</td>
<td>A sponsorship model that typically links individual donors to individual children, who benefit from pooled funding utilised for community development activities without necessarily singling out individual beneficiaries for special treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBCS (Rights Based Child Sponsorship)</td>
<td>A sponsorship model that typically links individual donors to individual children, who benefit from pooled funding utilised for a combination of community development and rights based advocacy, and, potentially, development of grassroots organisations and social movements with an emphasis on self-help, dignity and empowerment.</td>
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Section 1 - Introduction to Issues in Child Sponsorship

1.1 The CS phenomenon

Child sponsorship (CS) is a readily identifiable and somewhat controversial phenomenon in what might loosely be called the charitable or third sector. Waters (2001, p. 57) refers to ‘the genius of sponsorship’ while Coulter (1989, p. 1) has observed that ‘the wide-eyed child, smiling or starving, is the most powerful fundraiser for aid agencies.’ Writing in the mid-1990s, Smillie (1996, p. 99) described CS as ‘the bedrock of several of the older organisations’ and ‘one of the most enduring success stories in private aid agency fundraising.’ Further, Childreach national executive director Samuel Worthington (cited in Dorning 1998, paras 9-10) asserted in the late 1990s that CS ‘...has underwritten some of history’s most profound achievements in human quality of life.’ Worthington’s exuberant claim suggested that not only was CS effective as a fundraising device, it had led to remarkable, if not profound interventions in the Global South, used here as an umbrella term encompassing low income countries.

Although the extent of the impact of CS INGOs on the Global South is contestable, there can be little doubt that CS marketing has been a key ingredient in the rapid growth of several prominent international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) including World Vision, Save the Children, ChildFund, Compassion International and Plan international, organisations featured in varying degrees in the course of this thesis. For example, although the majority of Save the Children USA funding now originates from government grants, according to Dorning (1998, paras 10-11) Save the Children in the USA
had previously identified CS as the ‘single largest source of international private philanthropic revenue for health, educational and economic programs for poor children in the developing world’ resulting in ‘unparalleled benefits for the world’s poorest children.’ Further, CS has been credited with personalizing giving and making, as Fowler (1992) suggested, distant obligation seem immediate and impactful to citizens in the Global North.

The relational nature of one-to-one giving has long been highlighted as a positive feature of CS. Commenting on the Save the Children UK sponsorship program in the 1960s, one author and insider remarked on the personal link forged between some sponsors and adult beneficiaries, quoting a letter from a widow in a German refugee camp to her sponsor:

> It is thanks to you that I did not lose my courage... What a comfort to know that someone, however far away, knows your name and that of your children. Around here is no one, only misery, but your help is a solid rock beneath my feet. (Freeman 1965, p. 142)

Emphasising the importance of one-to-one aid, such stories emphasise the credibility of a fundraising mechanism that prioritises charity, good will, and global gift giving on a personal level in which recipients are vulnerable, grateful, known and identifiable. Taking an opposing but not overly estranged view, Dellios (1998, para 1) has described CS as one of the most ‘seductive’ philanthropic devices conceived, a conclusion that resonates for many critics of CS INGOs whose views will be explored further in Section 5 of this thesis.
Notably, CS is inseparably linked to notions of child saving - a philanthropic device that has long been a feature of western charity. Eglantyne Jebb, a co-founder of Save the Children, used the same swaddling-clothed child for the Save the Children Fund that had been created in 1419 for the Foundling Hospital in Florence where care was provided for the city’s destitute children (Freeman 1965, p. 139). Jebb herself astutely observed that, ‘The only international language in the world is a child’s cry’ (Jebb and Save the Children Australia 2008, p. 17). Perhaps for this reason, the widespread dissemination of a note by the founders of Foster Parents Plan for Children in Spain (later Plan International), found pinned to a small child by either journalist John Langdon-Davies or relief volunteer Eric Muggeridge during the Spanish civil war in 1937, was particularly effective. One version reads: ‘This is José. I am his father. When Santander falls I shall be shot. Whoever finds my son, I beg him to take care of him for my sake’ (cited in Mittleman & Neilson 2011, p. 371). This emotive, brief request was repeated often by the early founders of Plan International and contains several common elements of CS marketing including urgency, appeal to paternal or maternal instinct, lost innocence and a sense of very personal need. Though the context of civil war is rarely a feature of modern CS advertising, the appeal for compassion, urgent action and child-oriented support is.

As a formula, the combination of child-centred, urgent appeals in advertising has proven remarkably effective. Consequently, Brehm and Gale (2000, p. 2) noted after a period of unprecedented growth in the sector, that organisations that ran CS programs and utilised CS-based fundraising strategies, ‘report a year-on-
year increase in both the number of children sponsored and the amounts of money raised.’ For many individual donors unschooled in the complexities of foreign aid, CS functions as a readily understood, neatly packaged, and socially acceptable mechanism for donating. Because it emphasises children, for many potential donors it cuts across religious, ethnic and geographic divides. Much to the consternation of critics, in North America, Europe, the United Kingdom and Australia, INGOs that have invested in CS as a key marketing tool are amongst the largest private aid agencies in terms of annual funds raised and disbursed to developing countries.

Such has been the growth of CS that in 2009 the number of children in the world who were sponsored was estimated at between eight and twelve million, and the subsequent flow of funds may have exceeded US$3.1 billion (Wydick et al. 2009, p. 1). By such accounts it is possible that over the past two decades CS has generated international transfers in excess of US$50 billion via a mechanism that has attained a degree of virtuosity among many hundreds of thousands of sponsors. Between 1992 and 1996 alone, Americans donated more than $850 million to four American CS INGOs, Save the Children, Christian Children’s Fund, Childreach and Children International (Anderson 1998c, para 136) The incredible success of CS as a fundraising tool led one journalist to observe that ‘…charity officials acknowledge that nothing ever has been found to raise money more effectively than the face of a child…’ with the weakness being that CS ‘…is far more effective as a fundraising tool than as a reliable vehicle for delivering benefits to sponsored youngsters’ (Dellios 1998, paras 15-18).
It is not surprising that the international sponsorship of children should attract the attention of Hollywood, with a motion film released in 2000 starring Jack Nicholson. In *About Schmidt*, Jack Nicholson plays the role of a retired actuary who is dissatisfied with life and somewhat socially inept, yet able to reveal how he feels through letter writing to Ndugu, an African boy he sponsors for $22 a month through Plan. Although the film does not explicitly promote CS it has been described harshly in *The Guardian* as ‘giving the kiss of life to a flawed charitable format previously on the wane.’ (Siegle 2008, para 4) Considering the very personal content of the letters to Ndugu, and their lack of cultural sensitivity, it is perhaps fortunate that the fictitious boy was illiterate and in all likelihood unable to read Schmidt’s letters. In this instance CS is a vehicle of redemption for a disenfranchised, materialistic American surrounded by broken relationships, who is seeking meaning and purpose for the grand sum of $22 per month. Moderately successful at the box office, the film is more an exploration of ageing and a quest for significance than it is a promotional for CS. Implicit however for critics of CS is the material wealth, selfishness and ignorance of the sponsor, contrasted with the remoteness, poverty and helplessness of the child.

1.2 Towards a definition of CS

What exactly is CS? For such commonly used terms, ‘child sponsorship’ and ‘child sponsor’ are infuriatingly difficult to define using formal dictionary sources. For example, while the *Australian Macquarie Dictionary* (2005, p. 258) acknowledges the existence of ‘child abuse’, ‘child bashing’, ‘child labour’ and ‘child molesters’, there is no recognition of the hundreds of thousands of individuals who call and have historically called themselves ‘child sponsors’. In
its list of phrases and combinations the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (2002, p. 393) mentions ‘childcare’ however similarly excludes references to child sponsor or child sponsorship while listing a large range of unsavoury terms. Both the *Macquarie Dictionary* and *Shorter Oxford Dictionaries* acknowledge the existence of sponsors in similar terminology to the 1933 version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1933, p. 659) which is helpful in describing a sponsor as ‘1. One who answers for an infant at baptism; a godfather or godmother’ and ‘2. One who enters into an engagement, makes a formal promise or pledge, on behalf of another; a surety.’ Unfortunately such definitions imply awareness of religious practices without making the connection to sponsorship as a non-religious philanthropic device.

It is remarkable that few, if any dictionaries consulted in the research for this thesis deem it important to recognise a unique group of people who undertake the financial support of apparently poor children in geographically remote places via INGOs. The term ‘sponsor’ seems to have originated in the mid 17th Century (as a noun), while the verb dates from the late 19th century. *Spondere*, a Latin word, means to ‘*promise solemnly*’ (*Oxford Dictionaries 2014*). Sponsors thus include corporations that financially support events, individuals who promise to donate to friends who are fundraising, and relatives who undertake financial support for a family member or friend. Older English dictionaries refer to sponsoresses, and note use of the term in the 1848 Kingsley Saint’s Tragedy where it states ‘It knits them unto me, and me to them, that bond of sponsorship’ (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1933, p. 659). Particular importance in considering the etymology of the word is the way it was used to describe the carefully
planned and orchestrated linking of a child to an adult at baptism or Roman Catholic confirmation. This was ultimately for the benefit of children, functioning as it did to improve their chances in life, typically by linking them to powerful friends, family members or adults able to provide care in addition to that of a parent.

Academic sources also rarely attempt to define CS, perhaps because the term is so widely used and so pervasive, that it seems obvious. It is noteworthy that the spectrum of child sponsors includes adults, children, families, social groups or organisations. In Australia it is not uncommon for a whole class of primary or secondary school children to sponsor a child, or for that matter a church or business. Although sponsors do tend to be materially advantaged, they are not exclusively located in industrialised countries. And rather than being limited to children aged less than 18, some sponsorships continue into young adulthood.

Cognizant of the lack of formal definitions in reputable dictionaries this thesis proposes the following working definition to inform forthcoming discussion:

An international child sponsor is an individual or entity that pledges ongoing support for disadvantaged children or young adults in geographically or sociologically distant realms. CS is identified as an act of regular, often long-term giving for the benefit of identifiable children, youth or their communities in an exchange-based relationship. CS INGOs are therefore organisations that facilitate links between donors and distant others, using individual children as the focal point of exchange.
The definition above has merit for several reasons. It acknowledges the historic concept of a pledge or promise of support, the power differential between sponsors and beneficiaries, the often though not exclusive international nature of support, the longevity of CS programs due to regular giving, and the paternalism inherent in the collective psyche of sponsors. Historically, sponsors have been referred to as ‘foster parents’ and ‘god-parents’ (Jebb 1922, Langdon-Davies 1938). Such a definition is inclusive of key types of sponsorship programs that will be proposed in Section 2 of this thesis. For example, it acknowledges the historic sponsorship of disadvantaged children in the UK and USA by more privileged citizens in those countries, just as it acknowledges the sponsorship of disadvantaged Indian children by the emerging Indian middle-class. However, it rightly excludes more formal individual scholarships and scholarship programs in which donors support beneficiaries less personally and with criteria other than poverty and disadvantage. It also recognises the historic importance of letter-writing, updates, and personal communication in CS programs that linked genetically unrelated children to benefactors. Importantly, the definition does not limit the type of assistance provided and is as inclusive of orphan care as it is of pooled funds for community development that potentially impacts an entire village or local area.

1.3 Negative portrayal of CS

A key point made in this thesis is that overwhelmingly negative portrayals of CS INGOs, stemming from journalistic exposes in the mid-1980s and 1990s, continue to inform public debate over CS efficacy and legitimacy, running counter to CS INGO claims that CS is life-changing and empowering. The result
for those interested in the topic is two prevailing narratives: one (perpetuated by CS INGOs themselves) positioning CS as mutually beneficial to donors and beneficiaries alike; the other (propagated by critics and disenfranchised journalists) bemoaning it as a cynical marketing ploy for a failed model of intervention that is dependent on the self-gratification of child sponsors and overly simplistic, if not harmful imaginings of the ‘other’. Critique that CS is expensive, breeds discontent, maintains dependence and fails to deal with underlying causes of poverty is common, as seen in the readily available *Rough Guide* (Wroe & Doney 2004, p. 86).

As befits scholarly enquiry, attention is given to both the merits and apparent failings of CS in this thesis. It is noted here that CS is often criticised as a prodigious fundraising mechanism marred by a seemingly entrenched ability to misrepresent poverty in the Global South, mislead sponsors, raise the cost of interventions (Anderson 1998b, Anderson 2008, Caritas 2014) and demean the dignity of those represented as poor (Dogra 2012). Ove (2013, p. 1) correctly observes that CS is a prominent fundraising technique for development efforts in the Global South and a ‘powerful apparatus for the conveyance of representations about the Global South, the North, and the relationship between the two.’ Notably, much of the contentious historic debate over CS fundraising has focussed on its truthfulness and the limited extent to which CS INGOs have portrayed developing country beneficiaries with respect and dignity (Mittelman & Neilson 2009, p. 63). Some have also questioned whether the formation of a relationship based on exchange of money ‘may perhaps be a source of dissonance in sponsors’ (Yuen 2008, p. 50). Further, the claim that small
monthly donations can significantly alter a child’s life have been contested and branded as dishonest (Tackett 1998, para 2).

While relationships based on the exchange of money may be a source of dissonance to some sponsors in CS programs that still strongly encourage letter writing and personal contact, another potential source of dissonance is the potentially harmful impact of singling out individuals for help. Commenting more broadly on the ethos that drives many Christian sponsors, Bornstein writes:

The irony of child sponsorship is that as much as child sponsorship links people across nations in transnational relationships of a global “Christian family”, it divides people locally and has immense potential to inspire jealousy.’ (Bornstein 2001, p. 609)

The success of CS fundraising has not been without even more pointed criticism. CS INGOs are said, especially in the 1980s, to have made repetitive, extensive, though not exclusive use of babies, starving children and graphic, emotive imagery of supplicant, helpless ‘others’ to elicit donations in a manner that gratifies donors (Smillie 1995, p. 136). This is especially important considering Smillie’s (2000, p. 121) claim that the CS format of marketing has emerged as ‘the pre-eminent lens through which a very large and growing number of Northern citizens view the South.’ It may be that at time of writing this is less the case than it was during the past 30 years however CS marketing continues to shape perceptions of poverty, disadvantage and appropriate solutions to Southern poverty in the donor countries, leading to concern that sponsorship advertising may ignore Northern complicity in the creation of
inequality (Plewes & Stuart 2007, p.24), portray the global South as needy, passive and childlike (Dogra, 2012) and compromise their potential as global citizenship educators (Tallon & Watson, 2014). Nevertheless, there are good examples of CS INGO’s engaging in effective development education activity and portraying children and the developing South in a more positive light (see Mittleman & Neilson, 2011).

Although there are numerous INGOs utilizing CS, a small number of them tend to be prominent in the Global North. For example, in 2007 the three largest Canadian CS INGOs generated ‘more than ten times as much money from the public as the three top non-sponsorship organisations’ (Plewes & Stuart 2007, p. 30). The situation in Australia, where World Vision is the largest INGO, is even more intriguing, not least because its corporate social responsibility advisor went on record to an Australian Parliamentary inquiry in 2007, stating that world Vision had ‘…tried to get out of child sponsorship a few times… it is just too popular’ (Family and Community Development Committee, Parliament of Victoria 2007, paras 25-29). World Vision Australia’s annual 2008-09 income was more than five times greater than the next largest INGO (ACFID 2010a) although for three years to 2012 annual income from CS fell by two per cent per year as a consequence of the Global Financial Crisis (McLeod 2012). In the year 2010-11, total international income for Save the Children, World Vision, Compassion, Plan, Children International, and Child Fund exceeded US$6 billion, at least US$2.5 billion of which derived from CS. Far from being a spent force, CS is a tool that has paved the way in some INGOs for rapid growth and leverage to access government grants (Maren 1997, p. 145), a sustainable
income stream, a more diversified funding base, and the consolidation of a small
number of INGOs into ‘super-donors’. The success of CS in mobilizing public
donations has elevated several CS INGOs (especially the early adopters) into
an elite category of fundraisers, an issue dealt with in Section 5 of this thesis.

1.4 Legitimacy of CS INGOs

Despite the ongoing nature of critique of CS, it is difficult to dispute the notion
that children are key to its enduring appeal. While there is a continuum of modes
for utilizing the funds raised through CS (from direct cash handouts to
beneficiaries, to larger community development programs and community
mobilization) the child as central to organisational identity has remained largely
intact over time. CS INGOs are held in high regard because they do work with
children. Consequently the reputations and identities of CS INGOs are
inextricably and profoundly linked to their role in child-saving and child-rescue.
The nobility of such work is almost beyond reproach in the Global North.
Bornstein (2003, p. 7) goes so far as to assert that children serve INGOs as
symbols of world harmony, seers of truth and embodiments of the future. While
positioning them as seers of truth may appear at odds with claims that CS
infantilises the Global South, it certainly seems the case that children in donor
countries often function as neutral symbols of innocence and harmony.
Sponsored children have been utilised as tools for generating international
understanding and friendships among school children since the 1920s (Tallon &
Watson 2014, p.299)
The emphasis of CS INGOs on children and their needs has legitimised and depoliticised INGO activities historically. It is argued by Manzo (2008, p. 632) that the iconography of childhood expresses institutional ideals and key humanitarian values of solidarity, impartiality, neutrality and humanity. For Christians the act of sponsorship is of deeper significance; it can affirm faith through demonstration of charity and goodwill, enabling them to ‘find a way to actively enact their faith; the compassion one feels...is actually the voice of God speaking to Christians to act’ (Yuen 2008, p. 46). Receiving help may also be spiritually significant, regardless of one’s faith. Bornstein (2001, p. 599) relays the words of Albert, a boy who had been sponsored in Zimbabwe and interviewed as an adult: ‘then came the sponsor and everything looked up...the Lord came to my rescue in the form of a sponsor and He was there as a provider.’ In this way sponsorship may be seen as a god-like act, insofar as a powerful and benevolent force in the Cosmos reaches down to assist the poor. Sponsors may become vessels of God, or at least God-like actors whose relative wealth equates to remarkable personal powers to mediate in matters of poverty and disadvantage. Rather than situate the actions of sponsors in self-interest, Rabbitts (2014, p. 293) calls for a ‘richer and more dynamic’ reading of the motivations and impacts of sponsor giving, emphasising the question of whether CS can open more radical engagements between the Global North and Global South.

A more robust approach to evaluating the legitimacy of INGOs will be explored in the final section of this thesis however it is argued here that assessment of worth must move beyond private or public perception, acknowledge cultural
norms and values, and involve additional judgments based on perceptions of accountability, representativeness and performance (Lister 2003, p. 3). Although it may reveal western managerial culture to say so, credible CS INGOs will arguably enable upward accountability from beneficiaries and demonstrate in a transparent way that money is spent prudently to maximise impact on beneficiaries rather than to serve the needs of INGO staff and its public image. In part such an understanding of legitimacy has been foundational to past critique. In his scathing journalistic exposé of the domestic sponsorship program of Save the Children USA, journalist Michael Maren (1997, pp. 144-47) argued that, ‘The total of the sponsors dollars that actually went in grants to field programs was... less than 50%.’ Sharing this concern with cost efficiency, the 1993 *Human Development Report* (UNDP, p. 89) singled out CS INGOs for reprimand, warning that by nature they ‘...have to spend much of their time collecting copious quantities of personal information about the sponsored children and employ large teams of ‘social workers‘ for this.’ Although this warning did not reflect awareness of emerging diversity in the CS sector it nonetheless flagged increasing concern that legitimacy should be linked to measures of cost-effectiveness (in itself an interesting point to be made by a UN agency).

Fowler (1997, p. 188) asserts that demonstrating satisfactory levels of achievement is the first step on the legitimacy ladder. This raises the thorny issue of legitimacy for what? If there are indeed different types of CS organisations could it be that legitimacy will be measured by different outcomes? Perhaps an important step is reframing children as active agents of change
rather than passive recipients worthy of compassion. Plewes and Stuart (2007, p. 30) acknowledge that there has been a shift in CS fund-raising, ‘from miserable, starving children’ to ‘picking winners’, a view partially echoed by Cameron and Haanstra (2008, p. 1478) who observe a growing preference for images of self-reliant and active people in the marketing of INGOs. In part this is due to strict codes of conduct designed and embraced by leading CS INGOs as they have responded to critique. Although not specifically commenting on its own advertising, the Save the Children UK website (2012, para 9 appx.) acknowledges that coverage of famines in the 1980s ‘...perpetuated negative and destructive stereotypes of people in developing countries, who were seen as dependent and helpless.’ Clearly CS INGOs have been especially adept in utilising emotive images of children to the extent that within the aid sector there is a strong perception historically that they have undermined their roles as development educators.

While a common refrain is that CS organisations are prone to serving their product rather than their purpose, it is argued in this thesis that many are engaged in critical self-reflection though are wary of doing so publicly or of publishing their results. Having worked personally for a brief time in a small CS INGO, the thesis is essentially an attempt to answer a personal question - namely, does CS have a role in the global quest to improve child wellbeing and reduce poverty and if so, in what form? Consequently, this question of efficacy and legitimacy is paramount at a personal and collective level. On this note Harris-Curtis (2003, p. 1) observes that ‘The reality for NGOs today is that they are increasingly challenged by the media, public, governments and academia.’
Crucially, this thesis will argue that several leading CS INGOs have evolved considerably over time in response to questions over their legitimacy and in an attempt to maximise program impacts.

Although he was not commenting specifically on CS INGOs, Racelis (2007, p. 203) has pointed out that the ‘halo of saintliness’ around INGOs is under threat. Arguably, this has been the case for CS INGOs for much longer, with substantial critique in the *New Internationalist* dating to the 1980s and further condemnation evident in to the *Chicago Tribune’s* investigative reporting in 1998. Due to such negative media exposure and finger-pointing by other INGOs, to some extent CS INGOs have been cast in the role of the black sheep of the INGO sector. But can it be demonstrated that they are thinking, learning organisations committed to improvement? Have leading CS INGOs transitioned from a mind-set of aid for individual welfare, to development as delivery and beyond to development as leverage? (Edwards et al. 1999, p. 15) Is CS an impediment to change or a vehicle for innovation? In the second decade of the 21st Century, can CS be defended as a credible fundraising and programming tool? For what?

The typology of CS proposed in Section 2 points out that there is significant diversity in the CS sector and that while many small CS INGOs without benefits of scale, retain traditional sponsorship models, some of the leading organisations have transitioned significantly. In keeping with Fowler’s ‘onion-ring’ strategy for INGOs it seems clear that large CS INGOs such as World Vision, do have a credible ‘core’ of projects and successive ‘skins’ or ‘layers’ of important activity including research, evaluation, advocacy, campaigning and
public education, with a commitment to human rights and structural reform (Fowler 2002, p. 22). Notably, Whaites (1999, pp. 410-412) describes World Vision in its early days as ‘missionaries fighting Marxism’ whereas by the 1990s it had become a diverse partnership exhibiting a shift away from a ‘homogenous set of evangelical core beliefs’ to an organisation committed to community development and poverty reduction.’ A challenge for critics is to acknowledge such change while identifying the emergence of new issues and challenges. Plan International for example may be seen as an organization committed to a theory of change model in which ‘Capacity changes of young people and duty bearers are expected to trigger citizenship changes whereby young people become aware of their power and use this to effectively participate in decision-making processes’ (Williams & Kantelberg 2011, p. 2).

Scholarly scrutiny of CS interventions has been very limited and there is an acute shortage of quality research regarding the impact of historic interventions. Chicago Tribune journalists noted in 1998 that CS INGOs were generally reluctant to commission independent evaluations of their projects and impacts due to cost (Dorning 1998, para 31 appx.). In their attempt at a literature review, Brehm and Gale (2000, p. 1) observed that there was ‘…a scarcity of empirical research-based evidence about the impact of child sponsorship on recipient families and communities.’ Unfortunately, the situation remains little changed at the time of writing. Available information about CS typically falls into the three broad categories of easily accessible journalistic exposé used with nauseating repetitiveness by critics, frugally released and carefully selected in-house publications (including consultancy reports), and a fragmented scholarly
literature limited by a historic reluctance of CS INGOs to open their doors to external scholarly scrutiny. Despite some exceedingly rare efforts to quantify the impact of sponsorship interventions (see Wydick et al. 2013), and a small number of contributions from anthropologists (see Bornstein, 2001 & 2003), CS interventions are characterized by an abundance of anecdotal, often negative accounts dating to the 1980s. Such accounts have continued to inform the widespread criticisms of CS that emerged when the *New Internationalist* magazine addressed the topic in several issues during the 1980s (see for example Stalker, 1982). The lack of a coherent body of literature of CS makes it especially difficult to preface a Thesis on CS with a detailed literature review!

Clearly, while CS is historically maligned by community development practitioners and journalists alike, CS has largely eluded concerted scholarly inquiry over roughly one hundred years of existence to the point where, at the time of writing, definitions are scarce, its origins are largely forgotten and few journal articles of substance are evident based on empirical studies or in-depth analysis. For this reason the author of this thesis has co-edited the first major text on the topic. *Child Sponsorship: Exploring Pathways to a Brighter Future*, was published in September 2014 by Palgrave Macmillan UK. Various contributions to this book (especially on the origins of sponsorship, a typology of sponsorship programs, and the future of CS) are informed by this thesis and have been written simultaneously with a preference for publishing in the literature prior to submitting the thesis.
1.5 Thesis contents and significance

Meadows (2003, p. 109) asks, ‘Does Child Sponsorship ever go wrong? Of course. Is that a good enough reason to abandon the concept?’ It is perhaps the key question that underpins the researcher’s reason for writing this thesis. However, in attempting to make a significant contribution to the literature the researcher proposed four key goals. These consisted of:

a) development of a typology of CS funded activity (necessary to advance discussion of the phenomenon)

b) use of archival research to clarify the historic origins of CS (necessary to correct the claims of competing organisations and provide a reference point for the evolution of CS that would follow in the 20th century)

c) contextualisation of historic critique of CS (necessary to account for the emergence and sources of critique, and ongoing mismatch of historic critique to current models of intervention)

d) construction of a case study exploring stakeholder perception of a current CS program operating on a traditional model of one-to-one support of children (valuable because few if any such case studies of small CS programs exist)

As tends to happen with research, additional questions and greater clarity emerged as the research process unfolded. Four key questions came to
underpin the archival research. When did CS emerge as a fundraising mechanism for humanitarian aid or poverty reduction in the international aid regime? What was the historical context of the use of early CS? How were funds used to impact children? And finally, what tensions existed in the early CS programs? The value of these questions is self-evident. At the time of writing, the genesis of CS is unclear within CS INGOs and without. In fact, CS appears to have been pioneered as early as 1919 by Save the Children and the Society of Friends in post World War One Europe and is rooted in the Christian tradition of God-parenting.

An additional four key research questions underpin the fieldwork component of research contributing to the case study. Firstly, what merits and disadvantages of CS are highlighted by youth, teachers and administrators impacted in a current CS program? Secondly, are the merits and disadvantages of CS highlighted by stakeholders consistent with broader critique in the literature? Additionally, what is the impact of the sponsorship program on the sustainability and capacity of the school system it partners with? Finally, is the intervention sufficiently impactful on children, their families and communities to justify continuation of the IICS model or should the CS INGO evolve its intervention approach? If so, what recommendations may be made for programmatic improvement?

The CS model chosen as the subject of the case study in Section 6 of this thesis impacts approximately 9,000 children, predominantly in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. For the purpose of this thesis it is referred to as ChildHelper, a fictitious
name used out of respect for the organisation’s wish to remain unidentified in the literature. At the time of writing, poor children are selected by ChildHelper for varying amounts of sponsorship disbursed to education providers (not to children or their families) to cover the costs associated with private education (either day schooling, boarding school, special education in boarding schools or costs associated with higher education). The large majority of children and youth attend a local primary or secondary school as day scholars.

The researcher is a student of Deakin University and a former staff member of the CS provider, having worked for the organisation for one year in 2003. The researcher also served the organisation as a volunteer company director for several years after cessation of formal employment, applied for and received AUD$10,000 research grant from the CS organisation. From the perspective of ChildHelper, the research reported in this thesis is foundational to an extensive review of the organisation’s CS program and comes at a time when external review was considered essential to programmatic change. This is consistent with Hulme’s (2000, p. 80) observation that external impact assessments are valuable because they provide ‘...more information about programme effectiveness than is available from the routine accountability systems of implementing organisations.’

Hulme (2000 p. 80) has observed that ‘impact assessment studies’ are now often required by donor INGOs and, ‘in consequence, have become an increasingly significant activity for recipient agencies.’ Though this may be the case with many large INGOs, it is noteworthy that ChildHelper had not been a
recipient of funds from donor agencies and had not had a significant external
evaluation or impact study during its approximately forty-year history. Perhaps
as a consequence of this ‘isolation’ sponsorship practice within the organisation
has remained stable over several decades and to a large extent has remained
focussed on individual child support in an institutional or school setting.

Rather than evaluate whether the organisation’s program objectives were being
met (briefly summarised as helping children overcome poverty through
educational support), or what the long-term impact was on children in terms of
personal development, future employment and community leadership, the case
study in Section 6 sets out to establish weaknesses and strengths of the CS
programme from the perspective of beneficiaries, family members, school staff
and administrators using the principle of convergent validity (simply, validation of
findings using different methods of data gathering). The researcher’s goal was to
explore a variety of perspectives on program impact. Subsequently, a mixed
methodology approach was negotiated which sought to identify and explore
various perspectives on the potential impacts of individual sponsorship on
children, their families and community, including the education system in which
they were educated. To support this end, ChildHelper offered the researcher
access to program staff, children and partner schools in India and Nepal for
three months in 2011.

The structure of the remainder of the thesis is as follows. Section 2 uses a
literature review to propose a typology of CS INGO funded activity. Arguing that
debate over CS is constrained by lack of a typology of CS, and that further
discussion about it would be ill-considered without clarity over types of CS funded activity, the section proposes four types of CS funded program. To some extent the typology reflects David Korten’s generations of INGO (see De Senillosa 1998, pp. 2-3), beginning with welfare and progressing to sustainable systems development.

Having outlined four key types of CS funded activity, Section 3 reviews the research methodology employed by the researcher, noting that the thesis makes use of both archival research and a case study requiring fieldwork in India and Nepal. It is interesting that to date there has been a lack of consensus on which organization pioneered CS, a matter dealt with in Section 4 which reports on findings from archival research in the Save the Children collection held in the Cadbury Collection, University of Birmingham. Although ChildFund and other organisations have claimed responsibility for the origin of one-to-one giving, Section 4 demonstrates that the origins of CS as a fundraising device for NGOs, can be traced back readily to 1919, in a joint sponsorship program run between the newly established Save the Children Fund in the UK, and the Society of Friends in Austria.

Section 5 seeks to document historic issues in CS programs through literature review, a task facilitated by reference to the proposed typology. The thesis then reports on a case study of the ChildHelper CS program found in Section 6. Written with historic critique in mind, the case study provides a narrative in which the researcher attempts to highlight the perceived benefits of, and tensions within a current CS program still operating with emphasis on one-to-one support,
drawing from the perspectives of sponsored youth, teachers, principals, church administrators and NGO staff. The case study is important because it provides a rare snapshot of a program little changed for thirty years, utilising a model of intervention largely abandoned by leading CS organisations. Few if any such studies exist in the literature.

Concluding the thesis, Section 7 unpacks the notion of legitimacy and proposes principles for ethical CS INGO conduct. Collectively, the various sections of this thesis call for a more nuanced and informed discussion of a fundraising phenomenon that has raised prodigious amounts of money for child welfare and direct service delivery and poverty reduction, yet which has often escaped adequate scholarly scrutiny.
2.1 The evolution of CS INGOs

Child Sponsorship (CS) is a vexing term. In common usage it refers to the selection of individual children who are paired with international sponsors for ongoing financial support (see Section 1 of this thesis for a working definition). However, it is apparent that CS can be viewed as either a fundraising mechanism or a method of intervention. Further, over time there has been significant evolution in CS interventions to the point that it is impossible to adequately engage in discussion without proposing a typology of CS interventions. To date much of the fragmented literature relating to CS has generalised about CS-funded interventions as if they are all much the same. However, it is evident that there has been significant evolution of leading CS INGOs and that informed debate requires an awareness of diversity in the sector. Having said this, it is not unreasonable to argue that in the era 1940 to 1980, CS INGOs often, though not exclusively, emphasized the support of individual children in institutions (especially orphanages and schools). Alternatively, they prioritized cash transfer and service delivery to disadvantaged children and families in the context of their communities or homes, largely in a quest to improve individual child welfare.

The broad distinction between assisting children in their homes or institutions was observed by Livezey (1981, p. 2) in the early 1980s. Referring to 26 USA based CS INGOs Livezey noted that ‘Some help children in institutional settings such as orphanages and schools. Others help children in their home settings.’ A
third distinction may be added; notably, for those organisations that used sponsorship funds for specialised medical treatment of individual children. For example, after World War Two Plan International provided opportunities for sponsors to provide medical assistance to disabled children, some of whom were flown to America for surgery (Dijsselbloem et al. 2014, p. 123). Though it was established later, Children International’s foray into sponsorship began in the mid-1970s when American donors were mailed information about individual children and invited to sponsor surgery and treatment at the Mount of David Crippled Children’s Hospital. For as little as $10 per month, sponsors were able to contribute to surgeries (Cook & Guinn 2014, p. 193).

Support of children in orphanages, institutions and medical programs throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s remained a common feature of CS programs however CS for beneficiaries in home settings became more common with the passing of time. This typically involved direct handouts, service provision and cash transfers to children and their families for food, medicine and school needs. Maren (1997, p. 148) for example, describes direct cash provision by Save the Children in the USA to sponsored children or family members. Referring to the 1960s support of American Indian children as the ‘check-to-child days’ he cites the case of Delores Tootsie and Phyllis Wittsel who received $10 every three months to buy new shoes or school supplies. Sponsorship provided in this manner did not necessarily take place in the context of an institution or school though there is room to argue that the reservation system was a form of institutionalised if dysfunctional care.
Notably, the interventions discussed above were predicated on the idea that individual, disadvantaged children could and should benefit from targeted assistance (child welfare interventions, gift giving and direct service provision) rendered by powerful, external agents (INGOs) and their supporters or donors in affluent communities or countries. Each form of assistance prioritized ongoing funding for child welfare and family support. However, utilization of CS funding for orphan care, medical assistance and cash transfers to individuals or families would not remain the dominant modus operandi for several large CS INGOs. By the 1980s several leading CS organisations had begun experimenting with projects such as well digging, toilet provision, and introduction of new farming techniques to impact beneficiary communities.

Save the Children’s experimental work in the Dominican Republic in 1972 included road construction and water supply interventions and has been identified as the first project it initiated with a long-term community development focus (Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2014). At Save the Children USA this coincided with realization that ‘sending sponsorship donations directly to children and their families might not be the most effective way improve their lives’ (Dowd et al. 2014, p. 98). However, this type of work was often experimental rather than systemic and it would not be until the 1980s and 1990s that a small number of CS INGOs could claim to have a comprehensive programmatic approach that dealt with systemic or underlying causes of poverty.

The evolution from individual benefits, to family support and then community development, may be seen in the two case studies below, of ChildFund and
Plan International. However, before attempting to differentiate between CS programs and discuss their evolution over time, it is important to review the ‘notion’ of civil society and ‘development’ and their relevance to this thesis. In short, during the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s non-state, non-market actors (including CS INGOs) became the subject of intense scrutiny by academics and policy makers in the North who hastened to declare the breadth and importance of civil society, sometimes referred to as the Third Sector (UK), Not-For-Profit Sector (USA) or Voluntary Sector. Unfortunately however, civil society is such a broad and inclusive term that it has, amongst other things, been described as, ‘a notoriously slippery concept’ (Bebbington & Riddell 1997, p. 108). The 3rd edition of the Dictionary of Human Geography (Johnston et al. 1994, p. 68) defines Civil Society as:

That segment of the practices within a capitalist society which lie outside the sphere of production and the state… Relationships within civil society may involve divisions on a number of criteria, such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion and age.

Given the large number of actors within civil society and their inherent diversity, it is not surprising that it encompasses a wide variety of ‘organisations’ of which CS INGOs represent a tiny group. Civil society includes trade unions, cooperatives, schools, community and self-help groups, philanthropic organisations, churches, sports clubs, action groups, environmental organisations, humanitarian charities and so on. Hakikazi (2002) differentiates between for-profit and not-for-profit organisational associations and the
traditional three-way relationship between state, private sector and civil society. Although civil society is synonymous with ‘the public good’, deciding what constitutes public good is a subjective process influenced by underlying and often contradictory societal values. McIlwaine (1998a, p. 417) reminds readers that ‘The problem with defining civil society, however, lies in high levels of generalisation, and the failure to recognise the heterogeneity of groups present within it...’ CS INGOs are undoubtedly part of this and within CS there is considerable diversity.

Despite the presence of conflict and competition, an organised civil society sector was increasingly acknowledged in the 1990s as essential to effective, pro-poor service delivery, good governance and the flourishing of democracy. Foley and Edwards (1996, p. 39) argue that civil society had ‘...come to be seen as an essential ingredient in both democratization and the health of established democracies.’ Like civil society, non-governmental organisation (NGO) is a problematic term, largely because it too is so confusingly inclusive. However, the broad significance of NGOs within civil society is rarely disputed. Especially in countries where the state is perceived to be weak, corrupt, or ineffective, NGOs with a humanitarian or pro-poor imperative are entrusted with multiple roles including direct service provision, welfare activities, humanitarian capacity building and lobbying for good governance. To some extent they are now the ‘...de-facto partner in the establishment of global norms and standards, negotiating, influencing and proposing policy solutions to social public problems...' Jordan (n.d., p. 5). Edwards and Hulme (2002) have noted a maturation of support for NGOs as they transitioned from small-scale welfare
providers to the preferred channel for service provision. To some extent this
trend is explained by the emergence of neo-liberal ideals of outsourcing and
explicit recognition of the important role played by faith based organisations
(FBOs) from the 1980s.

The importance of NGOs as service providers is pronounced in some regions
and countries. In the context of Papua New Guinea it has been noted that
churches collectively provide approximately half of the country’s health services,
and co-manage some 40% of the primary and secondary education facilities.
They operate two of the nation’s six universities and train a large proportion of
the country’s teachers and health workers (Hauck et al. 2005, p. 5). Agg (2006,
p. 3) notes that in sub-Saharan African states adversely affected by structural
adjustments, church-based NGOs intervened to provide a significant proportion
of education and health related social services. Quoting Edwards and Hulme,
she points out that by the mid-1990s, NGOs provided 40-50 per cent of all
education services in Kenya, and 35% of health services. Similarly, NGOs
provided 40 per cent of health care provision in Ghana and 30 per cent in
Malawi (Agg 2006, p. 3).

An analysis of civil society ‘debate’ in the literature supports the claim that there
has been a tendency to give NGOs favoured status as ‘vehicles’ and ‘agents’ of
social development (Clark 1997, pp. 44-45), seen for example in publications
like the UNDP Human Development Report (1993) and World Bank’s World
Development Report (1997). NGOs have certainly proliferated. According to Agg
(2006) the number of NGOS by 1999 exceeded 45,000 however one must bear
in mind that in the mid-1990s the UNDP estimated that there were 2,500
development oriented NGOs in industrialised, western countries (Riddell & Robinson 1995, p. 2).

Popular wisdom and rhetoric of the 1980s and 1990s outlined by Riddell and Robinson (1995) amongst others, contended that NGOs with an international development and poverty alleviation focus (referred to here as INGOs) were perceived as being relatively cost-effective, innovative, flexible/responsive, objective, effective in reaching the very poor, efficient in service delivery, less corrupt, idealistic/altruistic, and better able to engage in genuine bottom-up development. This may not, however have been the case for many CS INGOs which were, during this time, frequently seen as cumbersome, inefficient and lacking a strong community development focus. Clarke (2003 pp.129-130) describes striking growth, noting that in 1980 INGOs funnelled $3.5 billion dollars from North to South, a figure that had grown to over $15 billion by 1999, proportionally representing about 21.6% of all aid at that time.

It has been said that by the 1960s the concept of development ‘...had been adopted by virtually all Christian denominations as the defining paradigm for mission.’ (Ryan in Clarke 2012, p. 19). However, it should be noted that this conceptual understanding of development blended human welfare, materialism and spiritual belief. FBOs have been described as adopting the prevailing development paradigm uncritically, simply adding knowledge of the Gospel to other things the poor lack (Myers 1999, p. 66). Further, rather than analyse the ‘... implicit hierarchy of 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' and the problems of power this invariably produces, Christian mission has often accepted development as a given, simply supplanting its 'material' measures with a
'spiritual’ dimension.’ (Ryan in Clarke 2012, p.19) FBOs therefore are not without their tensions. Kurti et al. (2005, pp. 72-75) argues that many of them:

operate within two parallel, sometimes conflicting, paradigms. One is the government and industry led world of international development with its measurable standards, criteria and accepted processes; the other is the community-led world of the church, mosque or synagogue, with its less tangible, values-based approach grounded on perceived fundamental truths. This tension impacts upon the way in which FBNGOs evaluate their own work and are evaluated by others.

Of course ‘development’ and ‘developing country’ are contested terms. Murphy (in Eade and Ligteringtin 2001, p. 60) points out that fifty years after US President Harry Truman’s 1949 ‘Four Points’ speech ‘...the very concept ‘development’ is coming under fierce scrutiny, its most basic premises and tenets fundamentally challenged from all points on the political spectrum...’ ‘Development’ has been increasingly framed in terms of the reduction of poverty, and more recently the introduction of democracy, equity, pluralism, and economic growth. Kaplan (1999, p. 4) warns that this political economy perspective with a social dimension is ‘...a radically simplistic rendition of a highly complex concept.’ An indeed it is. The idea of ‘development’ is prone to a subjective interpretation of societal ‘success’ and ‘failure’, or ‘backwardness’ and ‘progress.’
Some of the features and consequences of the modern development discourse are listed below and are borrowed from Kaplan (1999). For interest a third column has been added, relating to traditional child sponsorship in which one individual is matched to one donor.

*Figure 2a The Development Paradigm*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
<th>Traditional Child Sponsorship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Development can be created and engineered”</td>
<td>Projects and interventions are paramount</td>
<td>CS as a relational intervention and catalyst for change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development… is brought, to and for some, by others who presumably are more developed.”</td>
<td>Reinforces intellectual, moral and economic superiority of donors/consultants/technical advisors. Development becomes top-down. We learn little from them. Unequal exchange.</td>
<td>‘rich’ westerners help ‘poor’ others through sponsorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Development is done on behalf of third parties.”</td>
<td>Beneficiaries become subjects.</td>
<td>Sponsored children as passive, helpless subjects. Donors as powerful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Development practitioner… work(s) primarily out of the specifications of the world from which he/she has been sent.”</td>
<td>Project managers out of touch with local realities.</td>
<td>CS managers cocoon children in a new reality- providing refuge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Development is linear and predictable.”</td>
<td>Projects become inflexible, time bound, linked to finite resources.</td>
<td>$35 per week can lift a child out of poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Understanding will generate change.”</td>
<td>Beneficiary training is paramount. Culture, tradition, emotions become obstacles</td>
<td>Education and knowledge, especially formal schooling as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Development assumes a preferred culture or value system.”</td>
<td>Project success evaluated by norms of the donors.</td>
<td>Success measured by western care standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…subjects’ participation in the development project is vital.”</td>
<td>Participation is a means, not an end.</td>
<td>Subject participation is passive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Development assumes that a successful development intervention, or project, is replicable.”</td>
<td>Non-replicable projects judged harshly</td>
<td>Replication essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…the successful development project is sustainable…”</td>
<td>“If the effects of the intervention are not sustained, the project will be deemed to have been unsuccessful.”</td>
<td>Success measured in terms of individual impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The evaluation of the development interventions… is generally performed in terms of the ends stipulated in the project document…”</td>
<td>Evaluation is narrow, project based and ignores myriad other outcomes.</td>
<td>Evaluation rarely conducted- often anecdotal and short-term.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The transition in some leading CS INGOs to engagement with a community development paradigm is consistent with David Korten’s (1987) observation that INGOs can evolve through stages, becoming more sophisticated in their approach to poverty reduction over time. Korten broadly described the evolution of development oriented NGOs as following three stages or three distinct
generations, with possibility of a fourth, as seen in Figure 2b Korten’s Generations of INGO. Korten argued that development INGOs often began with a historic focus on the relief and welfare of individuals, delved into community development initiatives as they matured and realised that they needed to address localised causes of poverty, and then, if they were large enough, emphasised the need to address structural causes of poverty including governance. Loosely, we could argue that Plan International has passed through these stages and is now a fourth generation NGO although the extent to which it enhances strong people’s movements is unclear.

*Figure 2b Korten’s Generations of INGO*

| First generation NGO: emphasis on relief, welfare and rehabilitation activities. |
| Second generation NGO: emphasis on community development and localised poverty reduction. |
| Third generation NGO: emphasis on ‘sustainable systems development’ associated with broader programs, up-scaling, and contribution to regional or national development programs. |
| Possible Fourth generation NGO: arguably characterized by strong People’s or social Movements with emphasis on advocacy and rights. |

Source: Adapted from de Senillosa 1998, pp. 2-3

Rather than identifying generational leaps as Korten did, Clark (2003, p. 144) argues that ‘NGOs tend to broaden from one activity to encompass new ones rather than abandon the old entirely and jump to the new.’ This is certainly true in the case of Plan in Korea which maintained an orphan care program over decades while it experimented with and transitioned to social work for children, their families, and then eventually their communities. Considering the lack of
clean breaks in transitions, the generation’s model proposed by Korten should be used cautiously when applied to INGOs in general and CS INGOs in particular. Biggs and Neame (2002, pp. 34-35) observe that some NGOs in the Philippines actually moved away from political mobilization and embraced relief and welfare activities as a rational response to the threat of militarization. Thus, we see that Korten’s generations may work in reverse when survival of the organisation demands a more conservative approach. Further, the economic survival of an organisation and the realities of engaging with donor expectations may encourage some INGOs to combine elements of welfare and development in programming.

ActionAid is, at time of writing, arguably the most vocal western INGO involved in grassroots mobilisation and child rights. With a substantial and lucrative CS program viewed by some staff as an anachronism better consigned to the past, it balances an uneasy tension between fundraising imperatives (the enduring success of CS) and the knowledge that social justice hinges on advocacy and solidarity rather than charity. In keeping with Korten’s observations, ActionAid’s initial work focussed on CS-funded education for disadvantaged children. The sponsorship program began in 1972, and necessitated the collection of short profiles and photos of poor children for school fees, uniforms and equipment. In this sense ActionAid was a latecomer to the CS sector, but a determined one. Early fundraising success did however belie emergent tension.

Archer (2010, p. 612) comments that ‘...within a very short time, ActionAid’s field workers expressed concerns that this approach was ineffective and unjust.’ The
conclusion made by Action Aid staff was that they were helping needy children, but ignoring brothers, sisters and neighbours. According to Archer:

It was random and inequitable - but also it was ineffective. ActionAid was helping lots of individual children to access schools, but doing nothing to help the schools themselves - which were often in an appalling state. (Archer 2010, p. 612)

ActionAid responded by building better schools in the 1980s, stepping in as a service provider where states were not fulfilling their duties to citizens. In theory, this was to the benefit of all children in the community however provision of funding to schools was a form of direct service delivery with improvements still reliant on outside help, a situation that arguably undermined the responsibility of local government. Still, the move from child support to school support must be recognised in its context, as the beginning of a transition from a first to second generation development oriented INGO.

Review of ActionAid’s early work has led to mixed findings. Internal evaluation of 16 years of ActionAid school-building in Kenya found much-improved school facilities yet little evidence of improved access for poor children or increased academic performance. The self-imposed reviews revealed a perverse impact of better school infrastructure, namely that in some cases ‘poor children were more systematically excluded, especially when schools with good infrastructure imposed fee hikes’ (Archer 2010, p. 612). ActionAid’s experiment with non-formal education in the 1990s, and provision of pro-poor community schools with flexible curriculum and hours was an admirable attempt to ensure that the
poorest benefited from expenditure however, for forward thinking staff this too was limited and was still clearly failing to address the underlying causes of poverty. ActionAid was providing useful services but in doing so it was not dealing with issues such as government corruption, government inertia, community ignorance of their rights and lack of capacity for local stakeholders to demand change. For key staff in ActionAid it became clear over time that impactful, sustainable outcomes were needed to ‘enable communities to demand quality education as a basic right and to enable governments to effectively deliver quality services’ (Archer 2010, p. 612). This may be seen loosely as progression towards Korten’s third generation with a more recent emphasis on up-scaling and the establishment of people’s movements (rightsholders) empowered to leverage change from institutions and government (duty-bearers).

A challenge for an organisation like ActionAid, apart from the political nature of engendering grassroots advocacy for systemic change, is not to devalue its previous work. Although he was not commenting on CS INGOs specifically, Clark (2003, pp. 145-46) illustrates the shifting focus of INGO activities (see Figure 2c). He asserts, ‘I am not suggesting that NGOs are all making the same linear thought progression and are simply at different stages, or that the earlier stages are less important...’ However, he is explicit in urging that they work with civil society at local and national levels to address social injustice, weak institutions, and poor governance. By Clark’s logic, CS INGOs devoted exclusively to individual child welfare work run the risk of being seen as immature and unsophisticated at best, or wasteful and ineffective at worst,
perpetuating low-yield, low-impact welfare activities. The consequence is a sizeable question mark against their legitimacy within the INGO sector and academia, if not within the broader public.

Critically, it is possible to cultivate an aura of public legitimacy within the general public while undermining ones’ legitimacy among fellow INGOs. A further discussion of legitimacy will be used in the conclusion to this thesis however suffice it to say that a technical approach to evaluating the legitimacy of INGOs often involves comparative judgments based on perceptions of accountability, representativeness and performance (Lister 2003, p. 3). For CS INGOS in particular there are issues of accountability to beneficiaries and partners, donors, fellow INGOs and the large number of small donors who support individual children. Even the concept of achievement can be subjective. Fowler (1997, p. 188) asserts that demonstrating satisfactory levels of achievement is the first step on the legitimacy ladder however critically, achievement in provision of social welfare services is now undervalued compared to achievements in broad-based poverty reduction, advocacy or broader service delivery. To some extent the shifting focus of NGO activities shown in below is both a quest for impact (achievement) and for legitimacy. In the context of CS, we might well add a column after ‘Poor Individuals’ titled ‘Poor Families’, to reflect emphasis on family helper programs.
Figure 2c Shifting Focus of NGO Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Strategy</th>
<th>Poor Individuals</th>
<th>Poor communities</th>
<th>Poor societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Relief and Welfare</td>
<td>Self-help</td>
<td>Equity, building institutions for inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation goals</td>
<td>Meeting basic needs</td>
<td>Participation, sustainable poverty reduction</td>
<td>Rights-based development, voice, and empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local partners</td>
<td>Charities; missionaries</td>
<td>Community-based organisations, local NGOs</td>
<td>Civil society, progressive people in power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local bases</td>
<td>Orphanages, refugee camps, schools</td>
<td>Village-and slum-level institutions, co-ops</td>
<td>Civil society networks from local to global levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of problems</td>
<td>Nature, wars, ill-fortune</td>
<td>Local elites, resource poverty, etc.</td>
<td>Social justice, weak institutions, bad governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical instruments</td>
<td>Needs assessment, cost-effective business plan</td>
<td>Participation-from project planning to implementation and evaluation</td>
<td>Advocacy to ensure civil society views are reflected in national development plans, ‘scaling-up’ innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key allies</td>
<td>Local religious institutions</td>
<td>Community leaders, existing community organisations</td>
<td>National and international media, unions, progressive politicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key INGO strengths</td>
<td>Fund-raising, logistical skills</td>
<td>Local knowledge, listening skills</td>
<td>Persuasion, access to influence, linking skills (from bottom to top, North to South, academic to practitioner)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Clark 2003, p. 145

While mindful of the ‘discourse’ of development, and the objections of post-colonial theorists relating to the construction of poverty, for the purpose of this thesis a ‘developing country’ is simply classified as one with low levels of Human Development (evidenced in the UNDPs Human Development Report) and significant shortfalls in terms of the UN Millennium Development Goals. The use
of the term developing country should not be construed to imply moral, intellectual, social or any other form of inferiority. Far from being used as a neo-colonial term, ‘development’ is referred to as ‘improvement’ in the lives of beneficiaries incorporating notions of empowerment, greater choice, and improved living standards. Furthermore, development must be seen as a holistic process.

2.2 Case Study 1 - ChildFund

In 2013 ChildFund International worked in 30 countries, and claimed to assist 18.1 million children (ChildFund 2013, p. 3) and their family members through a distinctive approach featuring a one-to-one connection between sponsor and child. The following case study is constrained by a lack of historic sources on ChildFund (formerly Christian Children’s Fund and China Children’s Fund or CCF) and inability of the researcher to access the ChildFund archives. Nevertheless, Larry Tise’s 1993 official history titled A Book About Children is thorough and helpful in documenting the organisation’s evolution over time. Drawing heavily on interviews with staff and primary source material the book provides a fascinating attempt to document the organisation’s history and evolution.

A focus on individuals has been evident throughout much of the organisation’s history. ChildFund was established as China Children’s Fund (CCF) in 1938 by the entrepreneurial and much acclaimed Presbyterian minister J. Calvitt Clarke. Soon to be renamed Christian Children’s Fund and then ChildFund, it has been claimed by the organisation as recently as 2014 that ‘The “child sponsorship”
humanitarian development concept we know today stemmed from Dr. Clarke’s early vision: one sponsor donates one amount to help one child.’ (ChildFund 2014a para 1)

It will be argued is Section 4 of this thesis that the authors of ChildFund’s history were mistaken, and that Clarke was likely to have been well aware of the use of CS by other organisations. According to the University of Virginia Library (University of Virginia- Special Collections department, 2014) which holds the Clarke archives, Clarke had served as director of Near East Relief, an agency that sent clothing and food to Armenia and Syria, and had visited Palestine personally. In 1932 he co-founded the Save the Children Federation (then known as The International Save the Children Fund of America) to assist children in Kentucky, and served there as southern director until 1937. During this period it is likely that he would have been exposed to the concept of CS.

After his establishment of CCF, Clarke was devoted to orphan care. For his efforts Clarke received at least three decorations, the Order of Merit (Republic of Korea), Order of the Sacred Treasure (Japan), and Order of the Brilliant Star (Nationalist Government of China) (University of Virginia-Special Collections, 2014). In A Book About Children Tise (1993, p. 7) describes a fledgling American organisation which made its first grant of $2,000 in 1939 to the authorities in China. In Tise’s summary (1993, p. 8), growth was phenomenal and dedicated in its formative years to ‘hordes of homeless children’ in China who needed a safe haven. For Clarke, this meant orphanages, with favour given to Christian-run homes and institutions that provided religious instruction in
keeping with his personal beliefs. Accordingly, Tise points out that by November 1944 ChildFund was assisting 45 Chinese orphanages, some of which had been run by Mrs Chiang Kai-shek, whom he admired personally. Thus, the early CCF orphan care program initiated by Clarke may be seen as an institution-based child welfare program formed in response to foreign wartime conditions in which state welfare was dysfunctional or overwhelmed. The primary objectives of ChildFund at this time were the rescue of vulnerable children, protection in a safe haven, provision of educational opportunities and delivery of religious instruction. As a matter of expedience, in its early years the pioneering staff at CCF readily though not exclusively partnered with Christian missions that had pre-existing orphan care programs and schools. In the fiscal year 1945-1946, CCF disbursed $372,217 to this end (Tise 1993, p. 6).

The level of need reported in CCF advertising was often touching. Reflecting on his early work in China, Reverend Verent Mills reminisced that the youngest of the 700 Chinese children in his care was discovered near a cluster of bamboo while he (Mills) was on a visit to a soup kitchen. The child was one of many starving children encountered, and apparently almost beyond help. According to Mills:

And right beside the road there was a little boy. He looked more like a monkey than a human being thin, drawn, the skin on his face parched and wrinkled. The child was starving to death. He couldn't stand up, he couldn't cry, he just made moaning sounds. He was probably two
and a half or three, and there he was, sitting in his own mess, too weak to move... (Mills cited in Tise 1993, p. 10)

In his poignant account of rescue and rehabilitation of the child (named Lo Duk by CCF staff, or Begotten of the Road), Mills provided a touching account of the potential for individual CS in a well-run orphanage to radically change a child’s life through an act of love. Placed in an orphanage housed in a converted high school in Canton, the child would become emblematic of CCF’s work with desperately needy Chinese children. Although such narratives would later be deemed simplistic and misleading in a context of poverty reduction, in the context of war-time orphan care and humanitarian relief they were read as stories of legitimate, compassionate interventions by caring Christians eager to share grace and God’s love with innocent victims of a brutal civil war.

The rescue and protection of many children like Lo Duk resulted in widespread acclaim for ChildFund’s founder insofar as ‘Everywhere he went, Clarke was treated with honor and glory. He made endless addresses, was feted at luncheons and dinners, and entertained by children at each of CCF’s orphanages...’ (Tise 1993, p. 8). To Clarke the widespread acclaim enhanced his personal conviction that the future of the organisation lay in partnering with missionaries to deliver physical and spiritual salvation in an expanded orphan care program. To a large extent Clarke’s vision of an international child adoption agency for war-affected children was legitimated by orphan care practice in his own country, affirmed by the evangelical missionary zeal of religious, middle-
America and promoted as an antidote to communism via an act of civic or Christian responsibility.

Under Clarke’s leadership CCF advertising depicted an emaciated child on a benefactor’s lap, declaring that ‘The road to communism is paved with hunger, ignorance and lack of hope’ (cited in Klein 2003, pp. 155-59). Thus, in the context of emergent cold-war hostility and American confidence in its mandate to spread democracy, CS for orphans was embraced by some sponsors as an act of civic duty, Christian responsibility and demonstration of patriotic zeal. Similar motivations were evident with those who would adopt the mixed race children of American GIs who served in Korea, heralding a new kind of missionary work motivated by religious and nationalist concerns (Oh 2005, pp. 161-62).

Tise attributed the rapid growth of CCF to the ‘…very popular “adoption” plan developed sometime prior to 1941’, implying that the idea of sponsorship was initiated by Clarke himself (Tise 1993, p. 7). Promoted widely by its founder and chairman, the initial ‘adoption plan’ had encouraged individual donors in the USA to contribute monthly for the support of a Chinese orphan. 1941 Board minutes reveal that Clarke had thought the CCF adoption or sponsorship plan was working very well. He recommended that the rate of $24 per child per year should continue to be offered to sponsors even though the income received by CCF was not covering the full cost of child care in an institutional setting and in his opinion was ‘... now costing more than $24 per year to take care of these orphans’ (Tise 1993, p. 7). From this we may presume that donations for
unspecified needs were used to subsidise the true cost of orphan care, or that the orphanages assisted had other sources of income.

ChildFund’s role in the CS orphan care program was relatively simple. It raised funds in the USA, a task the Clarke relished, and transferred them to foreign implementing agencies, missionaries and institutions. In the case of the orphanages in China run by the Reverend Verent Mills, $2 per month per child was sent from Richmond, Virginia to Canton in the early years, sufficient to purchase adequate supplies of rice for the children. Prior to Mills moving 700 children from five orphanages to Canton where they could be cared for better, ‘the rice had to be shipped by rail to Hunan province, then carried by coolies on a five and a half day journey over the mountains to the interior Kwong Tung area’ (Wells of Grace 2014a, para 3 appx.). The children were eventually settled in a confiscated Japanese school and Mills was asked to join CCF in 1947 when a personal visit by Clarke resulted in praise for the vocational education Mills had been experimenting with. The formula of direct aid for orphans was successful for CCF and Clarke was pleased with progress. His spring 1946 tour of 21 Chinese orphanages was described as ‘triumphal’ and left him optimistic that there was no reason not to expand throughout Europe (Tise 1993, p. 8).

With income far exceeding ability to spend in China, and growing awareness that the tide was inexorably turning against the nationalists, the board of CCF turned its gaze towards orphan care in the Philippines, Burma, Japan and Korea. The British Colony of Hong Kong, would, after the fall of the Nationalist government, retain its prominence as a site for CCF programs. In some cases
CCF planned and constructed its own institutions. For example, the purpose-built Hong Kong Children’s Garden (begun in 1952) was designed to house 1,000 children in 98 cottages, each with house parents, providing both formal and vocational education. The facility was designed to incorporate the highest ideals of orphan care, ensuring small staff to child ratios, practical education and excellent facilities. Mills argued that the deinstitutionalisation of orphan care through provision of a home-like environment would enhance the emotional and psychological development of children. A stream of dignitaries, including Indira Gandhi, visited the model home (Wellsofgrace 2014b, para 6).

However, most ChildFund supported orphanages appear to have been run like Hong Kong’s Faith Love Orphanage with dormitories, regimented programs, strict discipline and traditional, institutional approaches to orphan care (Tise 1993, pp. 44-45). An early CCF-supported resident of the orphanage described it as ‘luxury indeed’ with buildings constructed of concrete and granite with various playgrounds (Chan 2011, p. 31). Paradoxically, his own reaction to being placed there by his mother was dismay, characterised by fear, confusion, resentment and abandonment. It was, according to Chan, a unique educational opportunity yet also ‘... a very regimented and totally insulated environment...’ in which children were stigmatized, treated like aliens and isolated from family (cited in Tise 1993, pp. 45-46).

As a fundraising device, CCF use of CS for orphan care provision provided a potent mechanism for mobilization of support in geographically diverse areas. By 1946 the work in Burma and the Philippines was established and in 1947
funds were sent to assist orphans in Japan and Korea. In 1951 the 23 Korean orphanages and 60 Japanese orphanages receiving assistance from CCF provided for the care of approximately 4,000 children, many of whom were mixed-race children of American GIs (Wellsofgrace 2014b, para 6) who suffered high rates of abuse, abandonment and discrimination (Oh 2005, p. 161). World Vision, Save the Children and CCF all established sponsorship programs around this time. In CCF’s case, homes were added for orphans, ‘...the blind, as well as homes for the children of lepers, and even a home for musically gifted children’ (Tise 1993, p. 36). Advertising by CS organisations featured emaciated individuals, heart wrenching pictures of abandoned children, urgent pleas that positioned orphan care as ‘...a challenge to Christians all over the world’ and headlines such as ‘You could have saved this little girl!’ (cited in Oh 2005, p. 162).

Surprisingly, CCF severed all ties with Clarke. By 1965, after which time Clarke had been deposed and his wife sacked, organisational income had reached five million dollars per annum with the total number of children assisted exceeding thirty-six thousand (University of Virginia- Special Collections 2014). It had not been long since Clarke was featured in the book Yankee Si! The Story of Dr. J Calvitt Clarke and His 36,000 Children. Subsequently he had become a household name to millions of Americans (Tise 1993, p. 61). The reasons for the coup are not well established however according to one account, the Board cited numerous complaints from former staff, board members and John Caldwell, the author of the book ‘Children of Calamity’ (University of Virginia-Special Collections, 2014). Tise (1993, p. 61) refers to the bloodletting as almost
predictable, with Clarke, then 74, convinced that he was indispensible, unwilling to let go, and unable to allow change. According to Tise, Clarke responded with claims that the Board had descended into a cold, business model of aid designed to enrich the new director and his family.

Clarke’s demise after the decisive internal coup, and his establishment of a new CS charity devoted to orphan care, was accompanied by an irony apart from the harsh reality that he had been orphaned by the organization he had founded. That is, ChildFund’s support for orphanages internationally in China and elsewhere had peaked as the rapid demise of traditional American orphanages accelerated. Shughart and Chappell (1999, pp. 153-54) have observed that in 1933 144,000 children were cared for in American orphanages in the USA. However, by 1977 that number had declined to 43,000 children who remained in institutions, with family care viewed as a more legitimate and cost-effective response. The tide had clearly turned against the institutionalization of children in the USA by the 1960s, as it had against Clarke and his plans for an expanded, world-wide orphan care program. The employment of a new breed of qualified social workers well versed in apparent failings of institutions contributed to a growing call within CCF for programmatic change.

The evolution of CCF began in earnest after the departure of its acclaimed founder although it should be noted that in Hong Kong CCF had operated up to 30 roof-top schools in the 1950s for children in resettlement areas (Wellsofgrace 2014b, para 7). Despite its historical work being centred on orphan care, by the 1950s it was becoming apparent that ‘housing, clothing, and feeding of
homeless children were not enough. If CCF was to be an effective force in the world of children, it had to find ways of assisting children outside the confines of orphanages.' (Tise 1993, p. 59) Throughout the 1960s CCF transitioned its programmatic approach beyond orphanages and institutions while retaining individual sponsorship as a fundraising mechanism.

Prior to the concerns raised above, a shift in CCF programming included support of children in boarding schools rather than in orphanages. For example, CCF support for Alwaye School in Kerala, India began in 1951, with sponsorship provided for 30 single or double orphans, preferably from lower casts (Tise 1993, p. 55). CU, a young boy sponsored in 1967 because he was about to be withdrawn from a government school to work on a farm, described in adulthood the time as:

...totally like heaven...Everybody was kind to me, we were fed regularly, we played...When I went home I had to work, taking care of the goats and things like that... My house was totally made of clay with a palm roof, and in the monsoon season it used to collapse and we would have to move. When I came to the school it was like a palace to me. (cited in Tise 1993, p. 57)

Similar success stories would become a feature of CCF advertising.

For CCF staff orphan care was popular and saleable, yet problematic in ways not initially predicted. As stated above, in 1960 the Korean Association of Voluntary Agencies notified CCF that it thought Korean parents were
‘...abandoning their children to get them into CCF orphanages. Our orphanages provided superior care and education. So we created unique “Family Helper Projects”’ (ChildFund, 2014a). The shift in CCF programming was described by one CCF staff member as naively similar to the American Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) scheme. Created in 1935 the AFDC scheme became America’s predominant family welfare measure, providing monthly cash assistance to needy families identified by caseworkers.

In hindsight, it can be seen that the scheme (a feature of the American 1935 Social Security Act) provides a likely precursor for the family payments and family helper schemes adopted by American CS INGOs that came into being after 1937. Its replication in Korea would, it was theorised, encourage Korean parents to keep their children at home, rather than resort to desperate, elaborate, and sometimes deceitful measures to have them admitted to a western-run orphanage where the cost of care was particularly high and standards difficult to monitor.

Informed by American advances in the realm of social work utilizing case workers, the American AFDC scheme (see Ross 1985, p. 5) and its own ideals relating to the education of children as a vehicle for poverty reduction, the 1960s CCF experimental Family Helper program employed centres of social services, complete with supervisor, caseworkers, library books, classrooms, and recreation spaces. High school graduates interested in social work were initially enlisted to visit homes, develop case reports on families, and invite participation in programs (Tise 1993, p. 74) resulting in requests for CS. Family Helper
projects were therefore designed to avoid the institutionalisation of children and help families in their own homes using ‘community advisors’ (ChildFund, 2014a).

Initially, CCF established cooperatives where ‘...mothers could purchase rice, beans, manioc and other staples which were distributed by weight according to the number of children in each family’ (Tise 1993, p. 75). However, over time CCF cash grants were paid directly to families of eligible children to assist in the purchase of groceries and schooling. Additionally, Tise (1993, p. 75) notes that mothers were encouraged to attend classes in nutrition, literacy, budgeting and sewing, or avail themselves of volunteer doctors who ‘...came to the center to give the children inoculations.’ For staff, the move towards case-work represented an effort to adopt best-practice child-welfare programming in an international context. Unlike the AFDC scheme which changed relatively little until the 1990s, and continued to draw widespread criticism for creating welfare dependency, CCF support to families did evolve. It may be that CCF staff had come to the same conclusion as critics of the AFDC who have observed that cash grants in America ‘...lifted few poor children out of poverty...’ (Page & Larner 1997, p. 26)

CCF’s experimentation with individual child welfare in the Family Helper programs of the 1960s and 1970s is evidence of a programmatic shift that was, arguably, out of step with emergent and soon to be dominant emphases on community development and poverty reduction. In a candid assessment of the experimental Family Helper programs, staff member James Hostetler (cited in Tise 1993, p. 66) explained with the power of hindsight that ‘The emphasis was
on what we could do for them. There was little thought of encouraging people to
do something for themselves.’ The dominant feature of the new approach was
extension of support to families using conditional cash transfers and direct
service provision, either free or subsidized. In theory, cash transfers reduced
high costs associated with institutional care, allowed families the dignity of
choosing how to expend funds, and positioned the family as a conduit through
which children would ultimately benefit. This may be seen as part of the journey
to the adoption of policy in 1967 in which local programs were to be led by local
leaders where possible (ChildFund 2014a).

A 1981 comparison of various CS INGOs (Livezey 1981, p. 9) revealed that
CCF’s 236,000 sponsors were assisting 251,000 children in 26 countries. By this
time the transition away from institutional support of orphans through CS was
almost complete, in part because of the high cost and also because of the shift
towards family helper ideology. This can be seen in the statement below, now
over 30 years old:

No religious requirement is imposed or inducement offered. It [CCF]
still supports some orphanages, but most of its work is done through
its family-helper and educational programs. Funded entirely through
private donations, its sponsors pay $15 monthly. (Livezey 1981, p. 9)

In the 1980s CCF transitioned further to community development initiatives
funded through CS, distancing itself from international, often mission-oriented
partners that ran schools and institutions. Responding to, but not necessarily
agreeing with a General Accounting Office study of five large children’s charities
(including Foster Parent’s Plan and Save the Children) which cited evidence of poor fiscal management or misrepresentation of policies in a number of organisations, CCF phased out funding for numerous third party partners (many of whom were missionary organisations) to improve financial transparency. Clearly the dispersal of funds to third parties had placed the organisation at risk hence, ‘Within a year or two, all funds were remitted directly to the bank account of each CCF project.’ (Tise 1993, p. 80) In reality, the issue was probably the same one that afflicts all INGOs, the need for quality monitoring and evaluation which tracks expenditure as well as achievement of quality outcomes. In likelihood, transferring all funds directly to a project bank account would not necessarily result in better management of funds without a strong M&E framework nevertheless CCF could state that it had taken appropriate action.

A push towards projects and community initiatives delivered by CCF was justified by self-initiated audits between 1972 and 1981 that had inexorably led CCF’s increasingly professionally qualified staff to conclude that ‘...you can’t effectively help a child apart from the context of his or her family, community and nation...’ (Tise 1993, p. 84). For readers well-versed in the ideals of community development, self-help and empowerment, this may be self-evident however through the mid to late 1980s CCF increasingly prioritized primary health care, nutrition, safe drinking water, basic education, income generation, environment and broader rights in programs. Thus, we can see that CCF programming inevitably shifted from an emphasis on individual child welfare, to family welfare and then more sustainable change at a community level. The extent to which donor expectations hindered and slowed this transition, if at all, is unclear
however by the 1990s the rhetoric was clear, insofar as ‘CCF’s approach to development is to encourage the parents of CCF-sponsored children to take active responsibility for planning improvements in their own communities, thereby taking control of their lives’ (Tise 1993, p. 157). CCF had come to focus on a more holistic view of the child and ‘community-based interventions’ (ChildFund 2014a).

The current ChildFund Alliance Programme standards (ChildFund Alliance 2008, para 1) insist that programmes ‘demonstrate community empowerment through active involvement of children, youth and families in the planning and implementation of programmes and projects.’ This shift involved challenges for ChildFund (renamed in 2009) and other INGOs in transition, one of which was the fact that ‘When an agency moves into the arena of community development, yet continues to operate on a sponsorship basis, it is sometimes difficult for the potential donor to understand exactly how his funds will be spent’ (Livezey 1981, p. 3). For ChildFund, as was the case with others, rebranding and programmatic shifts would lead to significant supporter backlash.

2.3 Case Study 2 - Plan International

In 2013, Plan International (referred to in this Section as Plan) and its affiliates impacted 78 million children in 90,229 communities throughout approximately 50 developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas (Plan International 2013, p. 3). CS has been a vital part of its work since 1937 when the organisation was formed to assist orphans and displaced children affected by the Spanish Civil War and CS remains crucial to current work which emphasises rights-based
advocacy for poverty reduction. In 2013 there were just over 1.5 million children sponsored internationally (Dijsselbloem et al. 2014, p. 113) making Plan one of the largest INGOs currently utilising this form of fundraising. Significant evolution is evident in Plan’s use of CS. Although Plan’s commitment to children remains unchanged, the methods used to protect, nurture and empower children have evolved considerably, moving from the historic provision of safe havens for war affected children in Spain and Europe, to the current rights-based interventions in the Global South.

Plan’s origins are found in attempts to rescue, feed and protect children adversely affected by the Spanish Civil War. In July 1936 nationalist rebels led by General Francisco Franco launched a brutal, German (and Italian) supported attack to overthrow the legitimately elected Spanish Republican Government. The widely publicized pictures of the aftermath of Luftwaffe bombing of civilians in Guernica, in defiance of the non-aggression pact, caused international outrage. Soon after the Guernica massacre, 3840 children, 120 helpers, 80 teachers, and 15 catholic priests were evacuated to England on the steamship Habana (Basquechildren 2013, para 4), particularly due to the work of the Duchess of Atholl, chairwoman of both the British National Joint Committee (NJC) for Spanish Relief and Basque Children’s Committee, Edith Pye of the Society of Friends and Leah Manning of Spanish Medical Aid. The children were initially provided with tents at three fields in Eastleigh, UK, however were then placed in British children’s colonies (synonymous with orphanages or children’s homes) or placed in home care in what might be referred to as ‘foster parent’ care.
As a journalist, self-proclaimed aficionado of Spanish culture and witness to the atrocities, Plan founder John Langdon-Davies wrote ‘I am obsessed with the disintegration of human nature that comes with the greatest atrocity of all, civil war’ (Langdon-Davies 1937, p. vii). With co-founder Eric Muggeridge (a thirty-year-old British travel clerk who took leave to drive trucks for the NJC), Barton Carter (son of a prominent family in Massachusetts, New Hampshire) and the support of the formidable Duchess of Atholl, the Foster Parent’s Scheme for Children in Spain was formally established in early 1937 as an affiliate of the NJC to establish children’s colonies, collectively known as the Children’s Republic (Dijsselbloem et al. 2014, pp. 115-17).

With NJC backing, Langdon-Davies proposed to fund the support of children by ‘establishing a lasting personal relationship between an orphaned or refugee Spanish child and a foreign sponsor’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 29). Children’s colonies were established in Caldetas, near Barcelona, and Puigcerdà, near the French border utilising chalets confiscated by government forces. A new lorry provided by the NJC allowed purchase and transport of food and supplies in England, France and Spain, making Plan staff responsible for ‘...buying everything instead of paying your money to the Spanish authorities’ (Langdon-Davies 1938, p. 3). The arrival of Esmé Odgers in 1937, an Australian, completed the nucleus of staff in the early program. As the first field director for Foster Parent’s Plan for Children in Spain, Odgers oversaw the care of 700 children near Puigcerda, in the Pyrenees, ‘Acting as nurse, mother, housekeeper and general organiser...she supervises the arrival of stores and
supplies at the frontier, and is a real angel of mercy to refugees...’ (Palmer & Fox 1948, p. 36)

Langdon-Davies seems to have been heavily influenced by a not uncommon relief mechanism for displaced children insofar as throughout Spain 30,000 children of the 900,000 children who needed help were being assisted in colonies (Dijsselbloem et al. 2014, p. 116). Plan’s colonies housed up to 300 children and their carers, and were often based in properties confiscated by the government and provided for the use of those who sought to assist children. They were established with help from Asistencia Infantil, a Spanish agency (PLAN International 1998, p. 6). A shilling a day (Carter estimated 25 cents per day or approximately $100 per year) guaranteed support of a child and once paired, the Foster Parent was sent the name, age, a brief history, and a photo (Dijsselbloem et al. 2014, pp. 116-117), and was encouraged to send photographs, letters, small personal gifts, and clothing to the Foster Children (Molumphy 1984, p. 30). In return, the children were provided with limited details of the Foster Parent.

The personal touch integral to the early scheme was valued for the goodwill it generated. In the words of a 1937 English appeal, ‘Children who have lost all personal ties are encouraged to feel the existence of a personal friend rather than a vague dispenser of charity. This is the essence of the Foster Parent’s Scheme’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 30). Odgers, the young communist from Australia, praised the personal bonds created between Foster Parents and sponsored children, comparing it favourably with ‘terrific personalness rather than cold
Noting the way photographs and postcards were treasured by children, Langdon-Davies urged ‘...any Foster Parent who has not yet done so to send their photo and also a chatty letter...’ (Langdon-Davies 1938, pp. 4-5) The logistical difficulty of coordinating the transfer of letters and gifts through Spain must have been significant although this would have become easier with the relocation of children from Barcelona to the French Border, and eventually, to England.

Plan’s children’s colonies in Spain and France were abandoned with Franco’s victory and the onset of World War Two, with an eventual attempt to repatriate Spanish children or house them with family members if they were available in France (Molumphy 1984, pp. 56-57). For a small number of Belgian children the English option would conceivably entail support offered to displaced children there in the war years, in colonies, or foster care. Eventually, Plan negotiated the right to house children in the old Woodbury Down Estate, in a suburb of London, offering limited term accommodation for children aged 5-15 whose mothers required hospital treatment, or for orphans and refugees, from both Europe and England. The Spartanburg Herald reported in 1940 that:

For the third time in the short history of the Foster Parent’s Plan great pots steam in large kitchens, rows of dishes line kitchen walls. Dormitories of two and three deck beds have warm cover sheets. School rooms have benches... You can once again hear the children sing. (Spartanburg Herald p. 11)
After the war, Plan’s work in mainland Europe was resumed, involving support for orphaned children in institutions, wounded children requiring specialised medical care and families of destitute children and food parcels. However, Plan also fundraised for children in Korea in the 1950s. Molumphy (1984, p. 107) describes Plan’s 26 years of work in Korea as especially useful for reflecting the post war evolution of the organisation’s philosophy, services and programs, largely because activities continued for so long in the one country. For this reason the remainder of this case study pays special attention to what happened in Korea, before concluding with reference to Plan’s work in Africa and Latin America.

In 1953 an article published in *Pacific Stars and Stripes* (Cox 1953, paras 1-8) quoted the director of Plan as sending out a call for ‘as much money as we can get’ to provide shoes, rice and housing for South Korean children, and to recruit foster parents, initially for 300 children found ‘living in fruit markets, in dumps, or wandering hungry through the streets’ in Pusan. Expecting 100 to 200 children to wander into Plan’s Pusan headquarters per day, Cox wrote that money would ‘help pay for lodging and food for him and his family. Later there will be shoes, clothes, and shipments of rice, powdered milk, and soap.’ Writing partially for a military audience, the article concluded with the reminder that although Plan was not a propaganda agency, American citizens would miss an opportunity to do work with ‘tremendous propaganda value’ if they did not do a good deed for Korean Children (para 14). The terminology of ‘mail-order’ foster children and ‘remote-control adoptions’ carries interesting connotations.
In Korea Plan staff are said to have argued that there were already too many poorly run and dubiously funded orphanages and that a more urgent need was assistance to children living with or apart from their families, especially single-parent households led by women with little or no income. It is surprising therefore that a similar number of children from families as from institutions were enrolled in the sponsorship scheme despite the fact that ‘...after 1954, it consciously leaned towards family-based enrolments with a view to preserving the family.’ (PLAN International 1998, p. 26) The shift away from orphan support in institutions to family support in a community setting is referred to in Plan International literature as unique, in that ‘Alone among children’s organisations in Korea, Plan began a program of direct assistance to families with children, guided by social workers working intensively in the communities around Pusan’ (PLAN International 1998, p. 26).

The chaos of wartime conditions made running a sponsorship program utilising caseworkers difficult, a fact rued by staff member Fred Mason in a letter to Plan headquarters in December 1950 in which he said:

...CARE...can go in with a truckload of packages...throw the packages overboard to the assembled populace, and drive back to base - they have done their job. We... have to have all our elaborate set up of Director... translators, bank balances, and children who will stay put...for us to do anything in Korea at present would be a waste of time. (cited in Molumphy 1984, p. 108)
The first Koran child sponsored by Plan in Korea was a nine year-old boy, Choi Ok Bong, at the request of Captain Edsall, commander of the battleship USS Missouri (Molumphy 1984, p. 110). US military personnel support for orphanages would soon become a feature of the occupation and Bong’s father had disappeared. According to Plan’s historical account, the boy was begging on the streets to support his two sisters and ill grandfather when he was discovered and rescued. It is not clear how he was supported over time however it is likely that as with other children, he was either placed in an orphanage or he benefited from ‘…cash grants, gift parcels of food, clothing, household supplies, educational support, and medical care.’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 113)

Molumphy (1984, p. 113) stresses that early enrolments were not for children in institutions, rather they were provided to children of widowed mothers for whom support would benefit the entire family. Even so, recruitment of children in orphanages followed rapidly, partially because organising cash transfers and individual service delivery in a community setting was so difficult, and orphan care in an institutional setting was popular. Over time, American military support for orphanages was considerable, illustrated in a National Geographic magazine account which stated:

Navy units tend to pass the word along from ship to ship. Another one that did a real job was the heavy cruiser USS Los Angeles. Its crew rounded up big donations of cash and clothing for 10 different orphanages and hospitals in Korea (Mosier 1953, para 15).
A number of factors made it more expedient for Plan to support children in orphanages rather than in the community. Destitute parents and guardians often had no street address therefore transmission of cash grants through the mail was impossible (Molumphy 1984, p. 111). On the other hand, hyperinflation made cash payments to individual families very difficult and risked creation of envy. Plan staff feared armed robbery, either when delivering cash personally or when distributing from the office when ‘...families came to pick up their monthly cash payments and to drop of letters...’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 113) According to Molumphy (1984, p. 112) requiring staff to lug sacks of highly visible, worthless paper currency with up to 264 bills for each child proved logistically difficult. Additionally, delivery of gifts was problematic, and the task of visiting families, all over Pusan, in areas beyond car access, provided a further disincentive.

For the reasons explained above, enrolments beyond Pusan were limited to institutions (Molumphy 1984, p. 113) with Plan increasing its support of such children while taking the high moral ground that it would not establish new children’s colonies in addition to the 595 that had proliferated by 1953 (PLAN International 1998, p. 26). From a managerial perspective the delivery of support to community members within a complex operating environment and lack of qualified social workers made less sense than cooperating with an orphanage director who could do much of the work required because ‘...the children were all in one place’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 113). Marketing success and the need for rapid recruitment was no doubt a factor as well. By 1953 the rapid growth of Plan’s donor base was outstripping its ability to pair sponsors with what it referred to as ‘outside’ children, that is, the millions of children who remained
with families and who were receiving no help from other agencies (PLAN International 1998, p. 27).

Although all children in Plan assisted orphanages benefited from sponsorship because funding was pooled rather than given to individuals (Molumphy 1984 p. 111), a variety of issues were evident in Korean orphanages which gave Plan staff cause for concern and would necessitate a programmatic transition in its child welfare priorities. The rapid inflow of funding to orphanages had created an orphan rush, resulting in a large number of poorly run institutions with excessive enrolments, ill-trained staff, unhygienic conditions and low capacity.

Generous American GIs may have been especially responsible for providing the conditions for rapid expansion of orphanages, some of which were initiated, built and serviced by military servicemen. For example, under the leadership of Major General Joseph P Cleland, the 40th Division designed an orphanage for 600 children, raised USD14,000 from the men and assisted with construction of what would become the Kenneth Kaiser Orphanage and School (Mosier 1953, para 25). In another instance recorded by Mosier, marines foraged for clothes, raised money, played nursemaid, taught children and bathed them.

Sustainability became a key issue for Plan in South Korea. Because it was common practice for an institution to receive support from only one agency, such as Plan, partial support of children in an institution could limit the institution’s potential to seek funding elsewhere (obviously direct support from US military personnel was helpful in this regard). This led to a tendency within Plan to increase the percentage of enrolments in Plan assisted orphanages to
ensure ‘...the continued well-being of those institutionalized children already enrolled’ at a time when the withdrawal of American forces was under way (Molumphy 1984, p. 117) meant that in the late 1950s more and more institutions were relying exclusively on Plan. Plan staff feared that without help many would be forced to close with disastrous outcomes for the children involved. Thus Plan found itself in a situation where early rapid growth in the sponsorship program had fuelled the expansion of costly, unsustainable orphanages, when children should have been assisted in the context of their communities and families.

In 1960 the Korean Association of Voluntary Agencies came to the disturbing conclusion that in the case of CCF (see Section 2.2 above) a large proportion of children in CCF orphanages had been transformed into ‘orphans’ by their families (Tise 1993, p. 66). This seems to have been an endemic problem in South Korea. In 1961 Plan staff began to actively advocate for improved orphan care standards, recognising that some partners offered dubious levels of care at best. In October 1961, 156 children were transferred to better quality orphanages however the most significant development was the decision to begin the return of institutionalised children to their families and to place orphans with foster families, a process that began in 1961 with the first 20 children. By 1962 the director of Plan in Korea had launched an initiative agreed on by the directors of 20 Plan supported orphanages to reduce the number of supported children from 2,550 to 1,300 over 24 months (Molumphy 1984, p. 118). In a strange twist, to incentivise the orphanage directors and limit impact on their finances, almost all of the unsponsored children in these orphanages were
added to the sponsorship program. However, in response the orphanages were to provide community services such as day nurseries for working mothers, education and vocational training with a long term goal being ‘...establishment of self-supporting child, family and community resource centres operating independently at the local level and responsive to the needs of the community’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 179). Eventually, ten of the orphanages established day nurseries, five would begin or expand vocational training programs, three would open schools and two establish farming or animal husbandry projects.

It is evident that over time the Plan CS program in Korea de-emphasised institutional support and prioritised the return of children to their families as the US military withdrew. The relatively sophisticated program that emerged can be seen as a return to initial attempts to assist children in the context of their families. It was reliant on qualified social workers utilising a casework approach designed to assist children in the context of their families, referred to proudly by Plan staff as ‘unique’, ‘different’ and the basis of the model program adopted by the South Korean government to resettle orphans in government run foster care programs (PLAN International 1998, p. 27). A strong emphasis on vocational education was justified by the goal of making families self-supporting, and therefore required that children were selected not just on basis of need, but on a parental ability to participate in self-improvement. A blunt analogy was provided to explain why the neediest children from communities were not necessarily given sponsorship:
The practice in Korean hospitals that treat patients with tuberculosis is not to admit any terminal patients. They will provide beds only for patients with a reasonable chance for recovery...We have 7,500 “beds” to offer... and we want “patients” who possess a reasonable chance for recovery. (cited in Molumphy 1984, pp. 121-122)

As its activities matured, the programs of Plan in Korea diversified. These included attempts to provide group activities for mothers of sponsored children, recreational group activities, provision of corrective surgery and prosthetics for children, educational programs for mothers, library services to foster children, camping programs, credit unions, drawing contests and funding of a private hospital. The Daegu Credit Union which was established by Plan would go on to become the third largest in Korea, allowing Plan parents to borrow at 2 per cent per year well before microcredit was popularised in the 1980s. In 1979 Plan activities in Korea came to an end, due largely to improved economic circumstances and government capacity to provide its own social services (Molumphy 1984, p. 133).

In Hong Kong, Plan family assistance resulted in provision of cash grants and parcels, administered somewhat unrealistically through a ratio of approximately one social worker responsible for 360 families (PLAN International 1998, p. 35). In recognition of the potential for misuse of cash payments to families, Plan Staff continued with family payments however quarantined a portion of sponsorship funding for health checks, uniforms, books, summer camps and recreational activities, eventually experimenting with vocational training programs for some
parents (PLAN International 1998, p. 35). Similar work was undertaken in the Philippines in the early 1960s where destitute, single-parent families were selected by case-workers for support. In their case they received:

...cash grants of US $8 and Plan allocated US$35 a year for monthly budget purchases of clothes, school supplies, bedding, toilet articles, and other supplies. In a typical month a child might receive a dress or pair of pants, a shirt or skirt, pillowcases, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, mosquito netting, and kitchen utensils. One dollar a month was set aside for a Christmas package. (Molumphy 1984, p. 186)

The Plan supported CS program in Vietnam may be seen as typical of sponsorship in the 1950s. Between 1957 and 1975 sponsorship funded ‘direct subsidies for food, education, school supplies and uniforms to the very poorest families’ yet it also facilitated staff training at hospitals and clinics.’ (PLAN International 1998, p. 34) In the case of one sponsored child named Thahn, a small monthly cash grant enabled his mother to ‘...buy a few bricks each month until she had enough to build a small store.’ (PLAN International 1998, p. 34) Attempts to provide caseworker support ultimately failed in Vietnam due to worsening security. However, in 1960, nearly 1,500 foster children were receiving monthly cash transfers, cash gifts, gift parcels and a variety of supplies including cloth, toothpaste, toothbrushes, multivitamins, raincoats, sandals, hats, towels, copy books, insect spray, spray guns, book covers, ink bottles, mosquito
nets, rulers, pencils, pens, soap, erasers, compasses and blotting paper (Molumphy 1984, p. 139).

It would seem that in Vietnam and elsewhere, Plan’s CS funds were used to procure a limited range of necessities which were purchased and distributed direct to sponsored children in a classic case of what might now be referred to as a hand-out mentality with little opportunity to deal with the underlying causes of child poverty. In the Philippines the first sponsored child in 1961 (a 10 year old orphan living with her married sister in a makeshift wooden shack) was immediately provided with ‘precious towels, shoes, tooth brush and paste, school enrolment, and even a brief case to carry her books.’ According to Plan, ‘…when it had all come to her, Norma smiled’ (Plan USA 2014 paras 1-6). For much of the 1969s and 1970s cash transfers to families and gift giving would remain central to Plan work despite its geographic shift to South America and Asia. In 1969, Plan was supporting 27,000 children in Latin America, 26,000 in Asia, and there remained 7,000 children in Greece (PLAN International 1998, p. 37).

In some cases, cultural differences impeded replication of institution-based orphan care or cash payments and gift provision for families in other countries where Plan sought to introduce social services. In 1962 Plan staff who were scoping opportunities in Bolivia were informed by Ministry of Health staff that the minister believed it would be wrong for psychological reasons to give monthly cash payments to Colombian children (Dijsselbloem n.d., p. 2). In Ethiopia government staff opposed individual child sponsorship on the basis that cash
grants to particular members of a community might perpetuate an economic class structure that they believed had no place in Ethiopian Society’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 282). Plan adapted its CS program accordingly, informing Canadian sponsors that ‘Instead of giving a family a gift of ten dollars, for instance, or direct gifts, Plan has found it to be more beneficial to the family if the gift is used for village improvements... the provision of such necessities as uncontaminated water and mass inoculations’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 282). It is perhaps a little ironic that this early experimentation with community development in Ethiopia arose because of firm leadership at government level, and appears to have occurred in spite of Plan practice elsewhere.

As is the case with ChildFund, for Plan it is difficult to pinpoint a date by which sponsorship funds were predominantly used for community development activities rather than for individual child support or cash transfers to families. As early as 1964 Plan Philippines staff had implemented a ‘poverty plan’ for displaced squatters with the express intent that families would benefit from better housing, economic opportunities, education, medical care and recreational facilities (Molumphy 1984, pp. 192-193). Nevertheless, practice often lagged behind organisational rhetoric. External researchers can point to 1984 as a tipping point. In that year the Board of Plan International adopted ‘... a Program Policy Statement that focused on developing skills and institutions within each community that would persist long after Plan’s departure.’ (PLAN International 1998, p. 51)
Since the 1990s Plan’s programmatic approach has further evolved and it describes itself as a leader in child-rights initiatives. Innovative community work pioneered by Plan Bangladesh resulted in development of the ‘Child Centred Community Development Approach (CCCDA)’ between 1997 and 2004. Plan’s Program Framework acknowledges that ‘...resource transfer to alleviate child poverty is not empowering or sustainable if it only addresses the symptoms and not the causes of poverty.’ (Plan International 2007, pp. 11-12) In keeping with an international poverty reduction agenda quite unlike its earlier child welfare strategies, CCCD positions children, families and communities as critical actors in their development processes which bring about structural change. Crucial to the work is child and citizen rights, informed advocacy and partnership with government and civil society. According to the CCCD Program Guide:

CCCD is a rights-based approach....It relies on the collective action of civil society to generate the empowerment of children to realize their potential, and on the actions of states to live up to their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child... The CCCD focus on the structural causes of poverty, gaps and violations of child rights requires a strategy with a long horizon. The expected outcomes in terms of changes in policy, political will, public attitudes and systemic changes in service delivery require a long and steady engagement. (Plan International 2010, p. 17)

CS is not redundant in the CCCD approach. Sponsorship has been described as the glue that binds the organisation (Skinner & Steinberg, 2003) and a
fundraising device through which sponsors will be transitioned to supporters of entire communities, while Vijfeijken et al. (2011, p. 44) found that CS anchors Plan in communities and provides the long-term funding essential for sustainable community development and child rights advocacy. Thus, ‘Plan’s long-term presence in communities through sponsorship activities allows the organisation to support the continuous participation of community-based groups even after a particular project ends.’ (Vijfeijken et al. 2011, p. 30) It is not surprising then that Plan Guatemala’s work has shifted from technical, project-focused interactions and direct service delivery, towards cooperative partnerships and citizen participation in local political processes (Dijsselbloem, et al. 2014). This is not to say that Plan currently encourages, facilitates and funds radical, grassroots activism. Rather, it chooses to work with both duty bearers and rights holders.

2.4 Child welfare vs. community development

It should not be presumed that the two case studies above present atypical examples of the evolution of early programming in CS during the period 1940-1990. Still, the similarities in the journey taken by these two organisations are not dissimilar to other CS organisations that used CS for direct support of orphans, transitioned to family support, and eventually acknowledged the importance of service delivery and community development. Their historic interventions were often, though not exclusively founded as a humanitarian response to wartime chaos in which state welfare services were unable or unwilling to respond to the needs of orphans, refugees and adversely affected
The support of individual children in orphanages, institutions and within families was a logical response, and more aligned with child welfare mandates than more recent poverty reduction initiatives. Subsidization of disadvantaged children’s school fees and educational expenses (including books, uniforms and pencils), and transition to direct assistance to family members in the form of cash transfers likewise reflect a strong emphasis on child and family welfare informed by practices emerging in modern welfare states. A prominent example is the AFDC scheme.

The AFDC scheme was, for 60 years, America’s most visible cash assistance program, and it has been speculated earlier in this chapter that it probably had significant influence on those American CS INGOs that utilised case workers to provide social welfare services from the 1940s. It was formulated in the depths of the Great Depression, as part of the American New Deal, as a family welfare measure to benefit children whose parents could not financially support them. Eligibility for monthly cash payments was determined by caseworkers who checked the living conditions, income, circumstances and thus the eligibility of children under the age of 18 in disadvantaged families (Page & Larner 1997, p. 20). Designed primarily to provide relief to single, white mothers, the AFDC Scheme provided a template for similar programs internationally. For ChildFund and Plan staff, the use of a case-work approach to individual child welfare can be seen as an ethical effort to adopt best-practice child-welfare programming in an international context. Unlike the AFDC scheme which changed relatively little until the 1990s, and continued to draw widespread criticism for creating welfare dependency, CCF and Plan support to families did evolve. It may be that staff in
the respective organisations had come to the same conclusion as critics of the AFDC who have since observed that cash grants in America ‘...lifted few poor children out of poverty...’ (Page & Larner 1997, p. 26)

In the international setting at least, there was a growing sense that especially in rural areas, impediments to child welfare included a lack of education, dormant natural resources and inadequate facilities and social services. For Plan it was apparent that CS fundraising could be adapted to address these shortcomings insofar as, ‘...through the personal concern of our sponsors we are able to evolve approaches, schemes and programs that eventually fill voids... we stress the need for concerted effort toward total community involvement in attaining socio-economic upliftment’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 198). Experimentation with small-scale community development projects in the 1970s and 1980s grew from recognition that the lives of children could only change in any real sense, if the causes of poverty that had entrapped them were addressed. Although they are still popular with some INGOs (especially smaller ones), the direct hand-out and individual child-welfare programs, or family helper activities common in the period 1940 to 1980 are now viewed with high levels of cynicism in the aid sector in regards to their ability to address and impact complex causes of poverty.

Figure 2b provides a useful framework for summarizing contemporary ‘wisdom’ regarding legitimate poverty reduction interventions. In short, legitimate poverty reduction activity is situated within community development ideology. Generally speaking, development oriented activities are perceived as offering self-help,
enhanced community capacity and sustainable, long-term change with high rates of beneficiary participation and empowerment of individuals, families, communities and local service providers. Welfare oriented activities are commonly perceived as a form of relief, characterized by gifts and handouts leading to improvements in individual well-being. Increasingly, the view has been formed that the former leads to independence or interdependence, while the latter places beneficiaries at risk of dependency evidenced in a loss of well-being when ongoing, often external support is removed suddenly.
Figure 2d The Development vs. Welfare Spectrum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Oriented</th>
<th>Welfare Oriented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitates partnership and self-help</strong></td>
<td><strong>Facilitates paternalism, gift giving &amp; service</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hand-up - teaches the beneficiary to fish</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hand-out - gives the beneficiary a fish</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotes independence and self-sufficiency</strong></td>
<td><strong>Encourages dependence and reliance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Builds community capacity and cooperation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Improves individual wellbeing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targets community - focuses on community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Targets beneficiaries - focuses on individuals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seeks sustainable, long term change</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seeks to meet individual needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Addresses underlying causes of poverty</strong></td>
<td><strong>Addresses symptoms of poverty</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seeks collaboration, networking etc.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Avoids collaboration, networking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocates for systemic change</strong></td>
<td><strong>Advocates for charitable help</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improves local disaster management capacity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provides disaster relief</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improves capacity for the poor as self-advocates</strong></td>
<td><strong>Markets the poor</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Watson 2014b, p. 49

McIlwaine’s (1998b, p. 651) observation that civil society organisations can often be in conflict with each other is justified in the case of those organisations that use CS as a fundraising mechanism to benefit individual children and their families, and those that do not. The legacy of the individual child welfare initiatives associated with CS is ongoing criticism that many CS interventions have been welfare oriented, unsustainable, prone to creation of dependency and oriented towards gift giving and service delivery rather than the difficult task of grappling with underlying causes of child poverty. While the transfer of cash, clothing, gifts and direct cash payments to beneficiaries was an important feature of CS programs historically, leading CS INGOs have minimized or
moved away from the practice despite a resurgent interest in direct cash transfers from other types of organisation in recent years.

To some extent critics of CS-funded cash transfers are vindicated by leading CS INGOs that do not approve of the practice or have abandoned it. Plan Australia (2012, para 6) informs sponsors that ‘Plan has a policy of no cash gifts as this has proven to cause disharmony and problems within the family and community and may place children or their families at risk.’ Plan Australia many not have been referring to long-term cash transfers and it is not the purpose of this chapter to explore this criticism in depth. Rather, it is sufficient to note that such concerns are in keeping with MacAuslan and Riemenschneider’s (2011, p. 4) call for greater awareness of the relational impacts of cash transfers by INGOs and governments, rather than the economic benefits alone. Clearly, cash transfers offered with good intent but without careful research, targeting and support, are prone to the creation of jealousy, disharmony and mistrust in poor communities. For Plan Ethiopia staff in the mid-1970s, inoculation and service provision programs were based on the idea that ‘...they did see the disruptive and dependency-producing potential of direct injections of cash into what were essentially non-cash village economies’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 282). Acknowledgement of this has, over time, extended to gift giving when gifts have obvious cash value.

Welfare seems to be a troublesome word for many aid and development organisations, largely because of a paradigm shift in international aid that now idealises self-help, economic development, capacity building and sustainability.
The Australian NGO cooperation program (AusAID 2012, p. 6) for example excludes funding for welfare including ‘...orphanages, homes for the elderly, hospices, support to the disabled, and the provision of food for those who are destitute...’ For Sen and Muelbauer (1987) effective development emphasizes means rather than ends, and it values improved capabilities of people and groups, leading to greater ‘individual’ and ‘collective’ freedom for self-determination. This is extremely idealistic, and not particularly cognizant that oppression, corruption and misuse of power are often at the root of poverty. Nevertheless, interventions that improve collective or organisational capacity have gained favour within many large INGOs over those that rescue or assist individuals. The relatively new emphasis on community empowerment, capability, and capacity building, with an associated critical questioning of traditional, individual CS as a credible poverty alleviation tool, is evident in various non-CS INGO websites.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is circumspect when it comes to CS, stating, ‘ADRA aims to benefit whole communities rather than focus on individuals, as this builds up intra-community relationships’ (ADRA International 2014 para 18). The Caritas Australia website’s frequently asked question ‘Can I sponsor a child?’ is answered with a caution to readers that:

Caritas Australia does not believe focusing on individuals addresses the underlying causes of poverty. We are concerned that it may also isolate individuals from their own family and community. Sponsorship can also lead to families and communities becoming dependent on
aid rather than developing enterprise and initiative.... (Caritas Australia 2014, para 12)

Similarly, The DFID-funded *The Rough Guide to a Better World* (Wroe & Doney n.d., p. 86) generalizes that CS is expensive, creates dissatisfaction, reminds recipients of their dependence and ignores the root causes of poverty. In an unconscious appeal for a typology of CS activities, the authors remind readers that ‘In most cases ‘child sponsorship’ is a misnomer. It is community development by another name.’ Herein lies one of the most serious problems with debate over CS. While a number of leading CS INGOs have evolved their programming to emphasise community development and poverty reduction, critics seem poorly equipped to differentiate between types of CS-funded activity.

### 2.5 Towards a Typology of CS Funded Initiatives.

The CS INGOs featured in the case studies above have already transitioned, or are in the process of transitioning away from the exclusive support of individual children and their families to broad based poverty reduction initiatives and advocacy. Clearly there are a variety of historic and current CS-funded interventions and a strong case can be mounted that debate over CS would best be conducted with reference to a typology in order to move discussion beyond generic statements and criticisms to more nuanced analysis. In constructing a simple typology it soon becomes evident that several CS INGOs have evolved beyond micro-projects and individual welfare to ‘the battle of ideas’ and what Sogge (2002, p. 160) refers to as ‘the larger contexts of their work.’ Although
further work may be necessary in providing a definitive typology, what follows is an attempt to identify four broad types of programming. It is expected that the large majority of CS-funded initiatives in the Global South fall into one of the four. At the same time, it is acknowledged that some CS-funded programs may span types.

2.6 Individual or Institutional Child Sponsorship (IICS)

Brehm and Gale (2000, p. 2) classify CS INGOs into two classes, those that support programs targeted at development activity benefiting all children in a given community and those that ‘focus on the individual child as the recipient of the sponsor’s donation.’ Though it is not a sophisticated analysis, it is useful as a first step in differentiating CS-funded activity and is consistent with Livezey’s (1981) broad classification. For the purpose of this thesis the latter type is defined as the individual or institutional child sponsorship model (IICS). IICS is rooted in the social welfare work paradigm, applies specifically to children, and may justify direct service delivery to individual children in a home setting but more often in institutional care, predominantly orphanages and boarding schools.

Plan International’s early children’s colonies and CCF’s orphanages (such as Faith Love Home) typify institutional support provided in isolation from surviving family members or the child’s home community. It forms the basis of the post World War Two approach, in which disadvantaged individuals such as orphans, children with disability, or poor children, were identified as a matter of priority for special care. In this model of intervention the individual child’s situation was
documented, pictures were taken, and details sent to a donor nation either prior to sponsorship or soon after, where they were distributed and used to solicit or consolidate commitment from an individual donor for ongoing child support (sponsorship or foster parenting) in return for regular personalized feedback, usually in the form of letters, school reports, photos, cards and drawings.

In the IICS model, a child past or present would often receive varying degrees of assistance, often via a school or orphanage, including school fee help, uniforms, books, gifts and perhaps medical checks or food. Orphans, disabled children and boarding students often benefited from subsidised accommodation, food, substitute parental care and a variety of other benefits. In the case of Plan International a key program element was ‘Medical rehabilitation for severely injured children...’ (PLAN International 1998, p. 18) Though variations exist, it is not unfair to say that in IICS programs a significant amount, if not all of the sponsorship dollar benefits an individual child rather than family members or the community at large. This is not to say that others do not benefit. In many instances sponsorship funds have been paid directly to the school or institution rather than the individual or child’s family. Further, it should be noted that when large numbers of children are funded in schools and institutions that receive block funding for the children, non-sponsored children may benefit.

Historically the IICS model of ongoing funding for an individual child is the most enduring and perhaps the best known. It is largely though not exclusively (see the section below on IFCS) what the New Internationalist in the early 1980s was referring to when Stalker (1982, p. 1) indicated that the sponsorship of one
million children by international ‘foster parents’ was an extraordinary international exchange, yet headlined his article ‘Please do not sponsor this child.’ Stalker (1982, p. 2) was brutal, finding little merit in IICS and bluntly asserting that ‘…in almost every other way in which the donor is better off through a sponsorship scheme, the sponsored child or family is correspondingly worse off.’ In various forms, this particularly harsh assessment continues to reverberate in the aid industry. It is worth noting that the New Internationalist was co-founded by Oxfam, a non-CS INGO, and Stalker’s journalistic expose revealed a shift in thinking that had occurred as IICS persisted into a new era dominated by ideals of community development.

IICS and its current variants are usually placed by critics (such as Stalker) at the welfare end of the welfare and development spectrum. Still popular with the general public, they are much maligned by practitioners of community development and proponents of structural change. For example, Elliot (2010), who previously worked for Oxfam, asserts ‘the idea that individual children could be targeted and given sustainable development assistance was never sound and for a long time hasn’t been part of any kind of reputable development programming’. What Elliot does not say is that in the past, the notion that children could be targeted and given carefully directed welfare support was a credible idea in the context of social work programming!

To be fair to some CS INGOs that maintain IICS interventions, they do not claim that sponsorship is a highly effective method of community development. Nor do they claim to be interested in structural change, advocacy and sustainable
interventions designed to address underlying causes of poverty and disadvantage. Rather, and much to the chagrin of critics, they claim that individual sponsorship can change the life of a child. The distinction is important for an organisation like SOS Kinderdorf, which has predominantly sponsored orphans in specialist orphanages designed much like CCF’s group homes in Hong Kong in the 1950s. Legitimacy for SOS should therefore be assessed in terms of compliance with best practice in orphan care and child welfare rather than best practice in poverty reduction or community development. According to the SOS Children’s Village Programme Policy Children’s Villages are part of:

...a child development programme, with interventions that respond to the situation of children within our target group. These interventions focus on enabling children to develop to their full potential within a caring family environment (whether their family of origin or an SOS family), so that they are able to become self-supporting and contributing members of society. (SOS Kinderdorf n.d., p. 3)

Comparing SOS with a development organisation would be futile because the underlying programming is quite different. This does not stop critics however from asserting that the money would be better spent on community empowerment.

**Example of IICS - Asian Aid Organisation**

The emphasis of Asian Aid Australia’s program is the selection of highly disadvantaged children and direct service provision to individuals through institutions such as orphanages, day-schools, boarding-schools and special
education centres. In 2012 this small Australian CS INGO assisted less than 10,000 children in this manner, representing the bulk of funding dispersed to three countries in Southern Asia. Contrary to common criticisms of individual sponsorship which are discussed at length elsewhere in this thesis, Asian Aid Organization could be described as a cost efficient, faith-based organisation (typically retaining less than ten per cent of donated funds for administrative and marketing overheads). Financial efficiency is attainable because children are almost exclusively sponsored in an institutional setting consisting of private schools and orphanages.

Instead of maintaining a large team of social workers, children in the Asian Aid CS program have historically been identified by school staff and church pastors who have actively recruited on behalf of the implementing partners. Child information and updates are sourced directly from school or orphanage staff and marketing has relied on a low-cost marketing model prioritising church presentations and newsletters rather than engagement of celebrity endorsement and significant use of mass media. Unlike cash transfers to families, sponsorship funds have paid directly to schools and institutions rather than to individuals or families. In 2014 Australian sponsors could pay Asian Aid Australia rates from $30 to $100 month to subsidise the cost of students ranging from day scholars in village schools, to boarding students, orphans and university students (Asian Aid 2014, paras 1-6).

The question for organisations like Asian Aid is not whether individual sponsorship can benefit some very poor children who receive direct support,
scholarships or subsidies. Rather, the question is what proportion of children benefit, how significant the benefits are, and whether the support of individual children, often in isolation from their families or communities, can be justified as an impactful, cost-effective, legitimate poverty reduction intervention. For Asian Aid Australia staff consensus has emerged that sponsorship dollars are best spent when individual children benefit from improved capacity of schools and the broader education system to meet the needs of children in the community. To some extent this thinking reflects the early transition evident in ActionAid’s sponsorship program.

### 2.7 Individual and Family Child Sponsorship (IFCS)

The move to assisting children through families is seen in the emergence of Family Helper Programs. In some ways similar to the American AFDC program, Family Helper Programs run by Plan International and ChildFund in the 1960s and 1970s identified needy children using a casework approach. Rather than automatically placing needy children in orphanages or boarding schools, CS funds were increasingly funnelled to family members or used to provide welfare services or benefits to families and children, sometimes with cash transfers or direct gift giving to both children and family members- especially mothers. Usually, children remained with their families and communities. Arguably, this model of intervention was pioneered by Save the Children Fund in the 1920s (Watson, 2014a) when support was generally short term, did not utilise cash transfers direct to recipients, yet consisted of food and sometimes clothing provision to children who remained with families or care-givers (though this soon involved supported to children in institutions).
Like IICS, the emphasis of IFCS programs is on individual child welfare and development outcomes. However, unlike IICS, CS INGOs may identify a ‘needy’ community, select apparently needy children for sponsorship, and provide services within the community specifically targeting those children, family members and others. In such programs, the interventions offered by CS INGOs are aimed squarely at sponsored individual children or groups of sponsored children, and benefits are skewed towards these two groups rather than to community collaboration and empowerment at large.

**Example of IFCS - Compassion International**

Compassion Australia describes Compassion International as a ‘holistic child development’ organisation rather than a community development specialist. The terminology of child development is reminiscent of SOS Kinderdorf’s usage described in the previous section however the key difference is the choice of partner. While SOS has pursued institutional care for much of its history, Compassion now emphasises community-based partners. When it was founded in 1954, Compassion’s sponsorship program also facilitated monthly support of children in Korean orphanages, providing Bible lessons, food, clothing, shelter and medical aid to select children. By 1968 however, a new Family Helper Plan had begun in India, Indonesia, Haiti and Singapore and Compassion International also experimented with Special Care Centres from 1970, established to ‘treat children with physical handicaps and medical illness, offering relief through surgery, training, physical therapy, adequate nourishment and special equipment.’ Additionally, from 1974 sponsorship extended to children unlikely to receive an education through projects that ‘...pay for
teachers’ salaries, books, supplies, school uniforms, medical care and, in many instances, a hot, nutritious meal each school day’ (Compassion 2013, para 4). According to the Compassions website:

Compassion’s Child Sponsorship Program is comprehensive, holistic and unique. It’s dedicated to helping children find a path out of poverty through the love of Jesus Christ. By working with local churches, the Child Sponsorship Program offers educational opportunities, health care and health-related instruction, nutrition, life-skills training, and opportunities to hear about and respond to the gospel. (Compassion 2012, para 1)

In the example above, Compassion indicates that it partners directly with Christian church groups in poor countries to deliver services to sponsored children through a community group (local church), within the context of their communities. To an extent this is building the capacity of local church to respond to needs in its own community and this may complicate its categorization somewhat. However, a Compassion child typically receives benefits from one-to-one sponsorship in the form of medical or dental care, food, clothing, primary education assistance or tutoring, secondary education/vocational training assistance, and youth programs offered through local churches. Rather than provide institutional care, the emphasis is on individuals and their families as beneficiaries, within the setting of their community. The broad community surrounding children is not necessarily a beneficiary of CS funding.
The use of community centres is not unique to Compassion. In the 1960s, Plan International provided what we might be called child development services to children. In 1967 Plan’s Metro Manila centre provided health care, vocational training, day-care, a cooperative store and a range of counselling services and group activities at a single large compound (PLAN International 1998, pp. 35-36). Likewise, Children International (CI) continues to provide a sophisticated range of services to children and their families through community centres. CI has more than 80 centres which serve approximately 335,000 impoverished residents in urban slums, offering ‘...a safe reprieve from the social and environmental hazards that threaten children and their families in deeply impoverished areas, while also providing a diverse variety of programs and activities that foster personal growth, citizen security, self-sufficiency and improved community cohesion’ (Cook & Guinn 2014, p. 192). As hubs for social service provision these centres do not resemble early programs involving provision of food baskets to women.

It is necessary at this point to note that CI and Compassion International run programs in the context of local community. However, this does not mean that the broad local community around the child benefits significantly. While the emphasis on families blurs the definition in this case, it is argued that the individual child and the child’s family is still the primary beneficiary and that child development remains a paramount objective. It is therefore possible that two classes of poor children exist in areas with such programs, those who receive direct assistance and those who do not. Children are served in the community, without concurrent commitment to empowering the broader community to serve
children or address underlying causes of poverty. Where individual gift giving remains an important feature of IICS or IFCS, it continues to attract concern for its potential to be divisive and to cause jealousy.

2.8 Community Development Child Sponsorship (CDCS)

The community development model of child sponsorship (CDCS) provides a departure from individual child welfare or child development, and is aligned with community development ideology. It may be less oriented to the selection of very poor individual children for special benefits than to the transformative impact on the community surrounding disadvantaged children and their families. The logic is simple: to truly change the life of disadvantaged children, in a sustainable way, one must change the complex dynamics that contribute to child poverty and work with community to foster change. CS funds used for community development must necessarily empower children, families and the community.

Brehm and Gale (2000, p. 2) have observed that such funding models ‘use the funds to support development programs based in the community in which the sponsored child lives, to benefit all children in the community.’ Rather than seeking to identify the most needy children in the community, in the pretence that they will exclusively benefit, contemporary CDCS positions sponsored children as ambassadors and a necessary link in the fundraising process. Duly photographed and processed, the children or youth are used to solicit sponsorship donations and they therefore function as a medium or conduit through which funding flows to the benefit of the whole community when the
funds are pooled for interventions such as economic development (microcredit and loans), education (primary and secondary) and health projects (including nutrition, primary health-care and risk reduction). In transitioning from individual child and family support, CS INGOs have often maintained some direct benefits to children, such as clothing and school items, while increasing the amount of the sponsorship dollar for community development initiatives.

Example of CDCS - World Vision

World Vision is a leading proponent of the use of individual CS as a fundraising device for broad-based community development and direct service provision. To some extent it has transitioned through the same stages as Plan International and ChildFund though it was founded later, in the early 1950s. This transition is evidenced in Figure 2e. It can be seen that by the 1980s World Vision had begun to dabble in community development projects in areas where children were sponsored, whereas previously it emphasised institutional child welfare (IICS) and community based child welfare (IFCS).

Figure 2e Early Approaches: Trends and Learnings in World Vision CS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Sponsorship approach and beneficiaries</th>
<th>World Vision learnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950–60s</td>
<td>Institutional child welfare&lt;br&gt;One sponsor/one child beneficiary&lt;br&gt;Assistance to orphans in institutions</td>
<td>Succeeded in providing long-term care for orphans&lt;br&gt;Not community-based – few family or community benefits&lt;br&gt;Not sustainable – institutions required ongoing funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Community-based child welfare&lt;br&gt;One sponsor/one child or family</td>
<td>Succeeded in improving education wellbeing of very poor children&lt;br&gt;Not sustainable. Didn’t address</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
beneficiary
Assistance to individual children and their families in poor communities, often for schooling

root causes of poverty.
Tendency towards welfare dependency, jealousy and undermined parental role/dignity.
Paternalism rather than partnership

1980s
Community-based child welfare and community development (community focus)
One sponsor/one child or one community beneficiary
Assistance to individual children and their families, increasingly linked to small community development projects (typically a ‘village’) with focus almost exclusively on sponsored children

Succeeded in pioneering better community support
Some processes could be seen to undermine parental role/dignity and led to jealousy if applied without equity
Limited sustainability and low impact on underlying causes of poverty
More service delivery and less community empowerment

Source: Pierce & Kalaiselvi 2014, p. 143

The World Vision Australia website (2011, paras 1-6) poignantly described the impact of CDCS on Levy, a four-year-old Zambian child sponsored by Kate, an Australian. According to World Vision Australia’s marketing department, Levy was ‘small, and malnourished. Going to bed hungry was normal…the water Levy drank was dirty and it often made him sick. He barely had the energy to move…’

In this account CS is the catalyst for change. Through pooled sponsorship funds utilized in a World Vision Area Development Plan (ADP):

He had grown considerably and was healthier, stronger and had lots of energy to play with friends… Levy’s family had developed a garden…and Levy was now eating two nutritious meals a day…now there was a borehole only 200m from their house that the whole community was benefiting from… The support…also helped Levy’s
community build a school and health clinic… He attends school regularly… (World Vision Australia 2011, paras 1-6)

Although the story above is clearly designed for marketing purposes, rather than a comprehensive account of the ADP methodology, it clearly explained World Vision’s commitment at that time to a CDCS model. World Vision Australia effectively communicates the impact of interventions on individuals (thus maintaining the marketing advantages of individual CS) within the context of community development initiatives (aimed at strengthening the community around the child). The reality however is that this simplifies World Vision’s development programming. In its *Handbook for Development Programs* (World Vision International 2011, p. 8) we read that the preferred role of World Vision is to ‘serve as a catalyst and builder of the capacity of local partners and partnerships for child well-being.’

The shift in World Vision programming took place in 1979 when it pledged to move fifty per cent of its childcare projects to development by 1984 when there would be over 1 million children sponsored (Watkins 1998, p. 5). World Vision Area Development programs arose from this transition, based on the idea that impact could be maximised if World Vision targeted specific geographic areas for long term community development initiatives. This may be seen below in Figure 2f.
Throughout the 1990s and particularly since 2000, World Vision has emphasized community development and capacity building although it should be said that within the World Vision partnership, not all donor offices have entirely transitioned. The current Development Planning Approach emphasizes local partners and actors as primary stakeholders, prioritizes rights-based approaches and fosters some local advocacy. The Citizen Voice and Action component of
World Vision Area Development programs (began in 2005) was present in 209 ADPs in 29 countries by 2011 (World Vision 2011, p. 2) and is central to the Child Health Now campaign which educates citizens about their rights, and explains how rights are articulated under local law. This means that in theory:

...communities work collaboratively with government and service providers to compare reality against government’s own commitments... Finally, communities work with other stakeholders to influence decision-makers to improve services, using a simple set of advocacy tools. As government services improve, so does the well-being of children. (World Vision International 2011, p. 1)

At time of writing, ADPs are said to equip local staff and partners to contribute to the sustained well-being of children through integration and contextualization of child-focused development and through ‘...advocacy, disaster management, and critical aspects of partnering and supporter engagement, building on local assets and existing community efforts towards child well-being.’ (Pierce & Kalaiselvi 2014, p. 145) This is indeed far removed from the early work of World Vision as an orphan care provider!

2.9 Rights-based Child Sponsorship (RBCS)

A Rights-based CS model (RBCS) utilizes funds to promote the human rights of children and other community members, advocating for systemic change and mobilizing local resources and communities in the pursuit of justice. Reflecting on ActionAid’s evolution over time, Archer (2010, pp. 615-17) has observed that
by 1997 ActionAid had articulated a new approach to education which involved moving ‘from providing to enabling’, a strategy justified by the belief that ‘The challenge for the 2010s is to connect program, policy and campaigning work at all levels.’ This is brave talk and although there is often a gap between action and rhetoric, it is evident that ActionAid has made significant progress in moving beyond a service provision mentality to building capacities of local communities and network partners to maintain pressure on governments and international institutions utilising grassroots advocacy.

While many INGOs currently use the issue of rights to justify and legitimate their interventions, it is argued here that few have, and are capable of making the painful transition away from service provider and remote advocate to genuine partner and facilitator of direct action and grass-roots advocacy. Advocacy is political, making some of Action-Aid’s work highly controversial and perhaps even unpopular with those who wield and exercise power. Perhaps this accounts partially for ActionAid staff unwillingness to be interviewed for the purpose of this thesis and the book that has resulted from it.

**Example of RBCS - Plan International**

In a recent report, Plan International (2008) reiterated support for what it calls Child Centred Community Development (CCCD), adopted as a planning tool for use in developing countries to benefit all children in a community rather than just the sponsored ones. The authors (Vijfeijken et al. 2009, p. 78) acknowledge Plan International’s long history as a needs-based change agent working at community level through individual sponsorship and direct service delivery, an
emphasis still evident in many country offices despite the emergence of a rights-based approach (RBA). However, in assessing the recent strategic shift of Plan Guatemala, they note a departure for their previous work involving direct provision of goods and services to sponsored children, essentially using a welfare model of assistance:

Under CCCD, Plan redefined its role and responsibility in development processes and moved towards a facilitating role in an effort to enhance the ability of local stakeholders, including state actors, communities, and domestic civil society organisations, to create the changes necessary for sustained development progress.

(Vijfeijken, et al 2011, p. 5)

It is interesting that Plan International has considered the potential for its programs to morph into an ‘activist’ model of sponsorship that ‘anticipates children/communities/sponsors being involved in lobbying decision makers.’ In the context of Latin America, this is not surprising, and the potential strategy is consistent with ActionAid’s emphasis on grassroots advocacy and the empowerment of local agency in the quest to hold duty bearers accountable for the changes and services that ultimately benefit children, families and communities. In seeking to facilitate strong bottom-up advocacy, running in parallel with community-based initiatives, there is some justification for coining the term Rights-based CS (RBCS). Arguably, there is a distinction between rights-based interventions (in which interventions are justified by ones’ understanding of the rights of the beneficiaries/partners) and rights-based
community empowerment evidenced by collaborative processes in which donor INGOs genuinely foster the ability of grassroots organisations and social movements to agitate and strategize for the fulfilment of their own rights, using their own resources.

Utilisation of sponsorship funding for rights-based community empowerment and grassroots advocacy is problematic, not just because of the inevitable conflict that arises between INGOs that take sides with the poor, and are blamed by the powerful, but because shifting the mindset of sponsors beyond patronage to partnership in the seeking of justice may be a step too far. A critical question for such organisations is the extent to which individual sponsorship as a fundraising tool is adaptable to community empowerment and rights-based activism given the reality of a large gap between donor expectations and programmatic realities. Vijfeijken et al. (2009, pp. 76-77) argues that Plan International takes a bottom-up approach to rights-based development that differs from strategies of other rights-based development organisations. Unlike ActionAid, Plan is not working to support local movements and grassroots organisations (GROs) to claim their rights but instead focuses on strengthening existing community structures as democratic expressions of community life. This is perhaps a wise move for organisations that wish to remain welcome and politically neutral. Thus the focus of Plan International lies (so far) less on grassroots activism but instead on the practical exercise of human (and child) rights by local communities and their ability to participate in local democratic process. Plan International does not have a monopoly on this approach. World Vision
International also claims to be engaging in child rights however, it is argued here that Plan is further along in its experimentation in area.

### 2.10 Conclusion

It is unfortunate that debate over CS has also been constrained by a frustratingly simplistic use of CS as a blanket term that disregards diversity in the sector. However, this also provides an opportunity to clarify the broad nature of programs funded by CS income streams. In the absence of a typology this chapter has used case studies to show that large CS INGOs have evolved in their use of programmatic strategy, moving loosely from individual child welfare, to family support, and then to community development. In large CS INGOs with multiple implementing offices worldwide, it is likely that change has been uneven within organisations with different types of CS funded program operating simultaneously. However in the cases explored in this section the trends are clear (see Figure 2g).
**Figure 2g - CS Intervention Comparison Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IICS Individual/Institutional</th>
<th>IFCS Individual/Community</th>
<th>CDCS Community Development</th>
<th>RBCS Rights Based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Development oriented</td>
<td>Child Development oriented</td>
<td>Community development oriented</td>
<td>Social systems and advocacy oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowers/assists individuals</td>
<td>Empowers / assists individuals &amp; family members</td>
<td>Empowers communities across a range of sectors</td>
<td>Empowers communities, disadvantaged groups and seeks 'justice'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivers via schools and institutions as partners</td>
<td>Delivers via institutions/local church and local community as partners</td>
<td>Delivers via dev orgs, Southern NGOs government and community organisations as partners</td>
<td>Delivers via dev orgs, influential grassroots orgs and social movements, networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links donors to individuals assisted in an institution e.g. a school or orphanage</td>
<td>Links donors to individuals assisted in the context of their families</td>
<td>Links donors to individuals for service delivery to communities or integrated community development</td>
<td>Links donors to individuals and communities for community development, advocacy and rights-based mobilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets individual beneficiaries for majority of assistance</td>
<td>Targets individuals, families and some groups of individuals for assistance</td>
<td>Targets whole communities for assistance, increasingly on a large scale</td>
<td>Targets whole communities and disadvantaged groups for advocacy and assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes individual child improvement</td>
<td>Promotes child holistic development</td>
<td>Promotes sustainable community development</td>
<td>Promotes networking, systemic change and altered power relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addresses impacts of poverty at an individual level for long term impact</td>
<td>Addresses impacts of poverty at an individual level for long-term impact, often involved in local service delivery</td>
<td>Addresses underlying local/regional causes of poverty. Significant capacity</td>
<td>Addresses underlying local causes of poverty and systemic injustice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks short-term and long-term individual impact</td>
<td>Seeks long-term individual impact and some community capacity improvement</td>
<td>Seeks long-term capacity building and community impact</td>
<td>Seeks long-term capacity building, mobilization of rights activists and empowerment of social movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation top-down Reporting to donors Focus on outputs rather than impact. Beneficiaries viewed as passive</td>
<td>Evaluation top-down Reporting to donors Focus on outputs rather than impact Emerging commitment to data and evaluation. Heavy use of outside experts</td>
<td>Evaluation participatory. Focus on outcomes Programs increasingly data-driven. NGO becomes accountable to beneficiaries as well as donors. Beneficiaries viewed as partners and experts</td>
<td>Evaluation participatory. Focus on outcomes Genuine, bottom-up, collaborative evaluation. NGO accountable to beneficiaries and donors Declining Focus on reporting to donors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Watson 2014, p. 61*
Having proposed a typology of CS-funded interventions, inevitable questions must be raised with three caveats. Firstly, many CS INGOs may not neatly fit the typology. Secondly, CS INGOs may use sponsorship funding for IICS, IFCS and CDCS simultaneously, having neither abandoned child welfare nor having fully embraced new programmatic strategies. Finally, CS INGOs are may fund other interventions using non-CS income. Nevertheless, we might ask, is this typology inclusive enough to adequately categorize most CS-funded work past and present? If so, in the current climate in which INGO legitimacy is questioned, is it desirable, or possible for CS INGOs to transition to RBCS as ActionAid and Plan are seeking to do? Is it possible to be a legitimate, effective partner in poverty reduction at each level of the proposed typology, given the small size of some organisations and their limited capacity? And, to what extent is diversity in the CS INGO sector an asset? How might we measure success and benchmark good practice?

Despite some recent progress, the INGO sector at large is notorious in that ‘Internal evaluations are rarely released, and what is released comes closer to propaganda than rigorous assessment.’ (Edwards & Hulme 2002, p. 6)

Undoubtedly some CS INGOs are still stuck in what Van Rooy (cited in Eade & Ligttering 2001 p. 37) refers to as the ‘do now, think later mentality’. In fairness, however, many are stuck in a ‘do now, research later because the need is great and funds are short mentality’. A prominent recent exception is work conducted by Wydick et al. (2013, pp. 425-426) on Compassion International’s holistic child development programs in five countries. They found (among other important indicators) that Compassion sponsorship increases
years of completed schooling by ‘1.03-1.46 years over a baseline of 10.19 years and increases the probability of primary school completion by 4.0-7.7 percentage points (baseline 88.7%), secondary school completion by 11.6-16.5 percentage points (baseline 44.9 percent).’ Such findings support the credibility of Compassion’s CS program as an IFCS intervention predicated on child development, however they cannot be used to assess the value of this form of CS as a catalyst for broad-based poverty reduction at a community level.

Lingan et al. (2009, p. 1) observe that INGOs have made, and continue to make, ambitious claims about the impact and influence of their activities. However, the claim that a small donation each month can change the life of a child, or the capacity of the community surrounding the child, is best judged by placing CS INGO activity in a typology that facilitates informed discussion by INGO staff and the beneficiaries whose voices are strikingly absent in the debate over legitimacy. Lister (2003, p. 16) reminds us that legitimacy goes beyond questions of accountability, representation and performance to ask legitimate for whom and ‘does some legitimacy matter more than other legitimacy?’
Section 3 – Research Methodology

3.1 Research questions

Prior to the writing of this thesis, the author’s central questions were relatively simple. Why was it that CS had attracted so much criticism since the 1980s? On what basis had these criticisms been made? How was it that many of the common criticisms of CS continued to be circulated despite obvious changes in CS INGOs? Did these criticisms apply to a current CS program funded by an Australian INGO with which the author had sponsored children personally? Why had other CS INGOs evolved away from child welfare activity and direct service delivery to community development and beyond?

It seemed, at the time, that these questions would not be onerous to answer. A standard literature review would soon reveal why CS was in such disrepute, what the drivers for change were, and fieldwork conducted in India and Nepal would probably confirm that historic critique was well founded. Fortunately, the task proved more difficult than anticipated! Early work on the literature review revealed that the multi-billion dollar CS industry had, to a large extent, escaped concerted scholarly scrutiny, that the origins of CS had become obscure with the passing of time, and that much of the historic critique had not been updated or contextualised. The researcher found, much to his surprise, that a book exploring issues in, and drivers for change in CS organisations did not exist.

Cognizant of widespread and on-going critique of CS and a lack of published research on the topic, the author of this thesis resolved to develop a typology of
CS INGO interventions (necessary to differentiate between current CS programs and contextualise critique), discover which organisation had in fact pioneered CS, work with CS INGOs to publish the first scholarly book on the topic concurrent with the thesis, acquire a grant to investigate a current CS program which had changed little over 30 years, and explore the drivers at the forefront of the evolution of CS INGOs.

Two of the tasks listed above require discussion in this Section. Firstly, investigation of the origins of CS began with a widespread and somewhat confusing attempt to locate examples of early CS through a literature review however, eventually necessitated archival research at Birmingham University’s Cadbury Collection, relating primarily to Save the Children Fund in the UK. Secondly, acquisition of a grant to investigate a current CS INGO program necessitated three months of fieldwork in India and Nepal in 2011 with application for ethics approval from Deakin University. The four key questions that came to underpin archival research are listed below in Figure 3a.

**Figure 3a Four Key Questions for Archival Research**

1. When did CS emerge as a fundraising mechanism?
2. What was the historical context of early CS?
3. How were CS funds used to impact children?
4. What tensions existed in early CS programs?

An additional four key research questions underpin the fieldwork component of research into the ChildHelper sponsorship program. These may be seen below in Figure 3b. On condition of anonymity, the CS INGO program selected for the
case study is referred to as ChildHelper, a fictitious name chosen to reflect the organisation’s commitment to helping poor children and disadvantaged youth through subsidized primary, secondary and tertiary education utilising a model of intervention aligned with IICS.

Figure 3b Summary of Four Key Questions Underpinning Field Research and development of a case study on ChildHelper

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What merits and disadvantages are highlighted by youth, teachers and administrators?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Are the merits and disadvantages consistent with broader critique in the literature?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>What is the impact of the sponsorship program on the sustainability and capacity of the school system it partners with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Is the intervention sufficiently impactful on children, their families and communities to justify continuation of the model or should the organisation evolve its intervention approach? What recommendations may be made?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 ChildHelper and researcher overview

The CS model chosen for study in this thesis is utilised by an Australian and USA based INGO which facilitates IICS for approximately 9,000 children, predominantly in India and Bangladesh with a small number supported in Nepal. At the time of writing, poor children are selected for varying amounts of sponsorship disbursed to education providers (not to children or their families) to cover the costs associated with private education (either day schooling, boarding school, special education in boarding schools or costs associated with higher education). The large majority of children and youth attend a local primary or secondary school as day scholars. Sponsorship typically covers the
cost of tuition, uniforms and other educational expenses, or medical expenses as needs arise. A small number of students live at orphanages (though their status is often somewhat unclear) funded by the INGO or attend special schools including a school for the blind and a school for the deaf. The CS model of intervention utilised by ChildHelper is reliant on institutional/school care and has been driven by donor offices in Australia and the USA. Until 2011 the CS INGO had operated with a very small staff that had not been trained in child welfare work or in community development. In several respects the model of care provided (IICS) aligns with World Vision and ChildFund initiatives in the 1950s and 1960s explored in Section 2.

An important consideration in the research was the researcher’s own positionality. Bourke (2014, p. 1) affirms the idea that research is a process, rather than a product and argues that the identities of researchers and research participants may influence or impact the research process both subtly and directly. The extent to which researchers themselves are ‘read’, ‘interpreted’ and ‘understood’ by research subjects is likely to differ from project to project however it is increasingly evident to commentators on researcher positionality that consideration of this dynamic is fundamental and ‘it is important for researchers to consider what they are doing and how or why they are doing it, as well as thinking about who they are.’ (Hopkins 2007 p.387) Consideration of the positionality of the researcher was fundamental to the research project. The researcher is a lecturer in International Poverty and Development Studies at an Australian higher education provider and a former staff member of ChildHelper, having worked for the organisation for one year in 2003. The researcher also
served the INGO as a volunteer company director for four years after cessation of formal employment, however had no current involvement in the year prior to fieldwork. As a former employee and volunteer director, the researcher was a consistent proponent of community development (as opposed to individual CS), and had previously sought to create opportunity for programmatic transition to alternative sponsorship models. Additionally, the researcher applied for and received an AUD$10,000 research grant from the CS INGO to partially cover costs of the research, with assistance in kind from the implementing partner in India.

Three important issues are evident in terms of ethical research. Firstly, the researcher’s independence may be questioned since he was a direct recipient of funding from the INGO he studied during fieldwork. However, it is noteworthy that the researcher developed the methodology independently, gathered the data in the absence of INGO staff and analysed data without INGO staff input or oversight. Given that a number of the findings are unsettling, one might presume that the researcher operated with a strong degree of autonomy reflected in the findings and recommendations.

Secondly, unequal power dynamics between research subjects and the researcher were unavoidable given that the researcher is male, Caucasian in appearance, highly educated, an ex-employee and ex-director of the board of management while research participants were typically less powerful male and female children, youth, and NGO staff. Although such power and gender dynamics can never be entirely removed, mitigation necessitated removal of the
lecturer from all roles with ChildHelper two years prior to fieldwork research and consistent representation of the researcher as an independent academic bound by conditions of participant confidentiality. The researcher committed to building rapport with research subjects with all data gathered based on personal interviews or researcher led group activity and surveying. At all times research participants were informed that the research was both an academic study and that de-identified results would be shared with ChildHelper to inform project improvement. Identification of the researcher with ChildHelper was considered to be a potential threat to frank, open participation in focus groups and individual interviews with assurance from local NGO staff that youth would find it difficult to share their opinions freely. However, there were unexpected benefits of coming in as a foreigner and for the most part participants seemed to interpret this positionality favourably.

Finally, the researcher’s personal bias towards ideals of holistic community development and community empowerment were an obvious potential impediment to unbiased research. This required selection of research tools that enabled participant feedback and data analysis that would give strong voice to participants in identifying their own perception of merits and disadvantages of the current program.

3.3 Constraints and opportunities

Hulme (2000 p. 80) has observed that impact assessment studies are increasingly mandated by INGOs. Though this may be the case with many large INGOs, it is noteworthy that for ChildHelper the case study reported in this
thesis would be the first concerted effort to facilitate research on its sponsorship program. When approached by the researcher, ChildHelper embraced the opportunity to facilitate independent research, expressing strong interest in gaining evidence of impact for the purpose of programmatic improvement, evolution of the sponsorship program and strategic planning.

Although its small size and historic commitment to low administrative expenditure had previously limited opportunity for facilitation of independent research, a progressive leadership team and board of management viewed this research project as a useful step towards validation and assessment of program effectiveness. However, the following constraints were experienced. The researcher was not granted access to ChildHelper’s CS program in Bangladesh. ChildHelper staff in Australia were not included as research subjects. Additionally, no sponsors were consulted at the request of ChildHelper.

Rather than evaluate whether ChildHelper’s program objectives were being met (briefly summarised as helping children overcome poverty through educational support), or what the long-term impact was on children in terms of personal development, future employment and community leadership, the case study set out to explore the weaknesses and strengths of the CS programme from the perspective of beneficiaries, family members, school staff and administrators using the principle of convergent validity (simply, validation of findings using different methods of data gathering). The researcher’s goal was to explore a variety of perspectives on program impact - better described as a collage of perspectives woven together into a coherent representation using thematic
analysis. A mixed methodology approach was negotiated with ChildHelper involving a formal survey for sponsored children, individual individuals for key informants and participatory evaluation activities involving small groups of sponsored children and teachers. To support this end, ChildHelper offered the researcher access to program staff, children and partner schools in India and Nepal for a three-month period in 2011.

While the field research component of this research project represents a significant attempt to capture a variety of perspectives on the efficacy of the ChildHelper sponsorship program, it is acknowledged that it cannot be viewed as a comprehensive project evaluation. The reasons for this are explained more fully below.

3.4 Research design

As explained earlier, this thesis reports on the results of both archival research and fieldwork study of the ChildHelper program. Archival research relating to the origins of CS consisted of two strands of enquiry. Firstly, based on an obscure reference to early child sponsorship in a book by Kathleen Freeman (1965), the researcher partnered with Save the Children UK to spend a week in the Save the Children Archives held at the Cadbury Research Centre, University of Birmingham, UK. While there, historic sources from the period 1920 to 1940 were discovered relating to CS. These were perused, copied, ordered and analysed to extract information relating to when CS emerged as a fundraising mechanism at Save the Children Fund UK, the historical context, early use of funds and emergent tensions. Given that this process relies on historiographical
methods and extraction of data from primary sources, designed to ‘describe institutions, programmes and practices as they have evolved over time’ the archival research may be classified as a historical case study (Savin-Baden & Major 2013, p. 157).

The broader concept of a ‘case study’ was considered and subsequently adopted for fieldwork research despite the reality that there is ‘...a decided lack of clarity in the literature about what a case study is, due in part to imprecision in terminology and in part to disagreements by scholars’ (Savin-Baden & Major 2013, p. 157). Nonetheless, case study is an enduring and important means of framing qualitative research separate from phenomenology, ethnography, biography and grounded theory (see Creswell 2013 pp. 104-106). The earliest case studies were utilised in clinical medicine, prominent examples of which are to be found in Sigmund Freud’s studies of individuals, however case studies also became popular in education in the 1960s and 1970s with the single case study attracting most criticism. Merriam (1998, p. 27) concludes that the single most important characteristic of a case study lies in delimiting the object of study: the case, which is potentially a phenomenon the researcher can demarcate or ‘fence in.’

In keeping with Merriam (1998) and Creswell’s (2013) definition of a case study, the investigator sought to explore a bounded or demarcated system (in this instance an IICS program affecting approximately 9,000 children) through ‘...detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information...’ resulting in a ‘...case description and case themes.’ Cognizant of the
characteristics of five qualitative research designs, Creswell et al. (2013 p. 98) argues that a program situated in a time or place is suited to a case study approach and may be viewed as an intrinsic case (after Stake 1995) if the purpose is to understand a specific issue, problem or concern. This is consistent with Simons’ (2009, p. 21) view that case study utilises different methods to engage in ‘an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a “real-life” context.’ Such qualifications position a relatively small child sponsorship program as an ideal though potentially unwieldy case study.

Savin-Baden & Major (2013, p. 153) note that for some researchers, case study refers to the written product of qualitative study rather than to the methodology employed. In similar vein, Merriam (1998, p. 29) argues that a case study is defined more by the process than by specific data collection methods. For Merriam, a case study is about focussing instead on ‘holistic description and explanation.’ Stake (2005) concurs, positing that a case study is not so much a methodology but a choice of what is to be explored and researched, a view echoed by Thomas (2011, p. 9) who suggests that ‘...it is a focus and the focus is on one thing, looked at in depth and from many angles.’ It is unsurprising then that case studies may require the use of several forms of data collection resulting in rich description. Case studies of organisations are by nature difficult to replicate, are time-consuming and tend to be reliant on the subjective interpretation of the researcher who is left to make sense of and describe experience and perception.
Mutual agreement between the researcher and ChildHelper required that several methods of data collection would be employed which would give voice to various beneficiaries and other stakeholders in regards to their personal experience of IICS and their perceptions of the impact of IICS on youth, families and communities (including their schools). This thesis underscores the point that while ambiguity exists as to the parameters of case studies; the case study approach is served well when informed by judicious collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data (see Savin-Baden & Major 2013, p. 153) from a cohort large enough to make some generalisations about a broad program. As an approach to writing, it is accepted in this thesis that case studies are characterised by being bounded (narrowed to the issue of IICS), limited (to youth, school staff, administrators), holistic (describing the whole of the case), particularistic (focussing on perceived merits and disadvantages of IICS to youth, families and communities), contextual (positioning the case in the broader realm of CS) and concrete (Savin-Baden & Major 2013, p. 153).

Thomas’s etymological distinction between ‘case’ as a container (derived from the Latin capsa, meaning ‘box,’ or ‘container’) and ‘case’ as an occurrence (derived from the Latin casus, meaning ‘event,’ ‘fall’ or ‘accident’) is helpful and can be used to better understand the subtleties and ‘messiness’ of case study typology (Thomas 2011, p. 12). While some cases are centred on a short-duration event, the fieldwork research described in this thesis is centred on a bounded program leading to the experience of CS over a long period of time. Merriam (1998) makes an important distinction regarding types of case, asserting that in the instance of a heuristic case study, data is able to shed light
on a phenomenon, explaining reasons for a problem, background and accounts of what happened and why. This is perhaps a simplification given that the rigour of heuristic inquiry is based on systematic observation, and dialogue with self and others, emphasising connectedness, depictions of essential meanings and visibility of individuals (Patton 2002, pp. 108-109).

For Merriam, a descriptive case study is more literal and complete in reporting research findings, illustrating complexity of a situation and presenting information from a wide variety of sources and viewpoints in keeping with the ‘thick description’ of anthropology. However, Savin-Baden & Major (2013, pp. 155-156) note that there is a typology of case study loosely organised around purpose. Thus, Yin’s concept of an evaluative case study is used when researchers seek to go beyond description, progressing to ‘...judging the merit or worth of a case. This type of case study is often used in organisations...’ (cited in Savin-Baden & Major 2013, p. 155). In essence then, the case study of IICS proposed in this thesis may be seen as descriptive rather than heuristic, and loosely evaluative. It fits one of Stenhouse’s (1985, p. 64) observations that case study can be evaluative, designed to provide decision makers with information needed to evaluate programs or institutions. For this reason the researcher was provided a research grant on condition that findings would be shared with the INGO and that its directors would be briefed on the outcomes.

Thomas (2011, p. 16) notes there are two parts used to conceptualize a case study, namely the subject and the analytical frame or object. While this may be unduly limiting, it is functional and serves the purpose in this thesis of
conceptualising the fieldwork. The subject of this case study is a traditional IICS program funded by ChildHelper in India and Nepal in 2011. The analytical frame is stakeholder perception of merits and impact of the IICS program. Each young person, family member, teacher, school principal and administrator (all stakeholders) experiences the phenomenon of sponsorship in different ways, each ‘seeing’ IICS through the lens of their own experience, feelings, and worldview, representing not just sub-groups (research cohorts) but arguably, sub-cases. The researcher is positioned as Stake’s (2005, pp. 444-449) ever-reflective interpreter, whose task it is to organise the study around issues and questions that help deepen understanding of the theme or themes of the case, and ultimately, the merits of the case. With no pretence of the ability to generalise findings to other cases of IICS run by historic or contemporary INGOs, it nevertheless promises to offer a rich picture or collage, with numerous insights gleaned from what Thomas (2011, p.16) refers to as different angles and different types of information. It is expected that the case, as presented by the researcher, is a synthesis of multiple perspectives, a tapestry woven with numerous threads.

Although there is no commonly agreed method for constructing a case study, Patton (2002, p. 450) highlights a simple, three step process involving assembly of raw case data about the program, construction of a case record in a manageable file and writing of a case study as a readable, descriptive picture or story. He notes that ‘A case study should be sufficiently detailed and comprehensive to illuminate the focus of enquiry without becoming boring and laden with trivia. A skilfully crafted case reads like fine weaving.’ This is however
an oversimplification of the process and lacking one critical step, namely, the construction of a methodology for the assembly and analysis of raw case data. The adage ‘We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are’ - often though perhaps incorrectly attributed to Nin, (1961, 145) - is a warning to potential researchers that our representation of reality is both subjective and prone to our own interpretive response. To some extent this is unavoidable in the development of a case study however the careful selection of good data goes far in informing the way the case is represented. It is to this aspect of the fieldwork that this section now turns.

3.5  Methodology

The case study approach to qualitative research can be criticised as ‘a sort of catch-all category for research that is not a survey or an experiment and is not statistical in nature’ (Merriam 1998, p. 19). Further, while various writers identify case study as a unique approach to qualitative research, according to Savin-Baden & Major (2013, p. 153) it is unclear how the various proponents position the case study approach methodologically. Indeed, Merriam (1998, p. 29) goes so far as to say that case study does not lay claim to specific data collection methods, focussing instead on ‘holistic description and explanation.’ Nevertheless, as explained earlier the purpose of this particular field research project may be loosely categorised as an evaluative case study requiring widespread data collection, multiple sources of evidence, creation of a case study database, development of a chain of evidence and analysis using thematic coding (Yin, 2003) underpinned by a mixed methods approach or mixed methodology, involving qualitative and quantitative research with high priority
given to interviews, focus groups and a written survey. Denscombe (2007, p. 109) notes that a mixed method research project is in keeping with the principles of triangulation, providing opportunity to check the findings from one method against the findings from another.

Writing as early as 1989 Denzin (1989, p. 307) observed that ‘By combining multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources, (researchers) can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single observer, and single theory studies.’ In keeping with Denscombe’s (2007, p. 114) proviso that ‘there might be occasions when the research is best served by conducting the contrasting alternatives alongside each other at the same time’, this project involved the simultaneous use of quantitative and qualitative data gathering with findings in each method informing researcher conclusions regarding the case. This is consistent with Creswell’s (cited in Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010, p. 51) claim that ‘…mixed methods is more than simply the collection of two independent strands of quantitative (Quan) and qualitative (Qual) data.’ Rather, it is the potentially rich combination of data from conceptually different methodologies that makes mixed methodology approaches so attractive, albeit difficult to enact and write about.

**Sampling**

Thomas (2011, p. 62) argues that probabilistic sampling is irrelevant to case studies, insofar as ‘...the point of a case study is not to find a portion that shows the quality of the whole... it’s a selection.’ While dismissive of the need to demonstrate reliability and validity in case studies, he concedes that case study
may involve component methods and ‘In certain of those component methods you will certainly want to ensure that you pay close attention to reliability and validity.’ In the instance of an evaluative case study, one might argue that a more direct approach to sampling is required if one is to generalise about the impacts of a program for improvement. A researcher would, arguably, be more interested in sampling if the rich weaving of data were to be used to recommend changes across a program. As such, participants from multiple sites were sought and these spanned approximately 15 locations situated between Kathmandu, Nepal and Bangalore in south-central India.

Sampling was sometimes purposive in that some subjects such as senior administrators were hand-picked for participation, while other participants (such as school students) were recruited using cluster sampling in the context of schools. Denscombe (2007, p. 16) asserts that ‘A good example of a naturally occurring cluster is a school. If the researcher wishes to study young people aged between 11 and 16 years, then secondary schools offer the possibility of using cluster sampling because they contain a concentration of such people on site.’ Obviously, a researcher interested in sponsored youth would consider schools, especially those where a significant proportion of students are sponsored. Singleton and Straits (2010, p. 167) add that ‘Clustering concentrates interviews within fewer and smaller geographic areas, thereby spreading the travel costs over several cases....’ This was certainly the reality in this case study although it should be noted that sampling which began near Kolkata, moved to Nepal, and continued through multiple locations to south-central India was ambitious. If the data was to be viewed as representative in
some way, and legitimate enough to inform project evaluation, it was essential that data be gathered across multiple sites from multiple types of stakeholder.

3.6 Research Methods

Field Research Method 1 - Scan of relevant INGO documentation
The research process incorporated a scan of relevant INGO documentation. Document review included perusal of an independent consultancy report by an Indian contractor on the sponsorship program of the ChildHelper implementing partner and its organisational strengths and weaknesses (written without benefit of interview of program beneficiaries). ChildHelper staff also provided access to its draft guide on sponsorship and various examples of other documentation including sample letters and gifts sent between sponsors and sponsored children. A number of sponsorship reports were reviewed in conjunction with access to the website, annual reports and the sponsorship database. Rather than presuming to analyse this data as a discreet activity, the researcher used it to profile the organisation, place it within a CS Typology, and construct a historical sketch placing the program in the context of other CS humanitarian interventions.

Field Research Method 2 - Focus group Activity
Focus group discussion utilising a participatory ranking activity (used to summarise group opinion) is considered to be the most important single data-set gathered in the case study. These participatory activities were conducted with both teachers and students (in separate groups) generally with between two and 10 participants in each group. In total, 133 volunteer participants (sponsored and
previously sponsored) contributed to focus groups (typically at a school), in which they discussed negatives and positives of the sponsorship program, then allocated, using principles of group consensus, their observations to one of five faces on a poster spanning unhappiness/deep concern to happiness/satisfaction in relation to outcomes for individuals, families and communities (see Appendix 1). 30 school teachers participated in the same activity, which, incidentally, is consistent with Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodologies though in this case, conducted primarily in schools. Robert Chambers (2012, p. 48) notes that group activities in PRA, including making maps, lists, matrices, causal and linkage diagrams, estimating comparisons, ranking and scoring, and discussing and debating may result in realities being ‘expressed in a cumulative and visual form, often democratically.’

It is noteworthy that this data collection tool was used with ‘like’ groups. That is, while male and female teachers were combined for discussion on the basis of a common profession, male and female students were separated. Further, male and female groups were formed with preference for age similarity. The focus group activity required the researcher to be opinion-neutral yet active in facilitating the compilation of key points, discussion of each point, and democratic allocation of points by participants on the aforementioned scale. For the most part students engaged in the process robustly and teachers engaged very robustly. Female students were more subdued and in some instances students were clearly worried that if they criticised the sponsorship program they could be seen as trouble-makers. Nonetheless, the majority of focus group discussions were keenly engaged in over a period of 40 minutes to one hour.
Length of focus group discussion and activities correlated to education levels with shortest discussions taking place with youngest students and longest discussions occurring with senior students and teachers whose language proficiency and maturity was pronounced.

Central to the process for focus group discussion and participatory ranking of issues is coding and thematic analysis of raw data. This is illustrated below in Creswell’s flow chart.
Using NVivo, the researcher developed codes for each category of issue raised, compiling a list of most commonly occurring themes in the data set. Given that inductive analysis requires the discovery of patterns, themes and categories in one’s data, the researcher sought to establish a ‘picture’ of the most commonly identified positive and negative features relating to each category-impact on sponsored individual, families and communities. In itself this provided a very interesting profile of stakeholder perception of strengths and weaknesses of the program and provided the key themes searched for in the other data sets mentioned below. At the end of each focus group activity, participants were asked to highlight their top three recommendations for programmatic change.

It should be noted that while engaged in focus group discussions, and as time and circumstances allowed, participants were invited to engage in activities
consistent with Renzaho’s (2007) Participatory Action Learning Systems (PALS) which are commonly used in communities that have high rates of illiteracy. These wide (and ever expanding) range of tools and techniques utilize various strategies to collect data, including use of drawing, mapping, transect walks, construction of visual diagrams etc. Consistent with this ‘toolbox’, youth may for example be asked to draw the facial expression of a child who is sponsored, or contribute to a list of effects of sponsorship, or evaluate a relationship diagram. In keeping with rapid appraisal techniques used by relief and development actors, such activities are flexible, variable and may not be imposed on all participants according to a set format. In the simplest form it involved asking participants to identify with a ‘face’, listing issues as discussion points and grouping them at the end of the focus group session. In another instance, students were asked to write an imaginary letter to their sponsor saying what would normally be edited out by sponsorship supervisors.

**Research Method 3 - Individual Interviews**

Individual interviews lasting between 15 minutes and 30 minutes were based on trigger questions. For example, School principals and senior administrators were asked ‘What experience do you have of sponsorship? Do you think sponsorship is good for children? Why? Do you think sponsorship is good for the child’s family? How? Do you think sponsorship is good for the child’s community? How? Do you think sponsorship is good for the education system? Why? Is there anything that is not good about sponsorship? If you were the boss of the CS program, what would you change?’ Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded thematically using NVivo, with priority given to themes identified in
focus groups. Four senior church leaders, 4 teachers, 5 parents, 6 ChildHelper staff, 7 ex-sponsored youth, and 11 school principals were interviewed in this way though trigger questions differed for each group and not all trigger questions were asked.

**Research Method 4 - Formal Survey**

With reference to select criticisms of IICS identified in the broader literature on CS, the researcher constructed a 60 question survey prompting sponsored children and youth to agree or disagree with a variety of statements by circling a response on a Likert scale of 1-5. Likert scales typically have five points on a continuum from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Fink 2013, p. 45). In consultation with ChildHelper the researcher chose not to use a force-choice method utilising a 4 point scale, preferring a 5 point scale with a neutral position available. The survey was piloted on Indian INGO staff and adjusted for appropriate wording. The advice of ChildHelper staff was that this tool would be viable, an observation born out in two pre-research trials at an Indian School.

139 youth aged 12-25 completed valid surveys. The survey was designed to begin with easy questions designed to build participant confidence and allow them to provide positive feedback early in the survey process. For example, sponsored students could agree or disagree with the opening statements ‘Sponsorship makes me happy’, ‘Sponsorship gives me hope’, ‘Sponsorship has improved my life’ and ‘Sponsorship will lift me out of poverty.’ Delving into the criticism that relationships between children and sponsors can be one-sided,
questions 5-8 determine whether sponsored youth know who sponsors them, whether sponsors write and if communication is coercive.

**Figure 3d Sample survey questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know who my sponsor is.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My sponsor writes to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I want more letters or pictures from my sponsor.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In letters and cards to my sponsor I must write what I am told.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although 160 valid survey responses were sought, culling due to incomplete responses, erratic responses and under-age participation was required. 139 valid responses were gathered and analysed (see section below). Results were compared to themes extracted from focus groups and interviews.

A word of caution is required regarding this method as a component of the case study. It should be noted that written surveys are not commonly used by INGOs in developing countries because they may fail to capture interesting data, are often poorly understood by participants with low levels of literacy and represent attempts at western empiricism in cultures where narrative and story-telling are a favoured method of communication. In this case the survey was constructed collaboratively with staff at ChildHelper, for use in a school setting where all participants attended English Medium Schools or had graduated from an English
Medium School. Further, the survey was conducted in a group setting where the researcher read (in the absence of school staff) and explained each question and allowed for participants to question before writing answers. It was accepted that this ‘open’ process might lead to some students following the lead of others however this was considered a lesser risk than the possibility of participants filling out a survey form that they did not understand. Of the data gathering tools, the quantitative survey is viewed by the researcher as complementary to the qualitative data gathered through focus group activities and interviews. Creswell (2009, p. 207) notes that mixing ‘two types of data might occur at several stages: the data collection, the data analysis, interpretation, or at all three phases.’ For the purpose of this case, data has been mixed only at point of interpretation.

SPSS was used to analyse responses as ordinal data, especially to generate descriptive statistics collated into bar and pie charts. Given that the survey was designed to test whether sponsored children and youth agreed with key criticisms in the literature relating to IICS, this component of the case study is best described as utilising deductive analysis according to a pre-existing framework. Rather than positioning the survey as a key tool in case study, the survey is viewed as a complementary methodology of secondary significance. Nevertheless, it provides a degree of quantitative data that enriches the triangulation process.
**Figure 3e Summary of research participation in the various methods.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sponsored/Ex-sponsored Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Senior church Administrators</th>
<th>NGO staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.7 Ethics approval, consent and exclusion

The research project was approved by the Deakin University Research Ethics Committee (EC00213) conditional on requirements that all participants provide written consent, or in the case of minors, receive written consent from guardians. Children under the age of 12, and potential participants with a developmental disability were excluded from the research. Theoretically, all other children or youth currently or previously sponsored by ChildHelper were eligible to volunteer as participants in the research process however during the course of the research it became necessary to exclude some individuals whose grasp of English was so poor as to render their participation of dubious value. All participation was voluntary, including for teachers and administrators. Venues chosen for research activity were typically in a school or other building with priority given to locations identified by participants as according maximum privacy under the conditions. Anonymity of participation could not be guaranteed, and was not promised. However, all participants were assured that in reporting research, no individual, school or community would be identified.
3.8 Research reporting

The research report utilises one of several strategies provided by Dahlberg et al. (2010, p. 787). They suggest that researchers ‘Present quantitative results within the description of qualitative results. This approach organises the results section according to themes found from qualitative methods.’ Given this advice, the data analysis process and write-up was as follows: 1) Collection of data using interviews, focus group activities and surveys. 2) Thematic analysis of interviews and focus group results using NVivo. 3) Triangulation of data with reference to the quantitative survey. 4) Reflection and write-up using thick-description of case based themes.

In reflecting on the research process itself, a number of qualifications are required. Firstly, the data is neither systemic or proportional in terms of representation of types of children or youth sponsored. At best it is drawn from a partially representative sample. Secondly, the data gathered is perhaps influenced by limitations of the researcher as a cultural outsider. Thirdly, the construction of a data-rich narrative is prone to subjectivity. Just as all good art is ambiguous, and beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the researcher is aware that in constructing this collage (picture of the case), objectivity is limited to the researcher’s interpretations. Different data, and a different researcher, using different methodologies, might invariably produce a different perspective. And finally, while the voices of participants form the basis of thick description, analysis is not at all participatory. Conclusions made about the need for programmatic change are those of the author and the author only.
In summary, a case study approach relying primarily on document review, focus
group discussion/activity, individual interviews, and a formal survey was used to
construct a bounded case - in this instance, ChildHelper’s IICS program. In
applying a mixed-methodology approach to youth, teachers, administrators and
INGO staff, the researcher sought to generate rich data from various
stakeholders for the purpose of program improvement via case based
evaluation. While such a study cannot be said to provide a definitive list of
issues in ChildHelper’s IICS program, it would almost certainly provide a rich
platform for a review of a method of sponsorship much maligned in the
development sector. In its entirety the study should not be viewed as a formal
impact assessment although it does ask cohorts to discuss their perception of
impact on children, families, schools and communities.

Effective impact assessment activities have a conceptual framework at their
heart, commonly, a model of the impact chain, levels at which impacts are
assessed, and specification of the types of impact to be assessed. Although
Hulme (2000, p. 81) concedes that many smaller scale exercises may have a
conceptual framework that is implicit and seen as ‘common sense’, in the case
of ChildHelper the measurable, actual impact of IICS on beneficiaries and the
education system was of secondary importance in this study. There has been no
attempt to develop either a conceptual framework for the purpose of this case
study. Instead, emphasis was on teasing out and collecting stakeholder
perceptions of impact, merit and disadvantage to provide base material needed
to paint a colourful picture of perceptions of IICS. For this author, validation of
the case study befits Thomas’ observation that good case study is concerned
more with phronesis than theory, more from the insights it offers between another's experience and one’s own (Thomas 2011, p. 215). While the researcher does derive meaning from the case study this may be seen as loosely organised according to Yin’s ‘patterns’, Stakes ‘assertions’ or simply, Creswell’s ‘general lessons learned.’
Section 4 – The Origins of Child Sponsorship

4.1 Introduction

Lynch (1986, p. 13) describes the search for the origin of institutions, customs and inventions as one of the most important tasks of scholars and would perhaps have agreed with controversial Negro nationalist Marcus Garvey who famously stated ‘A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.’ In the case of CS understanding the origins of CS is necessary to assess one’s legitimacy in historical context. Surprisingly, although CS is used by some of the most powerful INGOs in the humanitarian aid industry, the origins of individual CS are somewhat obscure and seem to have escaped scholarly scrutiny. Ove’s (2013, p. 56) frustration at the lack of information regarding early sponsorship programs is symptomatic of a paucity of evidence. He writes, ‘If there is one “true” origin of child sponsorship, it appears to be lost in the mists of time or to the vagaries of marketing personnel.’ Though it is incorrect, his conclusion is understandable given the scarcity of historic information regarding the early work of leading CS INGOs, the opaque nature of information found on their websites and competing claims found in formal, written histories.

This section reports on archival research conducted in the Save the Children Fund (S.C.F.) archives held in the Cadbury Collection at the University of Birmingham. With extensive reference to archival sources, it sets aside several competing claims and identifies the British S.C.F. as the founder of CS in post World War One Europe with the Society of Friends (Quakers) as key partners in
its early use. This section then discusses features of the early sponsorship program, tensions, challenges and the move to domestic sponsorship of British children. Accordingly, this section seeks to set the record straight and argues that contrary to claims surrounding the invention of CS in the 1930s by China Children’s Fund (CCF), Foster Parents Scheme for Children in Spain, or Save the Children USA, the origins of individual CS are readily traced to 1919, in the post-World War One work of The British S.C.F., the Society of Friends and various relief missions in Europe (Watson, 2014b).

If the conclusions made in this chapter prove correct and are sustained by other scholars, it would seem that CS in its early years was couched in terms of ‘child adoption’ and ‘god parenting’. Unlike forms of CS popularized in the decades after World War Two, it involved short-term provision of food rations to children affected by post-war scarcity, including orphans in institutions. Referring to the earliest sponsors in the United Kingdom (UK) as godparents, it seems evident that the early ‘adoption’ scheme of the S.C.F. was rooted in the Christian tradition of sponsorship and provision of a godparent at point of baptism, a non-biblical custom dating to the second century CE. CS therefore may be seen as a clever extension of a cultural practice extending back into Christendom for millennia, a fact that partially accounts for its early popularity with British clergy and private schools. This section therefore provides an original contribution to the burgeoning literature on religion and development, and argues that the S.C.F. CS program is firmly rooted in Christian practices of ‘god parenting’ and charity. This explains to a large extent the deep popularity of CS with FBOs
throughout the latter half of the 20th century although it is evident that European FBOs are reluctant to acknowledge their faith roots (James 2009).

4.2 The mystery of CS origins - competing claims

Misrepresentation of the origins of sponsorship is obvious if not widespread. In an article in *Christianity Today*, Walker (2013, p. 29) describes CS as a relatively new idea in the history of Christian compassion with a definitive moment being the founding of ChildFund International (then China Children’s Fund) by J Calvitt Clarke, a Presbyterian minister, in 1938. According to Walker other organisations followed, including Save the Children in 1940, World Vision in 1950, Compassion International in 1952 and Food for the Hungry in 1978. He notes that over 900 Christian and secular American charities offer some form of CS currently. Tise’s 1993 history of Christian Children’s Fund (formerly China Children’s Fund and now ChildFund) also credits the invention of CS to J Calvitt Clarke. Referring to very rapid growth in fundraising in the 1940s and the care of children in Chinese orphanages, He writes:

> The secret to the miracle was CCF’s very popular ‘adoption’ program developed sometime prior to 1941. According to this plan, individual donors could contribute a set amount of money per month and per year and ‘adopt’ an orphaned child in China. (Tise 1993, p. 5)

Noting that regular instalments totalled $24 per year, Tise (1993, p. 5) concluded that ‘...CCF was the earliest of the various international child assistance organisations to employ this form of “adoption” as a mechanism for raising
funds.’ Key to this narrative is the idea that CS was conceived by an American, adapted to fundraise for orphan care in China, popularized first and foremost in the United States, and replicated by other INGOs for world-wide use. The argument is unfortunately American-centric and it shows a lack of awareness of developments in charitable fundraising in Europe as well as in the USA.

Contrary to Tise’s understanding of the origins of CS, an earlier history of Foster Parents Plan (now Plan International) attributes conception of the idea to British journalist John Langdon-Davies and ascribes its emergence to 1937 at the height of the devastating Spanish civil war. Molumphy’s historical account asserts:

> While covering the war in Spain for the London News Chronicle, Langdon-Davies conceived the idea of a personal relationship between a refugee or orphaned child and an English sponsor. In England he enlisted the support of the Duchess of Atholl, a prominent conservative member of parliament... (Molumphy 1982, p. 2)

In the narrative above it is implied that the invention of CS was due to the innovative mindset of a brave, well-connected British journalist. The purpose of the fundraising was for direct support of costs associated with children’s colonies (orphanages) in war-affected Spain. The Duchess of Atholl is presented as an influential supporter of Langdon-Davies’ fresh idea with a vested interest because of her prior evacuation of Spanish children to Britain and ongoing support for children’s colonies in both Spain and the United Kingdom.
A third claim is worthy of mention here, and presumes that CS was first used in the USA by Save the Children. Referring to Save the Children USA historical accounts available in the 1990s, Journalist Michael Maren wrote, ‘The organization pioneered this fund-raising technique with Appalachian children in the 1930s. It has since been adopted by dozens of other charities around the world…’ (Maren 1997, p. 139). In similar vein Ove (2013, p. 57) cites a Save the Children USA historical account in which:

Save the Children US, which was established to help poor children in Appalachia, claims to be the first instance of a sponsorship program in 1938 – a program in which individuals could sponsor schoolhouses and provide the children who attended them with meals, books and school supplies.

In reality, although ChildFund, Plan, and Save the Children USA used CS in their early years, by then it was an already well-used fundraising device. This thesis argues that by 1939 the sponsorship of children had been a modest feature of philanthropic giving, having been utilized some twenty years earlier by the Save the Children Fund in the UK and Quakers, or Society of Friends in Europe. A relatively small number of Americans had been sponsoring children internationally through the Society of Friends as early as the 1920s.
4.3 Context of early CS - The ARA and relief aid in 1919

To understand the origins of CS in the post World War One period, it is important to outline the context within which it was popularized and the enormous aid effort that it was linked to. Key to this was the American Relief Administration (ARA) which was established by an act of the United States Congress in February 1919 as an official government agency with a $5,000,000 endowment and mandate to feed famine stricken Europe. Herbert Hoover, a future president of the United States, was appointed as program director of what was to be a short-term, child-oriented relief effort terminating with the European harvest of 1920. However, in extending work for several years, and expanding the program to feed adults as well as children, Hoover later wrote that it ‘...proved far greater than the single problem of children’s relief in some twelve countries in Central and Eastern Europe...’ (cited in Hoover Institution Archives 2014, para 6) The government agency was short-lived. According to Hoover, by July he had sent a cable to the New York office requesting that it ‘...take the necessary steps to set up the new American Relief Administration...which was registered as a non-profit corporation...’ (cited in Hoover Institution Archives, 2014 para 2).

Under Hoover’s leadership the former government agency morphed into a non-profit with the impressive title American Relief Administration European Children’s Fund (ARAECF). In common usage ARA was retained. The scope of the relief operation in Europe was immense. The Interim Report of the European Relief Council, which was formed in 1920 with Hoover as Chairman, collected funds nationwide for the unprecedented relief effort in which it was estimated
that by September 1920 ‘...a total of 3,500,000 ill, waif, undernourished or orphan children would fall upon the various distributing societies for support until the harvest of 1921’ and that this would cost $33,000,000 (European Relief Council 1921, p. 4). Earlier estimates had not been so dire however by the time the Paris Peace Conference had ended the ARA had already organised delivery of 4 million tons of food and other items to 22 war-affected countries. The task of shipping food to war-torn Europe, and distributing it with government contributions was difficult, leading Hoover to write that it was ‘indeed a tedious business’ which:

... involved chartering a multitude of ships and establishing financial contracts with forty governments and twelve private associations. Out of these transactions there arose a host of claims- amounts due us and claims of foreign governments for spoilage or underdelivery on contracts... (Cited in Hoover Institution Archives 2014, para 22)

Success was well publicised. In Poland, where Hoover had tried unsuccessfully to organise food aid since 1915, he planned to feed children between March and June 1919 with $200,000 per month from the congressional appropriation. Funds were ‘...converted into cocoa, sugar, milk, flour and fats suitable for children...’ with the supplies purchased externally, imported into the country by the ARA and then distributed (Adams 2009, p. 4). One meal a day was provided to children, with Hoover adamant that all relief to Poland be funnelled through the ARA. At the height of the intervention in the summer of 1920 the ARA, its partners and 28,000 polish citizens fed a reported 1,300,000 children,
conditional on the strengthening of local child welfare services (Adams 2009, pp. 7-8).

Figure 4a ARA Food Distribution in Poland, 1919

Source: Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, 2014

As stated earlier, a key funding partner of the ARA was the European Relief Council, which was initially established, eventually liquidated by the ARA. Contributors to its funding pool of $29,068,504 included The American Friend’s Service Committee, The Literary Digest, Rockefeller Foundation, Commonwealth Fund, American Express Company, YWCA, American Red Cross and Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (European Relief Council, 1921). Within the ARA (or ARAECF), a special Children’s Relief Bureau had been organized. The ARAECF functioned as a private volunteer organization without
a formal charter, primarily to distribute food and clothing supplies. Headquartered in New York, The ARAECF operated until 1924. Using the funding at its disposal, a complex chain of suppliers and large procurements from the Grain Corporation, a system of central and regional warehouses was maintained in European countries from which food aid could be distributed or American food drafts cashed by European beneficiaries related to Americans (Hoover 1920, para 12). In theory, supported children were registered through a school, investigated by a local committee, then confirmed as malnourished by a local physician. Child feeding was provided via special kitchens operating at schools, institutions, orphanages, or hospitals. Usually, a noonday meal was served with attempts made to issue a card for children that could be punched for each meal received, providing a measure of accountability in what must have been a system fraught with difficulty.

4.4 The British Save the Children Fund

The ARA was announced in February 1919, with Presidential support, a sizeable endowment fund, and a future president at its helm. It morphed into a private, not-for-profit soon after, with an emphasis on feeding children. In naming his successor organisation the American Relief Administration European Children’s Fund, Hoover may have been aware of Dorothy Buxton’s and Eglantyne Jebb’s launch of Save the Children Fund some months previously. Hoover, like Buxton, was a Quaker and both sought to empower the Friends for relief aid in mainland Europe. Nevertheless, by contrast the British Save the Children Fund (S.C.F.) began on April 15, 1919 in London at a meeting of the executive committee of the Fight the Famine Council, an small organisation
struggling to raise donations for victims of famine in Britain’s former enemy countries. According to the Database of Archives of Non-government Organisations (DANGO, 2010), the council was a small British non-profit established soon after the armistice was signed in 1918, by sisters Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton (nee Jebb). Buxton in particular had advocated against the devastating Allied naval blockade in the North Atlantic which had been designed to starve the Germans into submission, and held the view that the British establishment had dealt with Germany and her allies harshly.

Mulley (2009, p. xix-xx ) points out that during the war Buxton had compiled 'Notes from the Foreign Press' for the *Cambridge Magazine*, presenting alternative views on foreign policy critical of the blockade and establishment, and leading her to switch allegiance from the Liberal Party to Labour, and religious affiliation to the Society of Friends. Her writing inspired the Fight the Famine Council, founded in 1918 as an effort to alleviate starvation of civilians in Germany and Austria, a cause not overly popular with many English citizens who were weary of war, traumatised by personal loss, and soured by years of anti-German propaganda. Fundraising for generalized famine relief in Europe had proven difficult for the parent organization of S.C.F., warranting a change in tack, and ultimately the success of S.C.F.’s new child oriented strategy would define the organisation, allowing the founders opportunity to distance themselves from claims that they held undue sympathy for Germany and Austria.
It is noteworthy that the formation of the S.C.F. occurred after the ARA and other relief societies had become active in Europe, and aligned closely with Hoover’s emphasis on helping children. Nonetheless, the fledgling organisation would assume remarkable prominence in a short period of time. In the minutes of the Fight the Famine Committee Buxton is recorded as moving ‘That the “Fight the Famine” Committee should appoint a special committee to consider the means to be taken for raising of a special relief fund, to be called the “Save the Children Fund.”’ (S.C.F. 1922c, p. 10) Thus began a remarkable journey for an organisation that would eventually lay the foundation for child rights.

The fund’s public work began on May 19, 1919 as a sub-committee of the Fight the Famine Council, with incorporation as a not-for-profit under the UK Companies Act 1908, delayed until Dec 1, 1921 (S.C.F. 1922c, p. 14). In naming S.C.F. and depoliticising its work as child oriented, the early founders began a trend in modern INGOs that that would continue for the remainder of the century and beyond. Leadership was provided by sisters Dorothy Buxton and Eglantyne Jebb, with a committee described by Dorothy as ‘…the queerest collection of cranks, fools, and vassals which could well be imagined’ (Mulley 2009, p. 256). Interestingly, Mulley (2009, pp. 261-265) describes Jebb as initially prone to hectoring the public with letters to the press, entertaining several fantastically hopeless fundraising ideas, demonstrating a lack of ability in community-based fundraising and points out that she had ‘…never enjoyed fundraising at the best of times.’ Although she was a humanitarian at heart, her interest in children appears to have been ‘theoretical rather than individual’ (Mulley 2009, p. 333).
Operating from a condemned building in London’s Soho, with staff employed on six-week contracts, S.C.F. fundraising was enhanced by astute celebrity advocacy and a remarkable publication. From October 1, 1920 the S.C.F. published The Record of the Save the Children Fund, a periodical designed to advocate for improved child welfare and to raise funds for famine relief in what it referred to as the stricken lands. Described by the Glasgow Bulletin as ‘the most melancholy magazine in existence’ (cited in S.C.F. 1920c, p. 38), the periodical provides various insights into the nature of the early work. By 1922, the S.C.F. publication was renamed The World’s Children: A Quarterly Journal of Child Care and Protection Considered from an International Standpoint. Circulation was 5,000 and sold for three pence per copy (Mahood & Satzewich 2009, p. 59).

S.C.F. legitimacy was not only bolstered by publication of a journal. Jebb’s early recruitment of Margaret Lloyd George as vice-president, was especially controversial because her husband, the Prime Minister, was partially responsible for the devastating blockade. In hindsight the appointment may be seen as ‘...a fantastic coup that secured widespread legitimacy...’ and facilitated the raising of an impressive £1,000,000 by 2 August 1921 (S.C.F. 1922c, p. 13). By 1921 Henrietta Leslie, a journalist and suffragette, was managing a team tasked with coordination of three hundred committees of local volunteers, leading to concerns that fundraising relied on ‘one long procession of stunts’ and ‘every kind of money-making dodge...’ (Mulley 2009, p. 262). Concerned that relatively small amounts were raised with great labour and effort, Jebb pursued a radical and expensive advertising campaign, ignoring critics on the Fund’s council by taking out full-page spreads in national publications including The Times. The
advertising combined urgency, guilt and melodrama to elicit donations, and was immediately successful. Mulley estimates that on average, each advertisement returned ten times the initial outlay. Other innovative fundraising that followed included ‘asking workers for a day’s wages, companies for a day’s profits, or the public to sponsor a child…’ (Mulley 2009, p. 264).

The use of celebrity endorsement was a feature of S.C.F. fundraising although the growing popularity of S.C.F. should also be attributable to the forging of multiple alliances. Despite accusations from the Secretary of the Charities Organisation Society that S.C.F. was exaggerating the plight of children, the endorsement and patronage of Lord Weardale, Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Mrs Phillip Snowden, Russian dancer Anna Pavlova, and English authors Jerome K. Jerome, A.A. Milne, Thomas Hardy and George Bernard Shaw, among others, all lent credibility to its work. A personal audience with Pope Benedict XV and a Papal encyclical issued from the Vatican on November 24, 1919 urging Catholics worldwide to support S.C.F. exceeded all expectations of support, not the least because the Pope’s blessing came with a tangible gift of £25,000 and promise to promote alms giving for S.C.F. work on two Holy Innocents’ days (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 61).

Wary of aligning itself too closely to Roman Catholicism, S.C.F. staff nevertheless reported that the remarkable Encyclical was the first of its kind from the Papacy, providing ‘…a public tribute of praise to the society entitled the Save the Children Fund’ (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 61). The cause was further bolstered by a strategic alliance with the Miner’s Federation that did much to popularize its
work with the working classes, and resulted in the passing of a resolution at the International Congress of miners declaring that ‘...the continued starvation of children in the distressed areas is a blot on civilization...’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 9).

Strong support from the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1920 was reported in The Record, discreetly overlooking his lack of interest prior to the Pope’s intervention. In no less a venue than St Paul’s Cathedral, the Archbishop of Canterbury belatedly concluded:

> We can go forward in thankfulness and hope to tasks which lie immediately ahead… Great tracts, we are told, are in want of daily bread. The obligation rests upon us all, as a nation and as men. (S.C.F. 1922c, p. 11)

By mid-1920 a combination of tireless campaigning, grassroots fundraising, and new advertising strategies embraced by Jebb and her team had proven their worth. Jebb quoted war heroes who had shared their rations with children, imploring the public for support needed for multitudes of helpless children and bereft mothers numbering in their millions. Her statistics were compelling, targeting the working classes and the affluent alike: Two shillings could feed a child for a week. £1 could feed and clothe a starving mite. £100 could feed a thousand children and a penny a day from each British worker for two months could save all the children of hungry Europe (Mulley 2009, p. 264). By such means one could absolve oneself, implied in Jerome’s open letter in which he stated ‘By our pride, by our greed, by our folly, we have brought the children to death’s door (cited in Mulley 2009, p. 265).
S.C.F.’s widely-circulated periodical played a key role in mobilizing support for British funded relief efforts, in stark contrast to the grim war propaganda prevalent in previous years and strident, ongoing calls for reparations. Referring to the plight of post-war Germany it described in its first edition ‘30,000 tuberculous children Berlin, a further million dead in Germany from hunger and consumption and ‘school children with hollow chests and lifeless eyes, the corpse-like babies dying in the wards...’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 5). Over Christmas 1920, S.C.F. staff had adapted war language in their appeal for humanitarian aid, observing:

The most dreadful siege in history is taking place in Europe to-day - a short journey from where you are reading now. Famine, Cold and Disease are the besiegers. The daily casualties, numbering always hundreds and often thousands, are innocent little children - not strong fighting men. And this siege has been going on for two years - two years during which Millions of Children have Died! (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 64)

When George Bernard Shaw wrote the preface to the booklet titled *Family Life in Germany under the Blockade* in 1919, he revived the guilt-laden question of what children would ask their fathers they had done during the war, replacing it with the suggestion that children would one day ask what their fathers had done during the famine. Shaw suggested that men would have a moral advantage if they could respond with the likes of ‘I shared my ration with the poor starving children in Germany’ (cited in Mulley 2009, p. 266). Poignant commentary and
urgent appeals were designed to arouse a complacent, war-weary public, declaring to readers in Europe, ‘All hope gone, death is staring them in the face unless you, or others like you, come to their assistance’ (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 64).

*Figure 4b 1920 S.C.F. Appeal*

![Image of the 1920 S.C.F. Appeal]

Source: S.C.F. 1921a, p. 64

Levels of sympathy in Britain for children in post-World War One Europe varied according to individual prejudices and politics. Referring to 1921 S.C.F. announcements that it would send aid to starving Russian Children, Mahood and Satzewich (2009, p. 55) describe S.C.F. critics who were influenced by anti-Russian, anti-German and anti-alien sentiment. For some British citizens there was a strong fear of fuelling Bolshevism through the feeding of what had been enemy children. However, where it was possible S.C.F. attempted to arouse
concern for starving children and ill women, communicating abhorrence for post-armistice sanctions and a sureness of British generosity at a time when the gruesome after-effects of the war had become well publicized. Referring often to the plight of ‘thousands of little ones standing in daily peril of death from starvation’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 1) S.C.F publications also mentioned ‘the evil structure of international relations’ (S.C.F. 1921g, p. 201) with one influential contributor (Israel Zangwill) arguing that money sent was ‘...the compensation which the Koran and other codes have allowed to be paid for murder’ (Zangwill 1921, p. 216). Such sentiment may not have been widespread however the appeal by S.C.F. to respect the innocence of children did not go unheeded and was quite in keeping with the ARA feeding program. Between May 28, 1919 and September 9, 1919, S.C.F. allocated grants for work in Austria, Armenia, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Russia.

Presuming that there was no more generous people in the world than the British, Mrs. Philip Snowden, described by some as the most eloquent Englishwoman alive at the time, observed that childhood’s:

...beautiful innocence and helplessness appeals to the best in all. It is bigger than nationality, purer than ambition, greater than material wealth. It must be saved if civilization is to be saved, and the kingdom of heaven achieved. (Snowden 1921, p. 69)

The adoption of the Della Robbia Bambino (see Figure 4b) by S.C.F. symbolized its role in appealing, on behalf of countless imploring children, to charity and the beneficence of civilized Europe. It was observed with some optimism that ‘When
the history of these times comes to be written by the historians of the future, to
no body of people will a warmer tribute be paid than to those who organised
themselves for the work of saving the children of Europe.’ (Snowden 1921, p. 69) While the sentiment may be questionable, the tactic was clear- S.C.F. staff
linked ‘child-saving’ to British notions of generosity and civility.

*Figure 4c The S.C.F. Dela Robbia Bambino*

Source: S.C.F. 1921f, p. 185

4.5 **S.C.F, Austria and the Society of Friends**

In her 1922 summary of S.C.F.’s early work, Jebb identifies Vienna as the first
place to receive funding from the fledgling organization, receiving a consignment
of food in spring 1919, which was distributed through hospitals to children who
were being brought in ‘...half dead with starvation...’ (Jebb 1922, p. 18). The
grant to Germany in the following month attracted widespread controversy for
reasons described above. It is noteworthy that S.C.F. partnered with the Friends’
Emergency and War Victims’ Relief Committee though this is not surprising
because Dorothy Buxton was herself a Quaker. By accessing the British Government’s £1 per £1 scheme, S.C.F. disbursed approximately £150,000 to the Friends who were feeding up to 70,000 children in the winter of 1920-1921 (Jebb 1922, p. 18), linked as they were to the ARA feeding scheme run by the Americans.

According to S.C.F.’s journal, many of the children supported by S.C.F. in 1920 and 1921 were assisted through the Austrian child welfare agency the Jugendamt, which operated 69 centres in which thirty doctors held free consultations. In addition, the Friends operated 23 depots:

…where, on the recommendation of the doctors, the mothers could come and buy at a low charge fortnightly rations of flour, condensed milk, sugar, etc. for one or in some cases for two of their children.

(Jebb 1922 p. 18)

These were probably depots stocked by the ARA and operated or accessed by the Friends. The American Friends Service Committee had been established in April 1917 and when the ARA was established in 1919, Herbert Hoover personally requested that they institute a large child-feeding program in Europe (The Religious Society of Friends 2015, para 2). Relief was carried on in Austria and Poland, and a famine relief program in Russia was undertaken. According to Jebb in ‘specially selected cases the rations were given for free,’ generally under supervision of Austrian staff or an English representative of the mission who visited the homes of beneficiaries (Jebb 1922, p. 18). Jebb describes
prioritisation of children under the age of six, invalid children and those in institutions.

Sympathy for post-war Austria was especially strong in 1920 and 1921 in S.C.F. writings and is partially attributable to British government pound-for-pound grants to relief societies active in Poland and Austria (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 10). Although S.C.F. writers commented that ‘The state of Austria outside Vienna is not so distressing,’ (S.C.F. 1921c, p. 102) they also took pains to describe to readers ‘...the pauperization and demoralization of the people,’ concluding that ‘Vienna must be regarded as a dying city’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 4). It was in this context that the fledgling S.C.F. made its first international grant on May 28 1919, to work in Austria, almost a month before it was registered under the War Charities Act (S.C.F. 1922c, p. 11).

Grants to Armenia and Germany were also made in June 1920. More approving of the grant to Armenia than work in relatively less affected Austria, the secretary of the American Near East Relief Administration reported that Armenian refugees had, by contrast, lost everything and ‘...have no houses, no clothes, no tools’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 3). Notably, by 1919 the Americans had already fed 160,000 children in Austria as part of its massive relief effort (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 2). Similar feeding programs were envisaged by S.C.F., sure that ‘The Coming Winter will be A TIME OF Crisis’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 16). In the months of November 1919 to December 1920, additional grants were made to France, the Baltic states, Belgium, China, Constantinople and Turkey (S.C.F. 1922c, pp. 12-13).
Early editions of *The Record* and archival files containing communication between S.C.F. and the Friends in Vienna, provide a fascinating account of the issues there. Although it prioritized food and medical aid, S.C.F. emphasized other needs on the basis that ‘...the rigors of the food famine are considerably increased by the lack of linen, clothing and soap’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 1). Early communication from S.C.F. mentions a range of problems including what it referred to as a ‘clothes famine’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 2), manifested in ‘unhappy little ones wrapped in newspapers’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 3) and a scarcity of clothes so great that in some schools ‘between forty and fifty percent of the children have only one shirt each’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 1). The situation reported by one eye-witness in ‘Czecho-Slovakia’ is especially interesting despite the use of terms that would make it unacceptable today. Arguing that the term ‘house’ was too dignified for what had been observed, the worried visitor noted that:

> Hovel or hole is a better word for these inhabitants. The squalor is almost beyond belief. Six or seven people - if one can call them people - in one stuffy hole and a half-dozen hens or rabbits besides. One picked the fleas off oneself coming out. Idiots and cretins abound, and there is a goiter or two (colossal in size) in every family. (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 4)

The issues raised are couched in harsh terminology however are indicative of endemic poverty and malnutrition in the post-war years. Concern is evident for unacceptable levels of overcrowding, unhygienic homes beset with plague carrying fleas, dietary deficiency resulting in ill-health, untreated medical
conditions and disability, intellectual or otherwise, linked to chronic malnutrition arising from famine conditions. It is clear that the spectre of typhus, plague and TB loomed large for those who worried about child-welfare in the immediate post-war years, necessitating a final large grant to the Society of Friends in 1921 to fund distribution of locally procured milk ‘...at no higher cost than condensed milk’ and with ‘stimulus’ to the local community (Jebb 1922, p. 19).

Other voices were less critical though no less passionate about the situation in the ‘stricken lands’ of Europe in 1920. In Hungary, a Mr Cournos opined that the urgent need was for ‘...milk for the children and linen and rubber goods for the hospitals...’ with schooling for children forced to leave at age 12 but barred from entry to a trade until fourteen (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 5). U.S Army Medical Core representative Col. Gilchrist warned of an imminent Typhus epidemic with potential to ‘...threaten the whole of Europe’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 6). In Russia, Miss Francis, senior sister of Lady Muriel Paget’s Hospital at Sevastopol fretted that throughout the Crimea people were living on bread and soup and ‘...everywhere there is very grave poverty, people of all classes are selling everything they have...’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 6). Such concerns were not misplaced. In Russia the Bolshevik Revolution, civil war and two consecutive droughts led to widespread famine conditions in Armenia, the Ukraine, Crimea and Volga River Valley. With 10 to 20 million people affected, the Soviet Government issued a worldwide appeal which was answered which was answered with an ARA grant of $20 million (Library of Congress, 2010).
Referring to direct assistance to orphanages, sanatoriums, and other institutions for invalid children, Jebb summarized the purpose of aid as temporary assistance during a time of post-war economic crisis and famine, aiming to ‘(1) to help to tide the younger children, who were not provided for under the American scheme, through this period, and (2) to help to put the local children’s institutions on their feet again… (Jebb 1922, p. 20). This emphasis on short-term assistance would inevitably influence the early CS program operated jointly between S.C.F. and the Society of Friends in Austria.

The May 1921 edition of The Record featured an article by Sir Phillip Gibbs entitled ‘By Austria’s Deathbed. An Impression of Vienna’ (Gibbs 1921 p. 199). In it he wrote ‘It is a ghoulish thing to sit at the deathbed of those Austrian people, as I have done, studying the symptoms of this mortality, watching the death agony…’ In his assessment Gibbs described a babies’ clinic as ‘filled with haggard, anemic women who had brought their terrible little babes, all scrofulous and boneless, for medical examination…’ and remarked on the ‘…bewildering contrasts between reckless luxury and starving poverty, between gaiety and despair…’ Revealing his own class sensibilities Gibbs also expressed sympathy for a doctor who was living on cabbage soup while persevering with a suit dating from before the war (Gibbs 1921, pp. 199-200).

As a consequence of the sympathies of key S.C.F. supporters like Gibbs, Austria’s accessibility, close proximity to Switzerland, prevalence of capable relief missions and priority for allied food and medical aid, S.C.F. support for Austria in the period 1919-1923 was significant, with provision of £150,000 to
the Society of Friends and £5,000 to the Vienna Emergency Relief Fund, mostly from ‘...small contributions from English middle and working classes’ (S.C.F. 1920a, p. 38). It is noteworthy that the first S.C.F. grant in Europe was for work in Vienna with the ‘...very first consignment to be bought with British funds - being purchased in Switzerland in the early spring of 1919’ (Jebb 1922, p. 18).

In her defence of S.C.F.’s work in Austria, Eglantyne Jebb reported that the Friends were actively involved in provision of rations or meals, and ‘...had 70,000 of these children on its books in the winter 1920-21’ (Jebb 1922, p. 18) most of whom were under the age of six. In all likelihood, these children were beneficiaries of its own funding and the ARA food relief effort in Austria. In addition to food distribution and child feeding, the Friends had partnered with an Austrian child-welfare agency that operated 69 centres in Vienna, providing free medical consultations, crèches and food depots where mothers could purchase cheap rations.

Individual children who were assisted in the early years by S.C.F. were referred by various relief agencies active in each country. This seems to have been the case in Austria where the Society of Friends had already gathered a long list of children, and passed on requests for support of specific children directly to S.C.F. Although it did not refer directly to its early work with the Society of Friends in Austria and Germany, which was controversial for the evangelical zeal of the Friends and apparent sympathies for socialism, the December 1920 edition of The Record reassured readers in Britain and its Dominions that:
The administration abroad is in the hands of the various relief agencies, viz., the Serb-Croat-Slovene Association for Child Welfare, Lady Muriel Paget’s mission to Czecho-Slovakia, Action Lodge Famine Relief Fund in Budapest, the Committee for Feeding Undernourished Children in Leipzig, and Lady Muriel Paget’s Mission to Eastern Europe. (S.C.F. 1920c, p. 45)

4.6 Features of the early sponsorship program

After announcements of the establishment of a child welfare department at S.C.F. early editions of The Record make increasingly frequent references to individual CS, commonly referred to as the ‘Adoption scheme’ or ‘Adoption system’. Later it would become known as the ‘photo-card adoption scheme’. There can be little doubt that Jebb credited S.C.F. with its founding. Writing in 1922, Jebb wrote that the Adoption system ‘...was first initiated by the Save the Children Fund…’, was ‘widely copied by other organisations…’ and was meritorious because ‘...individual donors could, if they wished, interest themselves in individual children’ (Jebb 1922, p. 19). She noted that initially, twelve hundred especially necessitous children were fed by the Society of Friends in Austria under the Adoption Scheme, and five hundred more by various institutions selected by the International Commissioner (Jebb 1922, p. 20).

A letter from Friend’s volunteer Mary Houghman to Miss E Sidgwick at S.C.F. corroborates Jebb’s claim. It refers to ‘...one of our early adoptions in Vienna,
about August 1919 to 1920…’ (Houghton 1922a). In a letter home from one of the Friend’s Relief Workers, the writer explains that:

The idea of the “Adoption” Scheme originated with the Save the Children Fund who have given us a grant which enables us to adopt over 1,300 children, to which we have added various small grants and gifts from individual adopters, which have brought our numbers up...

(Friends volunteer n.d., p. 4)

Houghton refers to a ‘joint adoption plan’ supported by S.C.F. That the S.C.F. should choose the Friends in Vienna as partners in this endeavour is unsurprising. The Friends were well-respected worldwide for their progressive social work, opposition to war, and, as stated earlier, Dorothy Buxton herself had become a Quaker.

According to Jebb (1922, p. 19) CS funding provided to the Friends in Austria was used for ‘Feeding a number of specially-selected case of children…’ in Vienna. Apart from provision of milk and food rations using unspecified donations, arrangements were made soon after ‘...for children to be “adopted” in Austria and the towns of Germany, and also in Estonia, Poland and Armenia’ (S.C.F. 1920b, p. 21). Revelation of greater need in neighbouring countries, and declining public sympathy for Austria, required Jebb to justify continuation of sponsorship there. Referring to the period 1922-1923 Jebb urged readers to consider that:
...the problem remains. When the Save the Children Fund first started its work for Austria, there was not enough food in the country, now the food is there but the people are too poor to buy it. It therefore remains the case that there are a vast number of children who ought to be given free meals, and the local institutions are hardly in a better position now to cope with child distress than they were two years ago. It falls therefore to the Save the Children Fund to make during the coming winter a still further effort for this unfortunate country. (Jebb 1922, p. 20)

Pictures such as the one in figure 4d were used in S.C.F. publications to expand the Adoption scheme to places such as Armenia.

*Figure 4d S.C.F. Picture titled ‘Orphaned and Destitute Two little Armenians who might be saved’*

Source: S.C.F. 1921a, p. 52
Over time the adoption scheme was expanded. By November 1920, approximately eighteen months after making its first international grant, *The Record* could already report that:

The "Adoption" Scheme, whereby the individual subscriber of 2S.[shillings] a week, or an equivalent monthly or yearly sum to the S.C.F., provides a daily meal for a specific child in the famine area, has proved immensely popular, and is fast becoming a concrete reality. The names and addresses of 1,000 Slovak children, of 1,500 Budapest children, and of a number of Serbian children, have been received and sent to the "godparents" with all available detail. (S.C.F. 1920b, p. 21)

The implication of the words ‘is fast becoming a concrete reality’, without mention of children sponsored through the Society of Friends in Austria for at least a year, is surprising. Was the Austrian sponsorship program facilitated by the Society of Friends considered by S.C.F. to be its own? In likelihood, S.C.F. staff viewed it as a program largely run by the Society of Friends and partly financed by S.C.F. which had helped advertise and broker sponsorships in the UK or elsewhere. It is not implausible to speculate that while the idea of sponsorship was conceived by staff at S.C.F. and financed through the Society of Friends and other relief agencies, initially S.C.F. was relatively passive until mid 1920 when it realized the potential the fundraising device offered and established its own program in which it took responsibility for administration.
The personal touch implicit in the program certainly proved popular. In December 1920, the editors of *The Record* noted strong support in Britain from individuals, Women’s institutes, Girl’s Friendly Societies, Brotherhood meetings, congregations and staff of shops and offices. Within a month since its last update in November 1920, S.C.F. sponsorships had almost doubled and included 451 children in Serbia, 2,000 in Slovakia, 2,000 in Budapest (Hungary) 350 in Leipzig (Germany) and 800 in Dvinsk (Baltic Provinces) (S.C.F. 1920c, p. 45). By January 1921 S.C.F. could announce to its donors and supporters that ‘The adoption scheme is going forward rapidly...’ and ‘The promises of adoption number 15,045’ (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 60). In hindsight this may be seen as remarkable growth given the limitations of European communication systems in the post war years and the economic difficulties faced by British citizens in the period 1919 to 1923. Such was the popularity of S.C.F.’s work that it proudly mentioned a surprise visit to a Viennese art exhibition, featuring the work of sponsored children. The visitors were none other than the Queen of England and Princess Mary (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 64).

The replication of S.C.F.’s ‘Adoption Scheme’ (referred to by Jebb) may be attributed to two likely factors. Firstly, competing fundraisers may have noted S.C.F. success and adopted the fundraising technique accordingly. Many relief societies operated in Europe and fundraising for their work was fiercely competitive although few could boast the celebrity status of S.C.F.’s key supporters or match its reach through its radical advertising and unique publications. Secondly, as S.C.F. worked with other organisations and institutions that had complementary non-S.C.F. income streams, it may have
encouraged adoption and these partners may have begun their own ‘adoption’ programs. A good example is the Society of Friends (Quakers). By 1922 the Friends in Vienna had developed their own ‘adoption’ program and had initiated ‘...a special American branch of our Adoption Scheme by which children carefully chosen from amongst the needy families without regard to nationality, religion, or class, receive monthly food parcels worth about $2’ (Houghton 1922b, p. 2).

While the Friends were recruiting sponsors in the USA and among their supporters, S.C.F. publications promoted ‘adoptions’ worldwide, introducing the concept of sponsorship throughout the British empire. In a short piece of writing titled ‘The Empire and the Save the Children Fund’ support is recorded from Australia, New Zealand and Canada (S.C.F. 1922b, p. 143) though not specifically for individual children and in all likelihood, the postal charges and time delays would have been a major obstacle to overcome. Nevertheless, overcome obstacles the sponsorship program did. In 1923 S.C.F.’s ‘Overseas Department’ was praised for:

...making great headway with the ‘adoptions’ scheme, and there are now subscribers scattered all over the world who are bearing a part in this most effective method of help. In South Africa, particularly, the scheme seems to have attracted schools and institutions... (S.C.F. 1922b p. 149)

The celebrity status of the founders and supporters of S.C.F. ensured that the sponsorship program and other work received significant publicity
...issued an appeal to the American people to contribute to the relief of the children of Central Europe who are facing starvation. He announces that he will adopt 20 of these children as his own temporary wards. (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 61)

Although the word 'adopt' may not have been synonymous with S.C.F. use of the term, its reporting by S.C.F. staff, the qualification that support was to have been aimed at European children, and was temporary, lends credence to speculation that the President of the United States of America, may have been an early child sponsor. There are other links that might justify this claim. Wilson had personally appointed Herbert Hoover to head the ARA knowing that Hoover was a committed Quaker, and had been orphaned at the age of ten. Hoover set out to partner with the Quakers in Europe, emphasizing orphan care. Inquiry is needed to confirm the nature of Wilson’s ‘adoptions’, length of ‘adoption, and possible links to S.C.F. or other organisations such as the Society of Friends. If indeed Wilson did fund the temporary ‘adoption’ of children by S.C.F. or another charity in post World War One Europe, it may be that it was through a relief organization linked to the ARA, and specifically, through the Quakers.

As it became clear that the need beyond Austria was great, and S.C.F. fundraising success enabled sizeable disbursements from mid-1920, it is apparent that staff at S.C.F. established their own, fully administered
sponsoring program while continuing to support a jointly operated sponsorship program with the Friends in Austria. S.C.F. encouraged European-based relief missions to select needy children and forward lists to the UK where appeals for funding in general and adopters in particular had already been made (see advertising below in Figure 4e). Eager to explain how needy children were identified, Record staff wrote:

Each child has been selected through the schools by the relief workers, in itself no light task, and the fullest possible particulars have been forwarded for the god-parents. Everywhere the school-teachers have given ungrudging assistance. (S.C.F. 1920c, p. 45)

It is noteworthy that in Serbia the majority of the children selected for sponsorship were in orphanages and orphan homes, or were orphans living with family members. The Record describes double orphans sponsored in orphanages, others who ‘...became the charge of relations or neighbours' and who were ‘...collected for a daily meal in the Blind Hospital...or the dining room of the children’s convalescent home...’ (S.C.F. 1920c, p. 45). Although sponsorship of orphans provided daily meals at home or in institutions, it was reported that ‘In Slovakia the feeding is done chiefly in the school-kitchens of the villages... We have photographs showing the children watching the cook or happily grouped in little picnic parties...’ (S.C.F. 1920c, p. 45). In Budapest, most children provided with support received their S.C.F. funded rations through ‘relief agencies’. It was implied that many of the children were refugees forced to shelter in old railway carriages or shanties.
In 1920 and 1921 the first sponsorship advertising became evident in S.C.F.’s journal as an alternative to appeals for lump sum donations. An example of this can be seen below in Figure 4e where donors were given the option of choosing or suggesting the nationality of their god-child and making a commitment to weekly or monthly support prior to receiving child details by mail at some stage in the future. Godparents provided a cash payment first, and were later sent details of a specific child. In some sources this was referred to as ‘pairing’ (Gilmore 1922a, p. 1). In decades that followed, child sponsorship organisations would suggest specific children prior to ‘adoption’ or ‘sponsorship’ however technological constraints in the 1920s, lack of photographic services and difficulties in communications ensured that sponsors were paired with children by S.C.F. staff rather than sponsors pairing themselves.

Figure 4e December 1920 S.C.F. Adoption Form

Source: S.C.F. 1920c, p. 46
A letter from S.C.F. staff to children in Britain and its dominions illustrates the basic mechanism of sponsorship and was almost certainly written for the benefit of adults as well:

My Dear Boys and Girls, ...No doubt you know all about our ‘adoption’ scheme. What you do is to pay 2S. a week, which provides a little boy or girl with a good meal each day for a week. Those people who promise to pay their 2S. regularly for a whole year become ‘god-parents’ and they write to the little children they are saving. At Christmas some of the ‘god-parents’ sent presents to their ‘adopted’ sons and daughters and they replied very nicely... (S.C.F. 1921e, p. 176)

The gift giving described above would become a firm fixture in the early sponsorship program. Unaware of the cynicism that now pervades the aid industry about tokenistic gift giving in sponsorship programs, early proponents of individual support to children described destitute, starving, refugee children to whom items of clothing and small gifts were of both practical and emotional value. In January 1921 The Record featured the plight of starving Armenian children, describing the tragedy of naked, emaciated children and a ‘great demand on the part of the younger children for toys.’ Children, readers were told, longed:

...to possess something, for they have lost everything. Even when we brought out so commonplace a thing as a postcard album and allowed each child to have one card their excitement was intense and
many a little one could be seen walking about hugging its card as if it were a most precious possession. (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 52)

For the most part S.C.F. encouraged practical gift giving, consisting of parcels containing clothing, soap and linen (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 62), requesting that donors write their names on the outside of parcels to indicate whether givers ‘…wish their wrappings to be returned…’ The emphasis on useful items was mirrored elsewhere. When he had visited Poland in August 1919, twenty-five thousand children had walked barefoot to pay Hoover homage and within hours he had organized for 700,000 overcoats and 700,000 pairs of shoes to be issued in Poland before the onset of winter (USHistory 2014, para 5).

Concluding that it would be impossible to continue feeding large numbers of Austrian children for a third consecutive year, when dire need existed elsewhere (for example Russia) Jebb wrote that S.C.F. ‘...determined therefore to concentrate its assistance in two main directions: (1) Feeding a number of specially-selected cases of children through its ‘adoption’ system... (2) Subsidizing local institutions…’ (Jebb 1922, p. 19) The support of local institutions was justified by observations that Austria already had noble institutions and welfare departments, but little funding. Although the word sustainability was not used, the issue was clearly one of temporary support until local organisations could once again sustain their activities on behalf of orphans, disabled children and the poor.

Jebb hinted at a unique feature of the Austrian Adoption Scheme when she wrote:
Vienna was a particularly suitable locality for the working of this scheme, partly because it was easier here than in less settled areas to keep track of children, and partly because there were so many who were specially suitable for ‘adoption’ in that they did not fall into any one of the recognized categories for relief. (Jebb 1922, p. 19)

The question is, what was Jebb referring to when she mentioned adoption of children who did not fall into recognized categories and who were, in likelihood, not eligible for food distributed in the American or other food programs? It is interesting that ARA child-feeding programs had begun in Austria in early May, 1919. Selection of children was based on the Pirquet method or Pelidisi formula necessitating accurate measurement of the sitting height of the child compared to weight. Children with a Pelidisi of 94 were classified as underfed and were entitled to a meal a day, while children under 93 were admitted to feeding centres (Archives Centre, National Museum of American History, 2014, pp. 2-3).

Clues to the nature of Jebb’s special category are found in correspondence from Quaker staff in Austria. A 1922 Letter to S.C.F. supporters stated that ‘An interesting feature of our work is that whilst a large number of our children belong to the working-class, the majority of them are drawn from the families of brain-workers, pensioned War invalids and State officials.’ (Houghton 1922c, p. 2). If we are to give S.C.F. staff the benefit of the doubt, it may be that these children were sufficiently advantaged not to have had a low Pedilisi score, and were consequently not entitled to daily food rations provided by the ARA.
One class-conscious Friend was quite explicit in her criteria for child selection, stating in a contradictory letter home:

I am so glad to be able to open my doors to all and sundry, making only such general distinctions as, that the children must come from decent families, keeping up standards of cleanliness, so that we need feel no scruples in letting them stand in the que together, when they come along for their monthly Food Parcel. (Friends Volunteer, n.d., p. 4)

Excluding poorly dressed, lower-class children from the sponsorship program so as not to offend middle or upper class children who required charity seems contrary to Quaker principles of non-discrimination. Rather than view this as evidence of systemic prejudice, and lack of compassion, it is perhaps better understood as evidence that the ‘Adoption Scheme’ was promoted to affluent supporters sympathetic to the plight of educated Viennese who had fallen on hard times and whose children, though disadvantaged, may not have been eligible for assistance under other feeding schemes such as that offered through the ARA. The educated classes were considered key to the rebuilding of Europe and support for them was evident in the response of the ARA. According to one pamphlet issued to ARA stock holders in 1920, the mission in Poland had several tasks, one of which was ‘…distribution of miscellaneous relief gifts to persons of the intellectual class, to university students and professors, and in 1920, at the time of the Bolshevik invasion, to refugees…’ (Adams 2009, p. 7).
In the ARA response, support for intellectuals was perhaps viewed as a necessary step taken against the spread of bolshevism.

How many children were relatively privileged is unclear, though the children referred to by Jebb all appear to fit this category. Readers should not presume that help was not justified or that steps were not taken to redirect assistance to more needy children. In correspondence from the Society of Friends in Austria to S.C.F. supporters it was noted that:

All the women have been personally visited and last winter it was possible to discontinue the rations to some children whose circumstances had improved and give them to others who were more needy. Almost half are children of widows, pensioners or invalids… (Houghton 1922d, p. 1)

To illustrate the human dimension of the process for its readers Record staff added a copy of a hand written letter by a sponsored boy named Paul:

Dear Foster Parent No 4306, Many thanks for the kind gift of 524 Crowns You’ve been so kind to send me for Christmas Mama brought me a pair of boots from it. Father knows and loves Great Britain and Ireland he studied there for a year - I have got a little brother, two years old, his name is Laszeo Mother is often ill Father is art-teacher I am a pupil of a state grammar school of the 1 Class. I would like to know your children by name. I am dear Foster parents Yours very gratefully, Paul Baronski Budapest… (cited in S.C.F. 1921e, p. 176)
In this instance, it was clear to British readers that the sponsored boy was from an educated family adversely affected by post-war conditions. The report excerpt below (Figure 4f) indicates the strong bias in the Austrian Scheme. Though the terminology is dated, Mittelstand may be taken to refer to the families in the middle-upper classes, and of 1221 families supported, 981 were classified as such. In both categories preference was provided for children of widows, invalids or TB patients. S.C.F. and the Friends were not unique in their concern for the Austrian middle-classes who had fallen on hard times. The Jewish Joint Distribution Committee also provided food parcels to professors, engineers, doctors, government employees and other white collar professionals as a matter of priority on the basis that Austria suffered unprecedented inflation, shortages and devaluation of the Austrian Krone (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives 2014b).

Figure 4f Report of Save The Children Fund Adoption Scheme

Source: Anon 1922a, p. 1
There were certainly procedures to eliminate inappropriate sponsorship. For example, a request by the Swedish Y.W.C.A. to find a sponsor for one Florian Richter was considered due to the fact that his father had been a doctor of medicine missing since 1915, presumed dead. However, an assessment based on a family visitation in Austria reported that the home was comfortably furnished, income was sufficient and the boy was in boarding school. Investigation led to the conclusion that ‘In our opinion this is not a needy case and would not be helped from our funds’ (Mission Der Freunde Mittelstand, n.d. p. 1). The use of casework in the early program was common. Documentation from S.C.F. archives indicate that sponsored children in Vienna received home visits from Friends who functioned as case workers whose task it was to assess level of family need. In 1922 the Friends reported to S.C.F. that ‘Visits of Investigation paid to the homes of the children…’ numbered 1433, and that 350 most urgent cases should be supported during the following winter (Anon 1922a, p. 2).

A second important feature of the joint S.C.F. and Friends Austrian Adoption Scheme was the short term nature of support for non-institutionalised children, who typically received food parcels for periods of around 6 months, with preference for support over winter months when scarcity was greatest. In contrast, institutionalized children received subsidized daily meals or fresh milk, supported though the ‘Cows for Vienna’ appeal (Mulley 2009, p. 260). While twelve month adoptions were encouraged, it seems that six month adoptions were more common. A 1922 letter from S.C.F. to the Friends in Vienna asked for information on the conditions of two adopted children, noting that ‘They were
six month’ adoptions, but the adopter awaits your view to decide whether to go on, or change to some more necessitous child elsewhere’ (Anon 1922b, p. 1) However, in denying a request to use sponsor funding to support one child for the first six months, and another for the second six months, an earlier letter from S.C.F. staff stated firmly ‘With regard to substituting other children for the second six months, I am sorry we cannot agree to this. Our scheme provides for the feeding of the same child for one year, and the foster-parents understood this from the beginning.’ (Anon 1921 p. 1) It seems evident from this account that the expectations of sponsors sometimes conflicted with the expert opinion of staff in Austria who preferred greater flexibility.

Another interesting feature of the ‘Adoption Scheme’ in Austria was the nature of tangible support provided to children through food aid and gifts. Food parcels funded by S.C.F. mirrored supplies granted by the ARA and this may be because they were purchased from ARA warehouses. Certainly those distributed by the Friends seem to have been generous, as seen in this description:

It is an interesting sight to see our little family of children of all ages coming along with knapsack on back, or capacious bag in hand to fetch their precious gifts of milk, fat, sugar, cocoa, white flour, and rice, and last, but not least appreciated, a cake of good quality washing soap, treasures which it is utterly beyond their parent’s power to buy in the open market, owing to the terrible depreciation in the value of the Krone. (Houghton 1922b, p. 1)
Not all children were assisted in this manner. Children in institutions benefited from food supplied directly to the institution, typically milk. The Friends had already experimented with importation of dairy cattle to supply milk to malnourished children in institutions, and in 1922 the Friends raised the issue with S.C.F. of appropriate support for older children, advocating for:

...a hot mid-day meal to such of the older children as are best fitted for this type of help, namely those who owing to advanced study had to be away from home all day and only take a little plain lunch (often just black bread) with them. The parents are delighted at the suggestion and these big boys and girls do not need fresh milk so much as plenty to eat at mid-day. (Gilmore 1922, p. 1)

It seems then that the S.C.F. funded Joint Adoption Scheme in Austria provided three variations of support: daily milk rations for malnourished children; monthly rations for predominantly middle-class children in need of temporary assistance; and in some cases daily midday meals, generally over a period of six months to twelve months. In some cases rations were supplemented with cod liver oil, boots and clothing. The nature of funding to institutions in Austria and elsewhere is unclear. In Serbia in 1921 S.C.F. appears to have sponsored orphan children in 'Dom', a children’s home, with funding to ensure ‘…a useful addition to the resources of the home’ (S.C.F. 1921d, p.122). Pictures were supplied to S.C.F. of these children on summer camp.

A final feature of S.C.F. funded adoptions in Austria was the personal touch incorporated in experimentation with letter writing, photo sharing and gift giving
for what were usually children who were biologically unrelated to their sponsors though sometimes of similar ethnic heritage. In the Austrian joint adoption scheme it appears that it was the Friends who actively pursued communication between god-children and their adoptive parents. A February 1921 letter from the Friends in London to S.C.F. acknowledges receipt of a cheque from S.C.F. of £4,420 to cover the costs of 850 adoptions and concluded with this pointed advice to S.C.F.:

We are posting to you to-day a further number of the cards written by the children who have been adopted. We feel that this may be very valuable in making more real the connection between the children, and those who have contributed towards their help. We have asked Miss Houghton, our representative in Vienna... to keep you supplied with reports as to its working, and to make the contact between the children and their ‘god-parents’, as they like to call them, as living as possible. (Henderson 1921, p. 1)

Such correspondence seems to indicate that while S.C.F. originated the idea of sponsoring individuals, it was the Friends who played a very active role in nurturing ongoing contact between children and their adoptive parents through personal letters rather than general updates. During the period 1921-1929 letters from children to sponsors were a frequent addition to S.C.F. publications.

One such letter is as follows:
Dear Godparents, Thank you very much for your good gifts. They tasted very good, but I am sorry I have already started on the last parcel. I have two big brothers, and sometimes I gave them some of the cocoa to taste. My parents have an allotment in the Prater, and we shall soon have the first things grown in it. My school report is good. In Languages, Singing, Writing, General Deportment Drill, I got “good”. In Arithmetic, Reading, Scripture, Home-work, Nature Study and Industry, I got “Very Good”. I am in the fourth class, and I love reading. At home, they call me the Book-worm. Two years ago I was in Sweden, in Goteborg, where I had a good time. I am sending you two drawings. One is the little house father is building, and I am going to help him and thin I am to have my own bed. Where do you live, dear Godparents? I am so glad Spring is coming, and that the cold weather is over. With much love, Your thankful godchild. (Anon, 1922f)

The formula of this letter is simple and much replicated. A salutary greeting is followed by, in various order, an expression of thanks, description of school achievement, polite question or two to the sponsor, commentary on weather or play activities and closing statement of gratitude. Remarkably, the contents are not dissimilar to millions of letters written to sponsors since with the exception that a photo of the child was not provided.

By 1923 crises elsewhere had made it difficult for S.C.F. to justify a continuation of support for children in Austria. Letters exchanged between the Friends in
Vienna and S.C.F. in Britain reveal pleas for ongoing assistance and launch of new appeals. By this time however S.C.F. attention had turned elsewhere and the Friends Relief Mission struggled to actively recruit adopters. A January 30 1923 Letter to S.C.F. reveals that in a new fundraising drive a ‘...total of 500 children has been reached, a good many of these are covered by private adopters from America or Vienna, and some are paid for by the Mission.’ (Gilmore 1923, p. 1). The interesting feature of this statement is reference to the spread of sponsorship internationally. Far from claims made by other organisations that they founded sponsorship as a fundraising device in the 1930s, as early as 1922 the Friends in Vienna had reported that adopters existed in ‘...England, America, Canada, or Australia...’ (Anon 1922c, p. 1). S.C.F. reported that its work was going ahead in Japan and South Africa where private schools in particular had embraced the cause of CS.

4.7 Tensions, challenges and the transition to domestic use.

As early as 1921 S.C.F. found itself publicly criticized for not doing enough for children in England. Mr H.L. Walcombe, secretary of the British Charity Organisation Society, publicly rued the declining number of British children in London who were receiving daily meals under the Provision for Meals Act. Simultaneously, S.C.F. and other charities were promoting massive feeding efforts internationally. Jebb felt compelled to answer publicly, reasoning that ‘On sheer basis of need certainly nothing would be given to England, because, although it is contended that the need is very great here, it is not comparable to anything which exists abroad’ (cited in S.C.F. 1921b, p. 85). Jebb conceded however that her vision was for a global network of national SCFs bound to
better of the lot of children at home and abroad, giving a proportion of funds raised for the needs of foreign children in an act of international solidarity. As a result of this, S.C.F. did not only sponsor children in mainland Europe.

Referring to increasingly common use of photography in the scheme, and a subtle name change, S.C.F. began to promote the ‘adoption’ of children in the British Isles in what it sometimes referred to as the ‘photo-card adoption scheme’, named after the ‘Continental description, “photocarte”, which emphasizes a characteristic feature - the sending of a card bearing the child’s portrait and some description of his circumstances to the subscriber’ (S.C.F. 1941, p. 11). Regarding the domestic program, The World’s Children (S.C.F. 1925, p. 36) noted that names of British children were gathered from the Invalid Children’s Aid Association and help usually consisted of sending the child away to the countryside or sea for a holiday, then rations of cod liver oil or milk, for the rest of the year. For example, S.C.F. supporters were told that a clergyman who had fallen on unfortunate times had been given five pounds to provide milk for an ailing son and that another donor had given 10 pounds for a TB affected parent to ‘...go away with the youngest two children, aged four and two respectively, for a holiday’ (S.C.F. 1925, p. 36). Early support from the mining industry ultimately led S.C.F. to prioritise support in depressed mining towns, seen below.
The use of photographs in the British scheme resulted in some godparents taking ‘...great interest in selecting their children - not only by nationality but by personal circumstances and characteristics’ (S.C.F. 1925, p. 36). There can be no doubt that the Great Depression and loss of S.C.F.’s original founders in the late 1920s and early 1930s provided a significant hurdle for S.C.F. fundraising or that the sponsorship program slowed and declined. Nevertheless, in 1936 The World’s Children listed waiting children as British (English, Welsh, Scottish) and also mentioned availability of children in the West African Cameroons (S.C.F. 1936 p. 119). However, World War Two and the Blitz ensured that S.C.F. sponsorships in mainland Europe were suspended. By September 30 1941, non-British sponsors had been found for 8,264 British children and 557 foreign refugee children (S.C.F. 1941, p. 10).
Experimentation with sponsorship had not been without difficulties and these will be elaborated on in Section 5. Nevertheless, the Adoption Scheme was praised for its ability to mobilize funds, in a personal way. A staff member in Vienna wrote that 'The children look upon the English friends as true god-parents, and these links of friendship will endure, witnessing to the reality of international goodwill' (Houghton 1922d, p. 1). Further, Quaker staff noted that a fine piece of work had been accomplished by S.C.F. in supporting individual children in their homes rather than in institutions and orphanages (Houghton 1922c, p. 4).

4.8 CS Precedents

Speculation over precedents for CS is limited. Ove (2013, p. 68) describes historic purchase and documentation of slave children by missionaries as ‘An obvious if somewhat obscure forerunner to child sponsorship.’ This link may not be as obvious as Ove suggests although the purchase and redemption of individual children by patrons bears some similarity to the sponsorship of children by benefactors. Stronger links may be seen in the very long history of alms giving in Christian and other faiths which seems to be reflected in the ‘Adoption Scheme’ of the S.C.F., as is the long running practice of legally adopting and caring for biological kin. We can be sure that adoptions were framed by S.C.F. as a means of exercising one’s religious obligations. The Duke of Atholl, second president of the Save the Children Fund in Britain, stated in 1924 (S.C.F. 1924, p. 97) ‘I believe that there has been no movement in this or any other country more altruistic and more Catholic in its endeavours and scope than the Save the Children Fund.’
Although S.C.F.’s humanitarian work was ultimately to outgrow sectarian statements, it most certainly publicized the support and sponsorship of children as a Christian responsibility in the early years. As explained earlier, Pope Benedict XV himself supported S.C.F. According to The Record, Save’s international treasurer arrived in London on December 14th 1920 with the Pope’s holograph and the first Encyclical ever issued by the Papacy to commend a non-Catholic society, urging a collection of alms on the feast of the Holy Innocents, to be ‘...sent either to his holiness or to the Save the Children Fund’ (S.C.F. 1921a, p. 61). Though the Encyclical did not mention ‘adoptions’ specifically, it would be naive to think S.C.F. literature had not been well browsed prior to such an important appeal.

In accounting for its rapid early growth Lord Weardale (first chairman of the Save the Children Fund) wrote that S.C.F. had secured the patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury and other great leaders to the extent that:

From our very earliest days we have had the sympathy, the inspiration and the co-operation of the clergy, ministers and people of the churches, chapels and religious meetings up and down the land. The noble and inspiring universal effort of Holy Innocents’ Day last year is still fresh in our memory, and in the coming Advent and Christmastide we look with confidence to a renewed and worthy effort by the church on behalf of the Child in the Midst. (cited in S.C.F. 1920c, p. 35)
Although Save the Children was not established as a religious organization, and was emphatic from inception that it assisted children without regard to religion or creed, there can be little doubt that its work was frequently seen as fulfilment of British civic duty and a moral imperative tied at first to religious duty.

Nested as it is within a frame of Christian charity, the most likely precedent to CS is the practice of God-parenting. Given its inception in Britain at a time when the nation saw itself as a Christian country, it is not surprising that the Adoption Scheme should be linked to the Christian tradition of religious sponsorship. While the importance of the role of god-parents has declined in secular, western societies, and may simply be associated with an individual chosen by parents to take an interest in a child during its formative years, the concept of god-parentage has been deeply important in Christianity, primarily as it related to baptism of infants. Indeed, ‘sponsor’ in Latin refers to someone who provides a surety, or acts as sponsor in baptism. While biological parents of children acted as sponsors for their own children during the period of St Augustine (354-430 AD), the Council of Munich (813 AD) ‘prohibited parents from acting for their own children altogether’ (Mintz & Wolf 1950, p. 344). Interestingly, we now know that the word ‘gossip’ is derived from ‘God sib’, a term that ‘referred to the relation a family would have with someone they felt close enough to make into a god-parent for one of their children’ (Rysman 1977, p. 176).

The use of the term godparent by S.C.F. is far from a coincidence. The relationship between children in the S.C.F. Adoption Scheme emulated the relationship between a Christian god-parent and a baptized child in several
ways. Firstly, in both Protestant and Catholic Christian tradition an adult sought to protect and influence a child, accepting responsibility for an infant child’s welfare. According to Lynch (1986, p. 124) ‘the parent/sponsor spoke and acted for the child during the ceremonies and accepted the obligation to foster religious and moral development as the child matured.’ Secondly, in a religious sense the god-parent, god-child relationship often functioned as a sort of social security net. Roberts (1996, p. 210) asserts that the Dutch elite were often concerned with finding a god-parent to replace parents if they died and usually chose godparents from their brothers or sisters so they were able to receive a generous baptismal gift. Writing about sponsorship in Mexico in 1861 Edward Tylor has observed:

The godfathers and godmothers of a child become, by their participation in the ceremony, relations to one another and to the priest who baptizes the child, and call one another ever afterwards compadres and comadre.... In Mexico, this connexion obliges the compadres and comadres to hospitality and honesty and all sorts of good offices towards one another... (cited in Mintz & Wolf 1950 p. 342)

Finally, as Catholicism viewed sponsorship as a rite leading to spiritual rebirth and the induction of an infant into the embrace of a new familial relation, the S.C.F. Adoption Scheme assisted malnourished children into the embrace of foreign sponsors who functioned, at least for a short term, as familial benefactors vested in child welfare. The popularity of CS in the 1920s can be
partially attributed to the fact that it was rooted in centuries of custom and ritual in Christian Europe.

A contemporary practice of the S.C.F. CS program was that of the direct transfers between the USA and Europe evident in the ‘Food Draft System’ introduced in World War One. When stressing that one of the tasks of the ARA was the relief of intellectuals in Central and Eastern Europe, Hoover indicated that over between two and three million dollars was raised for the purpose and supplemented by the provision of food drafts (Hoover institution Archives 2014, p. 2). In a letter to the Bankers of America he noted the presence of three to four million families in the USA with family affiliations in Eastern and Central Europe, who were desirous of assisting them, but constrained by high freight costs. He proposed to sell food drafts to Americans through banks, which allowed relatives in Europe access to rations stocked in ARA warehouses, with profits to accrue to the European Children’s Fund. Adams (2009, p. 6) describes an elaborate system in which American residents could purchase the drafts at 20,000 American banks, choosing a $10 draft (equivalent to 24.5 pounds of flour, 10 pounds of beans, 8 pounds of bacon, and 8 cans of milk) or a $50 draft (equivalent to 140 pounds of flour, 50 pounds of beans, 16 pounds of bacon, 15 pounds of lard, 12 pounds of corned beef, and 48 cans of milk. For Jews, kosher packages substituted meat with cottonseed oil. Rations were redeemable using a ticket sent in the mail. The similarity with child sponsorship is evident in that distant benefactors donated funds for food rations in Europe for specific individuals.
Remittances to family members in Europe also had some commonalities with the early CS program. Distant benefactors provided small sums to support distant relatives in war-affected regions. This had long been evident prior to World War One, however, was common during the war as well. The Transmission Department of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee operated from 1915 and enabled relatives in the USA to remit small sums directly to family members in Europe and Palestine, exceeding $6,966,195 in the period 1917-1920. For example, the master list of remittances to Poland shows $5.17 remitted by B. Meyer in Cleveland, Ohio, to Herman Kaliska, in Berlin on September 22, 1915 (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives 2014b).

Part of the genius of the S.C.F. Adoption Scheme in its early years was that it went beyond appealing to familial responsibility and remittances to loved ones. It framed short-term support for potentially all war-affected children and refugees in the context of an ancient Christian tradition requiring sponsorship of children for a minimum of six months by a friendly god-parent or biological relative. While a godparent in the Christian tradition required patronage between members of the same faith, and often the same kinship system, the S.C.F. Adoption Scheme promoted welfare-based sponsorship irrespective of religious commonalities between adult and child. Just as Latin American anthropologists believe that pre-Columbian sponsoring practices eased the way for Christian sponsorship (Lynch 1986, p. 77), it can be seen that religious sponsorship practices eased the way for modern child sponsorship by INGOs in Europe. And rather than sponsorship functioning (as it did in early Christianity) as a means of guarding
against the admission of untrustworthy individuals during a time of persecution when the consequences of betrayal were dire, (Mintz & Wolf, 1950, p. 343), S.C.F. sponsorship functioned to position all children as worthy of aid because their circumstances were already dire.

At times the S.C.F. emphasis on sponsorship for children regardless of religion or nationality required bravery and fortitude. Writing in 1923 Victoria De Bunsen described S.C.F.’s impartial treatment of children in terms of a ‘fight’ in which:

...every kind of weapon has been brought into play. Patriots would have it we were cutting our own throats by saving the lives of future German soldiers, who would want to fight us again; of budding Bolshevists who would grow up to overthrow our social system. (cited in S.C.F. 1922d, p. 86)

Sponsorship however attempted to depoliticize children and position them as a ‘World Asset.’

4.9 Conclusion

The tumultuous period between the conclusions of World War One and World War Two, a lack of readily accessible historical information, and the emergence of many new INGOs globally, may be partially responsible for well-intentioned though inaccurate claims about the origins of CS. However, while John Langdon-Davies and the Duchess of Atholl have been credited with founding CS to support displaced Spanish children in 1937 and 1938, it is more likely that the Duchess was already well familiar with foster parent schemes involving what we
now refer to as sponsorship. In 1921 her husband, His Grace the Duke of Atholl, was preparing to take over as president of the British S.C.F. In a speech at Edinburgh at that time the Duchess of Atholl had expressed her pride in S.C.F.’s work, describing it as ‘A task of Unprecedented Magnitude’ (S.C.F. 1922a, p. 105). It would be surprising if the Duchess was not well aware of S.C.F.’s publications and appeals for British sponsors. Rather than Langdon-Davies approaching her in 1937 to pitch the idea of sponsorship for the benefit of children in the Spanish Civil War, it is more likely that her knowledge of the fundraising device preceded his.

Debunking the claim that American J Calvitt Clarke independently conceived the idea of child sponsorship as a tool for fundraising sometime near 1940 is also not difficult. Sponsorship had been publicized in the USA since at least 1921 via S.C.F. and the Society of Friends. According to CCF history Clarke was involved with the American Near East Relief program until 1931 and had visited Armenia personally in 1924 at a time when S.C.F. was already sponsoring children there and the ARA was preparing to withdraw. As Co-Founder of Save the Children Federation (USA) in 1932 and southern Director from 1934-1937 it seems likely he would have been familiar with Save the Children literature, including sponsorship appeals, especially given that sponsorship was provided to children during the Great Depression in American Appalachia for $30 per year. Rather than being credited for inventing CS, it seems likely that J Calvitt Clarke replicated an existing fundraising mechanism when he established CCF for the support of Chinese orphans.
Child sponsorship was clearly used by S.C.F. and the Society of Friends in several European countries in the aftermath of World War One. Further, it was promoted to sponsors as far afield as Africa, America and Australia. In the absence of further information, S.C.F. and the Society of Friends should cautiously be credited as early pioneers of CS as a fundraising tool utilized to ‘pair’ donors with disadvantaged children for the purpose of short term provision of rations in post-conflict settings or the longer term support of children in institutions. Key ingredients of the early adoption scheme continue in CS programs 90 years later, including celebrity advocacy, monthly, relatively small payments for the support of individuals, identification of children utilizing personal correspondence to encourage a sense of personal connection, and modern variations of what were referred to as photo-cards. The eventual use of CS to assist children domestically in depressed areas of the UK and USA is best seen as a response to supporter backlash in donor nations, the need to demonstrate compassion at home, and the realization that though absolute need was greater in the famine stricken lands, relative poverty was also debilitating.

It may well be that there is more to the story of the origins of CS. Jebb’s claim that S.C.F. initiated ‘adoptions’ and corroboration by staff at the Society of Friends in Vienna, can be dealt with optimistically however caution is required. The early S.C.F. executive committee was varied and included Catherine Booth, a Brigadier in the Salvation Army, and Ruth Fry, a representative of the Quakers. When the International Save the Children Union was formed and based in Geneva, it was with the strong support of Etienne Clouzot, Head of Secretariat, the International Committee of the Red Cross. While Jebb herself
claimed that S.C.F. invented the ‘Adoption Scheme’ it may well be that her
knowledge of its antecedents was incomplete. Interestingly, the Joint Jewish
Distribution Committee (JJDC) also appears to have been an early user of CS -
referring to financial adoptions of single and double orphans in the same period.
An intriguing February 1921 letter from the JJDC War Orphan Department in
New York to the Child Care director in Paris, includes reference to a Rabbi Louis
Witt who had adopted several orphans in Palestine from November 28, 1917 for
the sum of $25 per month (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
Archives 2014c). Simmons (2006, p. 60) refers to an April 1918 Zionist
Commission to Palestine that investigated the circumstances of Jewish orphans,
and the newly established Palestine Orphan Committee, responsible for 4,000
orphans for which it sought foster placements or subsidies to enable children to
remain with relatives. Collectively both sources pose the question as to whether
CS was used in Palestine and elsewhere prior to its popularisation in Europe.
Nevertheless, in the absence to other claims prior to 1920, the S.C.F. and
Society of Friends should be cautiously accorded credit for pioneering, on a
large scale, individual child sponsorship through its ‘adoptions scheme’ in the
post-World War One period.
Section 5 - Issues in Historic Child Sponsorship

5.1 Introduction

A thesis on Child Sponsorship (CS) would hardly be justified without reference to its remarkable ability to generate controversy and polarise opinion within and without CS international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). Ideally, a thorough discussion of historic and ongoing critique would have taken place in a literature review positioned at the beginning of this thesis however a lack of clarity over the origins of early CS, the fragmented nature of the literature and the lack of a typology of CS related activity (enabling nuanced critique) made this unfeasible and necessitated a sweeping review of key issues as a precursor to this section. Having proposed a typology of CS-funded activity, and clarified the origins of CS, it is helpful to now discuss a variety of historic claims levelled against CS while avoiding critique using a one-size-fits-all approach. This being the case, this section seeks to gather and assess a variety of historic criticisms and discuss them in historical context. Particular emphasis is made on critique that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, with the warning that this occurred in the absence of scholarly scrutiny and prior to the popularisation of NGOs as development actors and development educators. Although no effort is made to apply them to current CS INGO activity, it is the opinion of the author that a number of issues discussed below do continue to affect the CS INGO sector at large, and especially those organisations that retain traditional models of CS.

A caution is required before continuing. Familiar with inordinate and vociferous amounts of criticism associated with political life, Winston Churchill observed
that ‘Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things’ (cited in Manchester 1983, p. 348). Critics of CS would almost certainly agree that pointing out the short-comings of CS (especially in the 1970s and 1980s) is warranted, justified and ultimately helpful. Conversely, some proponents of CS past and present would argue that decades of critique has been lopsided, misinformed and the prevailing negativity has contributed to an unhealthy and sometimes harmful debate that rarely acknowledges diversity in CS INGOs, the emergence of ethical practice, innovation, and the evolution in programmatic approaches discussed in preceding sections of this work. Further, this section is limited insofar as it limits itself to critique of the early sponsorship model employed by Save the Children Fund in the UK and the significant criticisms that arose in relation to CS INGOs in the post World War Two years that prioritised assistance to children and families.

Unfortunately, scant records are available on pre-World War II CS programs, largely because there were a small number of providers, the period was characterized by economic depression, and historic records have long been lost or are difficult to access. Sparse accounts exist of CS in the 1940s through to the 1970s, necessitating heavy use of a small number of sources from a narrow range of organisations, notably ChildFund and Plan International.

The following discussion acknowledges that several leading CS INGOs have evolved considerably between the 1960s and 1990s, a matter dealt with at length in Section 2. For example, between 1937 and 1983 Plan International
was involved in a ‘…transition from child welfare to child, family, and community development …’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 302). Meanwhile, in the mid-1970s World Vision moved beyond support of individual children in orphanages to large-scale support of children in schools, then increasingly to community development initiatives by the 1980s and 1990s (Pierce & Kalaiselvi 2014, p. 143). According to the typology proposed in this thesis, the support of children and their families through direct service provision, cash transfers and gift giving may be loosely described as welfare provision and should be classified as IICS (Individual, Institutional Child Sponsorship) or IFCS (Individual and Family Child Sponsorship). These forms of assistance should not be confused with CDCS (Community Development Child Sponsorship) which involved a paradigm shift away from individual welfare to community development, community empowerment and poverty reduction for whole communities.

It is further noted, somewhat in favour of the INGOs involved, that media accounts and damaging exposes have had undue influence in swaying broad perceptions of CS within academia and the aid industry at large. Vociferous media critique has typically targeted a small number of very large CS INGOs with significant media profiles, and has tended to rely on opinion and anecdotal evidence gathered at particular points in time. Peter Stalker’s (1982) article in the New Internationalist epitomizes the tension that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s over CS and may be seen as a tipping point in public debate over the legitimacy of CS as a poverty reduction tool rather than a vehicle for child welfare, though these may at first glance seem synonymous.
Writing when poverty reduction and community empowerment were becoming entrenched concepts in the aid industry, Stalker’s premise that sponsors benefited at the expense of sponsored children (Stalker 1982, p. 1) was based on opinion, anecdotal evidence and hearsay. Further, it reflected a generalised ‘…scarcity of empirical research-based evidence about the impact of child sponsorship on recipient families and communities’ noted later by Brehm and Gale (2000, p. 1). It is a point of interest that the New Internationalist was backed by Oxfam, an organization that does not sponsor children and has expressed its reservations about the practice of individual child sponsorship in the past. Currently for example the Oxfam Australia website asserts that its programs ‘…focus on communities rather than individuals’ and that it considers this to be a more ‘effective and efficient approach for long-term developmental outcomes’ (Oxfam Australia 2014, para 8).

Regrettably, while there have been very real issues in CS fundraising and CS funded interventions over time, debate has been stifled by a reluctance of the large CS INGOs to engage with academia, invite peer review, release research findings or otherwise risk harming their carefully cultivated public image as cost-effective, life changing and empowering. The results of internal analysis of CS funded programs have often been assigned to the grey literature and locked away in internal documentation. ChildFund (formerly CCF) is a case in point. Concerned that CCF’s performance might not be matching its claims, in 1972 Verent Mills hired Dr. Charles G. Chakerian, a social scientist from the University of Chicago, to survey CCF supported orphanages, schools and family helper projects.
After auditing student academic performance, CCF also engaged Dr. Ahti Hailuoto, head of the child welfare department at the International Union for Child Welfare in Geneva to conduct a similar audit of the worldwide CCF program. Though the results were not made widely public for many years, the lesson learned was that ‘…you can’t effectively help a child apart from the context of his or her family, community, and nation’ (Tise 1993, p. 84). Further, doing a little everywhere appeared to CCF to be counterproductive. While the employ of external expertise for evaluation was admirable, and led to systemic change, it is a shame that lessons learned by CCF were not shared more widely within the CS sector. Having said this, the same is true for many current non-CS INGOs that also do not share evaluation findings for fear of supporter backlash or because they are in direct competition with other organisations likewise reluctant to trigger damaging criticism from those who are unfamiliar with their complexity of their work.

An unintended side-effect of damaging journalistic critique has been for CS INGOs to become very protective, a reality observed by the author of this thesis in approaching multiple INGOs to contribute to the book *Child Sponsorship: Exploring Pathways to a Brighter Future* (Watson & Clarke, 2014). Strident critique by journalists in the 1980s and 1990s has made it incredibly difficult for programs staff in large CS INGOs to publicly acknowledge tensions in their current international programs or domestic marketing activities without fear of transgressing the mandates of marketing staff and CEOs whose primary function is to enhance growth of the organisation and protect its public image. Another issue is the simplistic expectations of donors contrasted with the
complexity of the work of INGOs, leading to a mistrust of donors or reluctance to engage fully and transparently (Elliot 2010 paras 17-22). So, sensitivity in some quarters of the CS sector is extreme and arguably it may be that the already high costs of marketing and fundraising has often impeded necessary expenditure on evaluation. To be fair to CS INGOS, it is a truism that although all INGOs engaged in developing countries will privately concede the complexity in their work, few discuss this openly as much as they should or share the reality of failed projects for fear of damage inflicted by a potentially hostile and unsympathetic media.

5.2 Issues in early S.C.F. CS

The CS program initiated by S.C.F. and the Society of Friends in Austria required the identification of disadvantaged children and provision of food aid - as seen in Figure 5a.

*Figure 5a A Friends Ration*

Source: Triptych/tri college digital library 2014
As early as 1921 the UK based S.C.F. found itself criticized for exaggerating the plight of children through emotive and sensational advertising, a feature of the early CS program also explored in Section 4. The earliest incarnation of S.C.F.’s periodical, *The Record of the Save the Children Fund*, was described in the Glasgow Bulletin as ‘the most melancholy magazine in existence’ with ‘more misery in its few pages than all the tragedies of the war combined’ (S.C.F. 1920c, p. 38). Although this criticism was announced with some pride by *Record* Staff, the secretary of the British Charity Organisation Society speculated that it was not unreasonable to think ‘that the condition of the children cannot be as desperate as represented in the appeal’ (S.C.F. 1921b, p. 85). The secretary seems to have been referring specifically to a S.C.F. appeal for funds to feed British children rather than its appeals for famine affected Europe however in decades to come CS INGOs would be accused time and again of misrepresenting the plight of children to donors, culminating in the observation that they engaged in the pornography of poverty (Plewes & Stuart 2007).

Poverty porn and the pornography of poverty are terms that have been used by academics and development practitioners ‘..to describe the worst of the images that exploit the poor for little more than voyeuristic ends and where people are portrayed as helpless, passive objects’ (Plewes & Stuart 2007, p. 23). Although CS INGOs would argue that this is an overly harsh assessment, and their ultimate goal has been to help children rather than exploit them for voyeuristic ends, the use of such images has been called into question because of their potential ability to humiliate, demean and misrepresent reality in the South for fundraising purposes. Cynics have suggested that heavy users of such images
have been more interested in growing their income streams and were prepared
to do so at the expense of truth and objectivity with blatant disregard for
principles of human dignity, development education or global citizenship
education. This criticism requires further discussion in the conclusion of this
section as it relates to legitimacy. An early example of what may loosely be
termed ‘poverty porn’ may however be seen in Figure 5b.

*Figure 5.b Mellins Food - Early advertising in The Record of the Save the Children Fund*

Source: S.C.F. 1921h, p. 217

Jebb’s 1920s radical and expensive advertising campaigns included full page
spreads in London’s most prestigious newspapers. Successful in terms of
financial return (Mulley 2009, p. 264), the advertising was nonetheless
controversial. In a remarkable harbinger to critique that would become
widespread in the 1980s, in January 1922 *Record* staff wrote ‘It has been said -
and generally with derogatory intention - that the Save the Children Fund has
made capital out of popular emotions’ (S.C.F. 1922a, p. 119). Interestingly, this was seen as necessary and desirable, leading to the observation by S.C.F. staff that ‘This is exactly what it set out to do.’ Indeed, Record staff described themselves as deliberately attempting to ‘open the eyes and stimulate the emotions of their fellows’ in the quest for a new and higher form of charity emphasising child wellbeing (S.C.F. 1922a, p. 119). The historical context of post-World War I Europe is perhaps important. Sympathy for the plight of women and children in ex-enemy countries was limited, famine conditions were widespread and Save the Children Staff were adamant that the ends justified the means in rousing a complacent public.

In hindsight it is apparent that famine conditions were pervasive in post World War One Europe and that the advertising of S.C.F. did play a useful role in rousing a war-weary public to respond in a time of need and move beyond sectarian interests in the pursuit of what would become a global movement for children. However, it is notable that S.C.F. made little reference to the ARA (American Relief Administration) feeding programs, and may have exaggerated the plight of children in Austria. In response to criticism of its fundraising for British children, whom it embraced in small numbers, Jebb explained that the need was not comparable to anything abroad (S.C.F. 1921b, p. 85). Seemingly pressured into the sponsorship of less needy UK children, Jebb conceded that her vision was two-fold, for ‘relieving the children’ and ‘helping forward the child relief movement in a dozen different countries (S.C.F. 1921b, p. 85). Clearly she was concerned that sporadic, fragmented efforts were not a long term solution.
The efficacy of direct services provided to some children is, with powers of hindsight and viewed through the contemporary lens of community development and poverty reduction, an issue. In Section 4 of this thesis it is pointed out that in Austria, many children sponsored were from the Viennese middle class, and were referred to as the children of brain-workers, with poorer children supported by the ARA feeding program. S.C.F. staff (S.C.F. 1925, p. 36) noted that sponsored British children were sent away to the countryside or sea for a holiday, then provision of rations of cod liver oil or milk, for the rest of the year. In at least one case a clergyman was given cash to buy milk for his children, presenting an early case of cash transfers to parents of sponsored British children (S.C.F. 1925, p. 36). It seems clear that numerous children in the sponsorship programs of S.C.F. were far from destitute.

Clearly the provision of food and respite was viewed as a kindness, however, such activity was more clearly aligned with child welfare, individual charity and a handout rather than with the hand-up and long-term empowerment approach central to the tenets of community development that emerged in the Post World War Two era. In S.C.F. publications a Blackheath subscriber was lauded for giving his Budapest protégé a fortnights holiday in England, while the daughter of a well-known peer was praised for facilitating the adoption of two children of an unemployed labourer in the Victoria docks (S.C.F. 1936, p. 119). Likewise, the sponsorship of Austrian children from the middle-classes may be questioned.
Early proponents of CS defended the use of picture sharing, an expensive practice that some 50 years later would lead to concern that children were being commodified—especially when sponsors selected children based on age and appearance. However, in the early years it would seem that pictures followed the process of pairing and more so in the UK domestic program. The use of photographs in the British scheme resulted in some godparents taking ‘…great interest in selecting their children - not only by nationality but by personal circumstances and characteristics’ (S.C.F. 1925, p. 36). At the time CS was praised for its ability of humanize and personalize charitable giving, much as was the case in 1939 when Odgers, a Plan worker said ‘The terrific “personalness” of the Plan is very exacting. But what else is there in life?’ to help our comrades in distress with warmth and understanding, not with cold charity’ (PLAN International 1998, p. 5). No doubt pictures were viewed as an exciting means of personalizing the process.

Referring to increasingly common use of photography in the scheme, and a subtle name change, S.C.F. began to promote the ‘adoption’ of children in the British Isles in what it sometimes referred to as the ‘photo-card adoption scheme’ in which sponsors received a card, the child’s portrait and a description of personal circumstances (S.C.F. 1941, p. 11). Originally initiated by Austrian staff in the Society of Friends, this process would become a telling feature of CS globally and necessitated the identification, allocation and ongoing monitoring of individual children who were paired with international sponsors who would come to expect photographs and personal updates. For Plan staff in the late 1930s this would be described politely as ‘exacting’ and would necessitate ‘Recording
Case Histories, arranging photos and translations, ensuring that every letter and parcel was delivered and acknowledged…” (PLAN International 1998, p. 5)

In theory, personalizing charity through CS was beneficial. For Austrian children supported by British god-parents in the 1920s, it was observed that ‘The children look upon the English friends as true god-parents, and these links of friendship will endure, witnessing to the reality of international goodwill’ (Houghton 1922d, p. 1). The stated warmth of connections formed with CS is well promoted in the early years, however there is little evidence suggesting that relationships did endure over time and some concern that personal contact via letters could be a double-edged sword. In February 1921 instructions to its Paris office, the War Orphan Department of the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which had also initiated a sponsorship program referred to as financial adoptions, advised:

…for propaganda purposes and in order properly to launch the work, it is essential that the first group of orphans whose records we receive for ‘financial adoption’ should be actual war orphans, preferably children without both parents. Naturally, the more pitiful and urgent the case is, the more chance there is not only of having that particular case speedily cared for, but also to have the spread to a greater extent. (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives 2014c)

Among other advice it was suggested that orphans immediately write a letter to the sponsor (guardian), receive the guardians contact details, thank the
guardian without being overly effusive, avoid cultivating in orphans the feeling that ‘it is under obligation to maintain a “beggar’s” attitude’ and to avoid, in written communication, any ‘appeal for further help of the guardian in America (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives 2014c). Without using the word directly, it is clear that potential was seen for the sponsorship process to subvert dignity and inspire paternalism.

Even in the early years the allocation of children by S.C.F. staff and the resulting nature of personal contact was sometimes problematic. In one illustrative case the S.C.F. allocation’s department wrote that ‘The foster-parent has had a nice little letter from him but she is not pleased, because she declares we have given her a Jew, when she particularly desired otherwise’ (Anon 1922d, p. 1). Seemingly oblivious to the potential for CS to commodify children and package them to the needs of their donors, a subsequent investigation revealed that ‘They are not Jews, but of Polish peasant type, and Roman Catholics…’ (Anon 1922e, p. 1).

Aside from the obvious prejudices and paternalistic attitudes revealed in some ‘adopters’ it seems apparent in the early S.C.F. CS program that managing the expectations of individual donors could be time-consuming and disconcerting with a particular issue being the grumbling of ‘old adoptors’ who had not paid their subscription in full and had their child ‘allocated elsewhere’ (Gilmore, 1922). Archival sources reveal much time-consuming correspondence over mismatched lists of children, tension over the individual requests of emotionally invested sponsors, and difficulty in managing uneven payments.
In support of S.C.F., Quaker staff in Austria noted that a fine piece of work had been accomplished by S.C.F. in supporting individual children in their homes ‘which often proves to be a more satisfactory way of helping them - especially the younger ones - than by taking them out of their own surroundings’ (Houghton 1922c, p. 4). Thus, concern over the institutionalization of children when family care options were available was evident as early as 1922, some 30 years before emergence of concern in the 1950s and 1960s that CS proliferated orphanages and orphan care programs.

Other key problems evident in the early years of the S.C.F. CS scheme revolved around the administrative difficulties inherent to the selection of children, ongoing monitoring, communication with donor offices, matching of lists of children held in various countries, and complexities around sponsor relations and expectations. For example, in a 1921 letter from a British god-parent to the General Secretary of S.C.F., the sponsor explained that she had been in direct contact with her god-child in Leipzig and ‘she had not got any meals’ (Renzaho 1921, p. 1). It would seem then that even in the early days, some sponsored children may not have received the direct benefits that were promised.

In Austria there seems to have been continuous trouble matching the lists of sponsored children held by the Society of Friends with the lists held by S.C.F. in the UK. The very same issue would come back to haunt several leading CS INGOs in the 1990s with journalists accusing the NGOs of collecting funds for dead children. Further, much later claims of inflexibility in CS programs are mirrored somewhat by observations in the early 1920s that six months adoptions
provided a degree of inflexibility due to the fact that ‘the rations for a year, if
given continuously, would leave off, in many cases, in the middle of next winter.’
(Clard 1921, p. 1) Staff also grappled with inflexibility of 12 month sponsorships
when by six months it was evident that family circumstances had improved and
funding should be switched elsewhere (Anon 1921). Further, staff in Austria
struggled to continue sponsorships when ‘so many of these parents who did
adopt Austrian children have already changed, voluntarily or by our suggestion,
to children in other parts more tried’ (Anon 1922g, p. 1).

Discrepancies in payments and cessation by god-parents also proved
problematic, with the S.C.F. allocations department noting that ‘some foster
parents in these hard times, pay instalments for a couple of quarters, and then
cease’ (Anon 1922b, p. 1). Difficulty in administering gift giving, concern that
short term sponsorships left children vulnerable in coming winters, and a strong
feeling that some families should pay a portion of the costs of their food parcels
to avoid the demoralization of dependency (Houghton 1922e, p. 1), reveal early
efforts to grapple with some of the complexities of early CS. Perhaps a key issue
highlighted early was the disconcerting reality that although the early CS
program allowed for meaningful correspondence and personal relationship
building, lived experience of some children was that they did not receive
personalized support. In fact, there was ‘...a good deal of disappointment on the
part of some of the children at not having had any communication from their
adopter...’ By contrast ‘...great has been the joy of those who have had
 correspondence, and sometimes additional gifts, from their foster-parents’
(Houghton 1922c, p. 5). The confusion and sense of inequity experienced by
many children who never hear from their sponsors or receive gifts, is a valid concern that continues to impact CS programs that market one-to-one sponsorship models.

World War Two and the Blitz provided impetus for rapid growth of the British domestic program with a concurrent retreat from sponsorship in central Europe associated with the enemy occupation. The 1940-1941 annual report of S.C.F. noted the gradual suspension of the work abroad and necessity of assisting children in Great Britain. Interestingly, many of the sponsorships were destined to be filled by foreigners. An appeal for 10,000 subscribers (sponsors) through the Save the Children Federation at large and in America in particular, meant that by September 30, 1941, non-British sponsors had been found for 8,264 British children and 557 foreign refugee children (S.C.F. 1941, p. 10). Such was the demand for ‘photocard’ adoptions that S.C.F. appealed to various administrators in Britain to submit suitable cases of children not over the age of 14, noting that the most helpful administrators were ‘clergy and ministers of all denominations, day and Sunday school teachers, mission workers, and those engaged in welfare and social work among children up to 14 years of age’ (S.C.F. 1941, p. 14). Although there is no hint that such selection processes were problematic, reputable CS INGOs in the 1980s and 1990s would begin to grapple with the issue of power dynamics in communities and the way this sometimes excluded poor children or created disharmony in communities where some apparently disadvantaged children were selected and received international support while others did not.
5.3 Issues in CS related orphan care

For some leading CS INGOs such as Plan International (formerly Foster Parents Plan), ChildFund (formerly CCF) and World Vision, the 1950s and 1960s may be seen as an era when orphan care formed a key plank of project activity. Plan’s early work in the late 1930’s and through the 1940s, had focused largely on care of children in what it referred to as ‘children’s colonies’, though it soon diversified into family helper programs and the treatment of disabled children. Similarly, World Vision, established by Robert Pierce in 1950, likewise focused initially on orphans in institutions with Pierce asserting that caring for orphans was ‘the little job God has given me to do’ (cited in King 2014, p. 262). Through its early years ChildFund emphasized support of war affected children in institutions (especially missionary run orphanages). In his opinion, ‘...an institution that could supply the food, shelter and education ...was what was needed’ (Tise 1993, p. 5).

The result for ChildFund was an astounding fundraising success. By one account, in the late 1950s CCF was funding 38,000 orphans in Korea alone and the Reverend Verent Mills would later reflect that it was a constant challenge keeping up with insatiable American demand for children. According to Mills, Clarke would:

‘...send me cables that would burn up if they were written on asbestos: “Need 4,000 more children! Get more homes for CCF to sponsor! We’ve got more requests than we have children!” I couldn’t even get the case histories and everything typed up from one home
before I’d get another cable asking for 2,000 more children.’ (Tise 1993, pp. 22-23)

For pre-existing orphanages struggling to cope with the influx of war-affected children these must have been exciting times!

An unintended problem for some CS INGOs engaged in rapidly growing orphan care programs such as in Korea, was the very rapid recruitment of children leading to their displacement from poor families and the proliferation of low quality and understaffed orphanages. CCF staff in 1954 noted many problems associated with rapid expansion of orphanages funded by American GIs stationed in Korea (Asbury, 1954). INGOs contributed to the problem though some, such as CCF, played an important role trying to improve standards of care. Tise (1993, p. 66) explains that The Korean Association of Voluntary Agencies conducted a study in 1960 for CCF to ascertain the origins of children in its funded institutions, length of stay and proportion who returned to family. He writes ‘The findings were unequivocal. A large proportion of these children had been transformed into “orphans” by their families.’ CCF was not alone in experiencing this phenomenon. For impoverished families, offers of free food, shelter and schooling provided significant incentive to place children in institutions that seemed to offer material and educational advantages beyond the ability of poor families to provide. The very term ‘orphanage’ was thus a misnomer when they housed rapidly recruited children who had family who were willing to care for them and may well have provided care if offered a family payment of sorts.
Interestingly, it may be that the term orphanage was a misnomer in the USA as well. Jones (1993, p. 462) argues that in the USA the large majority of children in institutional orphan care in the 1930s and 1940s had at least one surviving parent, typically a woman, who sent at least one child into institutional care because of economic disadvantage or the perception that chances of education could be bettered in an institution. The dynamic then was not dissimilar to the situation in Cambodia in 2010 where as many as 44% of children in institutional care were estimated to have been ‘...brought there by their parents or extended family’ (MoSVY 2011, p. 4). Rapid recruitment of children by cash rich CS INGOs most certainly exacerbated this trend historically and in some countries continues to do so today.

Alluding to the potential for CS INGOs to trigger ‘orphan rushes’ Herrell (1974, p. 691) observed, ‘A sponsorship program should be used for finding sponsors to provide for identified needs of priority-risk children, rather than “for finding children for sponsors.”’ The great irony for USA-based CS INGOs revelling in successful fundraising for orphan care in the 1950s and 1960s, was that their growth came in the twilight of the institutional orphan care programs in America and other rich countries. In 1909 a White House Conference had asserted that ‘Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization. Children should not be deprived of it unless for urgent and compelling reasons... children from unfit homes, or children who have not homes, who must be cared for by charitable agencies, should, so far as practical, be cared for in families’ (cited in U.S. Department of Labor 1929, p. 13). Over the course of the twentieth century, as the social work profession grew rapidly, a negative view of large orphanages
developed, based on the presumption that ‘Any amount of orphanage experience is harmful. The damage is greatest during the first years of life and increases dramatically with length of stay in an institution’ (McCall 1999, p. 129-30). It is arguably the dominant view held by child rights INGOs at time of writing.

Evidence that institutional orphan care was harmful to children mounted gradually (see for example Goldfarb, 1945; Bowlby, 1951; Provence & Lipton, 1962; Spitz, 1965). Despite this, Mass and Engler’s ground-breaking *Children in need of parents* (1959) reported apparent disturbance rates in as high as 40-60% of placed children. Numerous scholarly papers have since suggested that there are increased risks to children associated with institutional care. For example, Nielsen et al. (2011) reported a more limited range of emotions displayed in Ugandan children in orphan care. Frank et al. (cited in North American Council on Adoptable Children n.d.) conclude that ‘in the long term, institutionalization in early childhood increases the likelihood that impoverished children will grow into psychiatrically impaired and economically unproductive adults.’ More often than not, literature review reveals a prevailing view that institutional care should be a measure of last resort, though it remains enduringly popular for many child sponsors.

On the dissenting side Whetten et al. (2009, p. 1) randomly sampled 1,357 children living in institutions and compared them to 658 abandoned or double orphans living in the community. The study found that children aged six and above who had been institutionalized for more than 3 years performed better in
school examinations and performed reasonably well on emotional, behavioural, and physical health measures. Interestingly, Whetten et al. (2009) point out that some orphanages are better than others, and that some family care programs are inadequate. The same might be said for historic CS orphan programming.

Whether entirely accurate or not, and in the apparent absence of comparative studies between institutional orphan care programs, the view that institutionalized orphan care is virtually always harmful has reached its zenith in the past twenty years. This view has been adopted by UNICEF which took a hostile stance towards institutional care of children in its *Children on the Brink Report* (2004, p. 17) in which it argued that orphanages, children’s villages, and other group residential facilities ‘generally fail to meet young people’s emotional and psychological needs.’ At an international level current consensus hinges on the notion that family care and community care options are best for orphaned children. UNICEF for example, asserts that institutional care programs segregate children and generally fail to provide them with the attention, affection, social connectivity, cultural awareness and social skills needed to thrive (UNICEF 2004, p. 20).

The consequence of critique directed at institutional care has been profound in the USA. Shughart and Chappell (1999, p. 153) have observed that in 1933 approximately 144,000 children were cared for in orphanages in the USA. However, ‘By 1977, only 43,000 children were living in orphanages. And by 1980, the orphanage had for all practical purposes ceased to exist.’ This trend has been mirrored in Australia where, at time of writing, historic orphan care
programs have fallen under a pall of disrepute due to investigations into historic
neglect and child abuse. ‘Forgotten Australians’ is a term the Australian Senate
has used to describe at least 500,000 children who were brought up in
orphanages, children's homes, institutions or foster care in Australia, generally
in the period 1920 to 1970 (State Library of Victoria 2014).

While it would be nice to think that sound ideology, reinforced by quality
research carried out by psychologists and social workers, was largely
accountable for the decline of institutional care in the USA, Australia and
similarly affluent countries, other factors were also obviously at work. The
American Social Security Act of 1935 ensured that families of dependent
children were paid allowances (aid to families with dependent children was given
to 2.3 million children by 1960) for care of children, fostered or otherwise (Jones
1993, pp. 460-461). In Australia child endowment was introduced in 1941 by the
Menzies Government with ‘a payment of five shillings per week for each child in
a family after the first’ and expanded to all children by 1950, an innovation not
matched by the British until 1945. Shughart and Chappell (1999) point out that
by the 1960s the financial cost of family-based foster care in America was
approximately half that of support in an institution. In combination, this financial
disincentive, plus the introduction of child-care payments, growing supremacy of
a family-care ideology, increasing costs associated with professionalising
orphanage-based care, and a more stringent regulatory environment, ensured
the demise of many large and ageing institutions in Australia and the USA.
Despite the move towards family payments in the USA and foster care placements, the impact of institutional programs funded by CS INGOs in poor or war-torn countries seems to have been rarely questioned publicly in the 1950s and 1960s. To the contrary, rhetoric for international child saving via institutions reached fever pitch, especially amongst Christian Americans in the 1950s. Nevertheless, it would seem that many internationally funded orphanages experienced similar issues as those at home in terms of quality of care and isolation of children from surviving family members. Dr Chun Wai Chan, an ex-resident of Faith Love Home in Hong Kong, writes in his memoir:

It was a very regimented and totally insulated environment... We were stigmatized... and treated like aliens... We had gates right in front of the school, with a sign saying ‘ORPHANS HOME’. There was barbed wire – it was more or less like a correctional institution.... Each time I returned home, I felt less and less like I belonged there... Little by little, I noticed how different I was becoming from the rest of my family... (in Tise 1993, p. 45-46).

Like many children in USA orphanages who had surviving family members, Hong Kong based Chan had both a mother and siblings. Clearly, not all orphanages were run in this way, and Chan’s account represents one story, in one cultural context with a very positive eventual outcome in which Chan eventually became a cardiologist in the USA and served as a director of Christian Children’s Fund (Chan, 2011). As an anecdotal account the story functions as proof that IICS-funded orphan care could be extraordinarily
successful for some individuals. Though it was a far from perfect outcome, it is arguable whether he would have achieved as he did without time in an institution. Clearly however it came at a high personal cost.

It hindsight, recognition of the inherent problems with orphan care came relatively slowly to large CS INGOs. Although they maintained that orphanages could transform the lives of some children, CS INGO staff increasingly suggested throughout the 1960s and 1970s that as a welfare measure, placement of children in orphanages was costly, prone to manipulation, potentially harmful to some children and more importantly, did little to address the underlying conditions that perpetuated poverty. In the worst cases it initiated orphan rushes similar to trends currently found in Cambodia where volunteer tourism has fuelled a 75% increase in the number of residential care facilities, with 269 residential care facilities housing 11,945 children in 2010, many of whom had family members (MoSVY 2011 p. 8). Further, the high levels of ‘disturbance’ increasingly reported in USA-based placement schemes were also apparent internationally. In the case of the CCF-funded Shanghai Canaan home, segregation of children from broader society in institutions for long periods of time led staff to conclude that:

We had lots of problems with those kids... They had been isolated from the community, and they couldn't adjust to being outside. They stopped going to church, they found it difficult to find jobs, they didn't know the outside customs, they were maladjusted. (Mills cited in Tise 1993, pp. 23-24)
A concern to contemporary critics of orphan care in institutions is the apparent obliviousness of some CS INGOs to these long-running issues and the lack of longitudinal research accompanying their programs. To their credit, staff at CCF recognized and responded to its self-imposed discovery that it had been inadvertently contributing to the manufacture of an artificial orphan crisis. The response was a move away from direct support to orphanages, to the establishment of family helper programs where cash assistance was provided directly to needy and disadvantaged children or their guardians. Directors at CCF had decided to ‘...get out of the orphanage and real estate business…’ and had come to seek ‘...less intensive and less costly, but effective, forms of assistance to the largest number of children’ (Tise 1993, p. 68). Family care programs, based on direct cash transfers (perhaps influenced by the American AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) scheme seemed to promise to be both more cost-effective and easier to spread among a larger share of beneficiaries (Tise 1993, p. 66).

Religious coercion has emerged as an issue in historic orphan care. Yuen correctly observes that through sponsorship Christians can ‘...find a way to actively enact their faith’ (Yuen 2008, p. 46) and writing over thirty years ago, Livezey (1981, p. 10) praised Compassion International for its transparency and forthright declaration at the time that ‘...a child needs to know about God’s love for him as much as he needs food and clothing.’ However, partly due to the influence of post-modernism, post-colonialism and the shift of western societies to secularism, religious coercion has become an issue in orphan care. Herrell (1974, p. 685) conceded in the 1970s that ‘...an occasional sponsor may have a
desire to shape other person’s values according to his own religion or ideology....’ Others were more blunt. For example, Staff at the *New Internationalist* (1989b, p. 3) stated ‘In order for a child to qualify its parents may have to cease certain forms of political or religious activity – or the child may be pressured to take up activities like reading the Bible’. *New Internationalist* critique of apparent religious coercion is depicted in the cartoon below and may have been aimed squarely at large, religious CS INGOs partnering directly with missions and church groups.

*Figure 5c New Internationalist Cartoon - Sponsored children as Political Pawns*

Source: *New Internationalist* 1989b, p. 1

Given the emergence of a pervasive narrative that any amount of institutional care is harmful, and the serious issues that arose in expensive orphan care programs funded by CS INGOs in the 1950s to 1970s, it is not surprising that most CS INGOs have transitioned to new forms of sponsorship-funded activity. By the 1980s CCF had already concluded that ‘institutionalizing children who had families was really not the best thing for the children’ (Tise 1993, p. 122). A number of more credible CS INGOs that continue to offer institutional orphan
care champion group home models of care, use of qualified staff, higher staff-child ratios and longer-term support of youth into young-adulthood. Ethically-attuned CS INGOs engaged in orphan care emphasize the importance for children of cultural integration, religious freedom, social connectedness, preservation of family links, high levels of adult care in family homes and selection processes designed to ensure that only the neediest children are admitted. Increasingly, those organisations that promote institutional care as a first option, and especially those that fund their costs through orphan tourism, are being discredited. Some former orphan care providers, such as World Vision, now advocate for reintegration of children and community solutions for children who have been separated from family (Hagar/World Vision 2007). This shift is largely due to acknowledgement of the learnings discussed above, which are summarised below in Figure 5d.
5.4 Issues in CS funded individual support and family helper programs

Writing for the *New Internationalist* in the 1980s, when direct support to individuals and their families was common in CS INGO programs, Peter Stalker’s (1982) article entitled ‘Please Do Not Sponsor this Child’ provided a provocative, and for that time a stern rebuke of CS practice. Still readily accessible more than 30 years later via the internet, it is perhaps the one journalistic article that above all others, stimulated a decade’s long critique of CS and led to a series of damaging exposes in the media. It referred to the then sponsorship of children by one million international ‘foster parents’ as an
extraordinary, personal form of giving (Stalker 1982, para 1). Unbeknown to
Stalker the number of sponsors was to almost double to just under 2 million by
1989 (New Internationalist 1989a, para 3). Appropriately, Stalker acknowledged
the hope evident in CS fundraising (compared to less personal appeals)
however he also voiced despair over the nature of CS-funded interventions,
asserting bluntly that ‘...in almost every other way in which the donor is better off
through a sponsorship scheme, the sponsored child or family is correspondingly
worse off’ (Stalker 1982, para 7). For leading CS INGOs this represented a
grave and unprecedented attack on their legitimacy. According to Stalker CS
caused divisions and created more inequality, created western aspirations that
could not be fulfilled, maintained consciousness of aid and dependence,
perpetuated less economical and effective projects and left less money for
project costs (Stalker 1982, para 28).

The negative portrayal of CS by Stalker and other New Internationalist
journalists in the 1980s is understandable given that the publication was
financially supported in its early years by Oxfam and Christian Aid which each
gave £50,000 for the period 1973-76 and set up a publishing company,
Devopress, to steer the magazine. Launched as a monthly magazine in 1973
The New Internationalist’s strapline was ‘the people, the ideas and the action in
the fight for world development’ and one of its goals was analysis of the
relationships between the first and third world nations, and the aid programs
funded by the latter (New Internationalist 2014, para 1). Perhaps reflecting the
ideology and views of Oxfam, which does not sponsor children, in 1985 the New
Internationalist informed readers that ‘Doubts about the principle of singling out
individual children for special treatment had been circulating for years among
the voluntary agencies’ (New Internationalist 1985, para 23 appx.). For CS
INGOs the critique cut deeply, because it directly contradicted their carefully
cultivated public images and portrayed them as unethical, irresponsible and
ineffective at a time when they were riding a wave of unprecedented public
support.

Criticism of CS INGOs reached a crescendo in 1998 with a Chicago Tribune
special report titled ‘The Miracle Merchants: The Myths of Child Sponsorship.’
The Tribune’s investigative journalists had previously sponsored twelve children
in various organisations from 1995 and featured sensational accounts of alleged
organizational ineptitude in 17 articles. The special report – fairly or not –
depicted Save the Children, Childreach, Children International and ChildFund as
collectively lacking accountability, transparency and efficacy, however the
overarching message was that the CS INGOs could not be trusted to deliver on
promises of miraculous impact on individual children and needed to be more
closely regulated. Utilising a very small number of anecdotes and apparent
failings in the CS programs, the authors wrought havoc with the reputations of
the INGOs concerned. Having assumed a vital role as experts in child saving,
with children featured in international work as deserving victims, the CS INGOs
who were targeted found themselves cast as untrustworthy users of ‘one of the
most powerful and seductive philanthropic devices ever conceived’ (Dellios
1998, para 1).
Some of the allegations made for fascinating reading. Under the alias Lisa Ober, a journalist at the *Chicago Tribune* sponsored Korotoumou, a 12-year-old Malian girl, only to discover that the ‘doleful-looking child with big brown eyes and a short cap of dark hair’ had been dead for two years (Anderson 1998a, paras 1-15). The tragic demise of Korotoumu, who had been struck by lightning three months after the sponsorship began, was unbeknown to Save the Children in the USA which, Anderson stated (1998a, para 36), had continued to accept payment and communicate messages of her well-being and gratitude.

In the case of Childreach, reporters described a sponsored boy named Pierre Richard Etienne who was refused medical treatment for malaria or provision of school tuition despite his sponsorship (Anderson 1998b, para 40 appx). CCF also fared badly in the media reports with allegations that a sponsored child bordering on second degree malnutrition and severe skin infections was being offered dancing lessons rather than the urgent medical care she so obviously needed (Anderson 1998b, para 40). A significant further criticism was that gift giving was often inappropriate, as seen in the case of Wagner Villafuerte, from Guatemala, who had been used to solicit a $25 birthday gift for a jogging suit and festive birthday party. According to the journalists involved, Wagner received from Children International a sweat suit, cup of juice and packet of cookies. As a consequence of sponsorship Wagner received a new pair of tennis shoes that were too small, free medical and dental care unavailable to his siblings, and a standard support package including school supplies, toothpaste, soap, a frying pan, cooking pot and synthetic green blankets that lacked durability (Tackett & Goering 1998, paras 5-8). Correctly, the journalists involved
queried the alignment of such gifts with a marketing message that assured donors that the child would receive ‘vital, life-changing assistance’ (para 4).

Read as case studies, rather than representative samples, the anecdotal accounts reported above questioned the legitimacy of several large American CS INGOs in regards to the truthfulness of their claims at home and their efficacy abroad. For the purpose of this section it is notable that the cases revealed tension between the often-times historic promise of tangible, life-changing child benefits, and the complex reality of monitoring large numbers of children in increasingly remote locations within community development projects.

For Save the Children the critique led to audits in several countries (Anderson, 1998c), promises to overhaul sponsorship and ultimately to a revamped sponsorship program titled Literacy Boost (see Dowd et al. 2014). Although some of the organisations involved would publicly brush off the criticisms and account for the unfortunate incidences as anomalies, the impact was profound and would result in the development of industry standards for CS INGOs overseen by Interaction, a peak USA organization for 160 private agencies (Anderson & Dorning 1998). Within several CS INGOs it would hasten internal reviews, initiate evaluations of programmatic strategies, and in some cases trigger discussion about the abandonment of CS entirely. For several large CS organisations it would accelerate a gradual shift to community development, lead to acknowledgement that selection of neediest children in a community is complicated by high migration and dropout levels, and in some cases, reallocate
funds to ‘longer term, community-based, sustainable interventions’ (World Vision Australia 2006, p. 7). For many smaller organization not directly caught up in the scandal, temptation would continue to entice them to walk ‘…the fine line between presenting its most appealing program that will generate support, and honestly saying what they are, in fact, doing’ (Livezey 1981, p. 4).

A significant part of the problem in the 1980s and 1990s was that leading CS INGOs had transitioned from sponsorship of orphans in institutions to family helper programs in the 1960s and 1970s. Further, they had scattered their operations globally and also begun to experiment with community development by the 1980s. For Plan, this had already occurred in post World War Two Europe where from the late 1940s it assisted children throughout the Greek mainland and in isolated villages on remote islands. The result was a logistical nightmare. There Plan delivered direct aid to children through 63 government-run social welfare centres necessitating that civil servants function as social workers, who selected children, prepared case histories, delivered cash payments and distributed clothing and food. This apparently required ‘63 separate bank transfers per month’ and ‘63 separate shipments of clothing, gift parcels, and other items for distribution’ (Molumphy 1984, pp. 93-94). In Manila in the 1960s Plan staff centralized programs and worked in smaller geographic areas however the logistical difficulties were still considerable. Notably:

Foster families received monthly cash grants of US $8 and PLAN allocated US $35 a year for monthly purchases of clothes, school supplies, bedding, toilet articles, and other supplies. In a typical
month a child might receive a dress or pair of pants, a shirt or skirt, pillow cases, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, mosquito netting, and kitchen utensils. One dollar a month was set aside for a Christmas package. The special Services Fund, a useful and adaptable PLAN service, provided for such unusual circumstances or emergency expenses as hospital costs and medicine, overdue rent, emergency home repairs, supplemental food, and, sometimes funerals. Individual Foster Parents provided occasional supplemental gifts of money or parcels of clothes and toys. (Molumphy 1984, p. 186)

The logic of these and similar interventions was simple: small cash transfers to families or children, direct distribution of benefits or various gifts (such as uniforms and books or food) could, it was thought, boost individual or family well-being (and sometimes nutrition), improve school retention, and help children in the context of their families and communities. This direct distribution of benefits was common in CS INGO programing in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Commenting on the Save the Children UK domestic CS program in post-World War II Britain when government welfare services had improved, Freeman (1965, p. 119) proudly asserted that sponsored children were not starving or destitute but chosen specifically to benefit from ‘...the personal interest taken by the sponsor...' and grants ‘...spent quarterly by an administrator on the spot on food, clothing or school needs.’ Problematically for CS INGOs that had moved away from institutional support, where children could be monitored closely and communication was often easily achieved, the move to paternalistic family helper schemes in slums and remote rural areas (increasingly non-English
speaking) magnified logistical difficulties, increased costs, and made it far more
difficult to track and report on individual children where a case-worker or social-
work approach was used.

The historic family helper programs and cash transfers are not to be confused
with current ChildFund family helper programs such as the Marsabit Family
Helper Project in Kenya. This project emphasizes healthcare, supplementary
feeding for malnourished children, health education, potable water provision,
early childhood care, education and livelihood activities (ChildFund 2014b).

However, at a superficial level, some individual and family oriented cash
transfers offered by several CS INGOs in the 1960s and 1970s were not
dissimilar to Mexico’s current and much lauded anti-poverty cash-transfer
program Oportunidades, which has targeted up to four million Mexican families
since 2002 (World Bank, 2013) with the goal to improve education, health, and
nutrition for low-income and disadvantaged families. However, unlike
Oportunidades with its formidable resources, national presence, rigorous
selection procedure using household surveys, comprehensive analysis of socio-
-economic information, and targeted support to females, CS-funded family helper
programs in the 1970s and 1980s were often localized, delivered through
inexperienced partners, offered in isolation from government services and were
sometimes exclusive and divisive at a local level due to visible gift giving and
less formally vetted support. CS INGOs historically funded only one child or
perhaps a small number per family and with limited resources ran the risk of
operating in a haphazard fashion. It is little wonder that Stalker (1982) and
others would complain that these interventions caused division and stigma.
In commenting on Plan’s evolution in the 1960s and 1970s Molumphy (1984, p. 306) observed that country staff may have begun with support to children in institutional settings however ‘gave increasing attention to the family, then they began to change their role into that of a guide helping the child and family make use of all available resources... this change was gradual.’ Further, ‘programs were worked out from the bottom up, rather from the top down’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 307). Problematically for scholars interested in CS INGO cash transfers, there is a dearth of historic information documenting the size of cash transfers, their intended use, and impact. Their shift away from the cash transfers seems to indicate that it was problematic. Frustratingly, Tackett and Goering (1998, para 5-6) interviewed just one Children International beneficiary family who had received food, oil and soap, but preferred ‘help with the cost of enrolling kids in school.’ Taking a decidedly negative view of direct transfers and family assistance, Stalker (1982, p. 2) warned readers that helping individuals was divisive and damaging in societies already sharply divided, and led to family rifts where one child received preferential treatment. This may be seen in the Figure 5e. In 1989 the New Internationalist deepened its critique, declaring that:

The chosen few may receive extra food, education, clothes, medical treatment and gifts which others do not. Brothers, sisters or other families become jealous. And parents can feel humiliated... (New Internationalist 1989b, p. 1)
Direct assistance to children and their families is not universally discredited however it is widely perceived in the international aid industry that long term assistance creates dependency. McDonnal and McDonnal (1994, pp. 199-204) randomly sampled 5 per cent of Children International’s sponsored children in 1993, comparing 4,764 beneficiaries to 627 children who had applied for sponsorship but not yet received assistance. It is not clear how significant cash transfers were in programming at that time, however at the time CI was strongly oriented to direct service provision and gifts to individual children. Financial support for education costs was a feature of programs. Of 16 projects analysed the authors claimed that 11 were responsible for significant improvements in the lives of sponsored children with ‘dramatic effects seen on children’s education and physical health.’ The study however did not seek to ascertain whether project activity was, in some ways, discriminating against family members or creating jealousy and rivalry.
In the absence of rigorous, independent studies, there is nevertheless consensus among some leading CS INGOs that direct benefits have been prone to the creation of divisiveness (See Figure 5e) and may have been conducive to ‘favouritism’ in which ‘...family, tribal and other loyalties impact on the selection of children’ (van Eekelen 2013, p. 476). Drawing on a wealth of experience acquired over decades of work, a World Vision Australia discussion paper (World Vision Australia 2006, pp. 7-8) suggests that singling out individual children ‘...creates two classes of children’, ‘often creates jealousy’, ‘creates welfare expectations’, establishes patterns of ‘transactional participation’, ‘can create dependence’, ‘can divert resources from development’ and can send mixed messages to the community about the role of INGOs.

For those CS INGOs that retreated from welfare payments and direct gift giving, weaning recipients off direct benefits was often difficult and CS INGOs sometimes found it easier to close their programs entirely and relocate rather than remain and transition the expectations of former beneficiaries. Writing as late as 2007, Pratten et al. (2007, p. 21) cites the difficulty of transitioning World Vision activities in Pilahuín, Ecuador, where the INGO had been active for decades, noting diplomatically that in communities with long term World Vision presence involving direct-benefit service delivery, ‘...refreshing community expectations and transitioning to a new model or holistic approach is not an overnight proposition.’ Interestingly, they found that even where funds were pooled to benefit all children in a community, parents of non-sponsored children had a negative view of World Vision.
Perhaps the greatest concern with direct transfers to children and families was the paternalistic nature of the support offered and the unsustainability of this mechanism of aid. To Plan staff in Korea and Bolivia in the 1970s, who were experimenting with ‘…groups of families working together to implement group and community projects’ it was becoming evident that ‘The simple distribution of food, clothing, and money to Foster Children and their families could be no more than a stopgap measure to ease the immediate effects of poverty, ignorance, and ill health’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 306). CCF staff would inevitably come to the same conclusion. In a candid assessment of CCF’s experimentation with early family helper projects CCF staff member James Hoestetler described the paternalistic framework of programming and explained that:

The emphasis was on what we could do for them. There was little thought of encouraging people to do something for themselves… They were capable of doing that, but somehow we saw them as cases. We had caseworkers… They would go out and deliver money to the families. There was very little interaction between the families.

(cited in Tise 1993, p. 66)

Save the Children has agreed. In the 1990s Save the Children brochures informed supporters that 60 years of direct experience had taught the organization that direct handouts simply didn’t work and the best way to make lasting and positive changes in the lives of children was to develop the capacity of communities to take care of themselves, and by association, take care of children (Dellios 1998).
Direct, non-cash gift giving has been a feature of CS programs since the early 1920s when S.C.F. staff began to promote shipment of clothing and soap from the UK to children in European countries affected by war. Notably, gift giving typically takes place in one of two ways. Either sponsors are encouraged to purchase and mail gifts directly to sponsored children (for example, caps, shirts, writing materials and hair-bands) or the INGO undertakes mass acquisition and distribution, sometimes involving purchases and gifts-in-kind from donor nations with expensive shipping costs, and increasingly, purchases in country of destination. Writing in the 1960s Freeman (1965, p. 118-119) observed that the demand for toys around Christmas had ‘reached enormous proportions’ necessitating procurement and shipment or distribution of gifts for up to 90,000 children. The logistical challenges and associated costs were considerable, not to mention the pragmatic difficulties in managing the appropriateness of the gifts. Freeman (1965, p. 119) for example describes the dismay of miserably clad refugees in the remote mountains of Macedonia who received bales of ‘dress and dinner suits complete with starched shirts and collars’ and ‘ladies’ and ‘girls’ hats ‘of every description.’

Reflecting on 25 years of work with CS INGOs, McPeak (2013, paras 6-7) addresses the claim that singling out individual children and families for valuable gifts and cash payments, including gifts such as bicycles, scholarships, and house repairs, did divide families, ‘...inadvertently causing resentment and jealousy.’ Further, gift giving was often difficult to manage at a procurement and distribution level, complex and costly to administer, prone to corruption, hard to evaluate and cash grants were anecdotally associated with increased levels of
dependency when provided over long periods of time. Although some leading CS INGOs have retained tokenistic gift giving, and this can be appreciated by child recipients and their families, the usefulness of such gifts can be made difficult where the real needs of recipients are not matched by expectations of donors or the logistical imperatives of the INGO. McDonic describes the exasperation of the mother of a West African child who had been sent coloured pencils, letters, stickers and photographs, concluding:

Why should I care about these things? They are of no use to me…I need a hoe. That is what I need. I do not need these things. I think I should take my picture back... (cited in McDonic 2004, p. 92)

Direct correspondence with children has often been cited as a benefit in CS programs for the manner in which it personalizes giving. John Schultz, CCF’s Sponsor Services Director once said that sponsorship was ‘a powerful, mind-expanding, consciousness-raising experience for both sponsor and child’ with direct correspondence responsible for giving donors an increased understanding of Third World conditions, inspiring feelings of compassion and schooling them in a development approach to aid’ (Tise 1993, p. 97). More recent research by Compassion has found a strong correlation between sponsored children’s self-esteem and frequency of receipt of personal correspondence (Sim & Peters 2014, p. 174-175). Plan International’s executive director in the 1950s, Gloria Matthews, likewise defended letter writing, stating that ‘person-to-person contact is a good influence. It’s a hopeful thing! … And what’s wrong with a kid saying “thank you”?’ (PLAN International 1998, p. 24). However, taking a contrary and
often repeated stance, Stalker wrote in the *New Internationalist* in 1982, ‘there’s nothing like writing a regular thank-you letter to keep you in your place’ (Stalker 1982b, para 18 appx.) A follow-up article by the *New Internationalist* posited that Bolivian children and their families did not necessarily benefit from a personal relationship and asserted that they:

...may be permanently marked by psychological and material dependence on their ‘padrino’ from the North. However well-intentioned such aid may be, the kernel is the creation of a paternalistic relationship which is unnecessary and potentially harmful. (*New Internationalist* 1985, p. 4)

The extent to which letter writing is a genuine exchange of ideas has been contested, leading some to conclude that rather than forming the basis of a meaningful relationship, dictated, concocted, edited, and sometimes falsely written letters form the basis of an exchange that is little more than a façade disguising a cynical marketing ploy. Journalists at the *Chicago Tribune* revelled in accounts of teachers forging letters supposedly from students and one individual who wanted to tell his sponsor the tricks he could perform on his bicycle however was advised not to tell his sponsor that he had one because it might lead the sponsor to question the need for assistance (Tackett & Goering, 1998).

Others, relying on opinion and anecdotal evidence, have pointed to potential shame experienced by parents reliant on handouts to support their children. Yuen (2008, p. 49) asserts that fathers in Ghana were being ‘...led to believe
that their authority is being undermined by the gifts, attention, and correspondence lavished on their children.’ However, the absence of robust studies makes it especially difficult to ascertain the degree to which these and similar criticisms were and are justified across various historic CS INGO programs. In 1987 a CCF survey of sponsors found that 77% corresponded with their sponsored children. Many also send additional gifts of money, especially for the child’s birthday (Tise 1993, p. 95). The author of this thesis cannot locate any data or findings related to the negative impact experienced by children who do not receive letters and gifts (while their peers do) or even data on whether letter writing is in decline in sponsorship programs although personal conversation with staff in some CS INGOs tends to suggest that this is the case and large CS INGOs have moved away from this feature of CS due to its logistical difficulties, cultural complexity and cost.

The nature of sponsor and sponsored child communication and non-communication has been an ongoing issue for CS INGOs- anecdotally at least. Referring to his sponsorship in a 1950s Hong Kong CCF orphanage, Dr Chun Wai Chan noted how happy children would feel when they received letters or gifts yet observed that ‘About a third of the children at Faith Love Home never heard from their sponsors’ (cited in Tise 1993, p. 47). In contrast, a more recent study conducted by an assessment team from the Institute of Development Studies (Sussex) on behalf of Plan International (2008, p. 3) found that ‘Only 30-35% of sponsored children receive letters and gifts from sponsors, creating jealousy and disappointment...’ Further, ‘Claims of positive effects on children’s growth, self-esteem and ability to communicate... can’t be substantiated enough
to advertise them.’ This is not to say benefits do not exist for those children who do receive letters, rather, it is a reminder that positive claims should be based on solid research and an understanding of impact on those who miss out.

Critically, sponsor participation rates in communication vary across CS INGOs and the facilitation of meaningful cross-cultural communication is highly problematic, especially where sponsorship transitions from support of children in orphanages or schools (where it is much easier to facilitate communication) to support of children in their communities where language, literacy and cultural differences are more obvious. The cultural gap between many sponsors and their children seems to have widened. In the case of Plan International the fostering of children as far afield as Africa led to the observation in the 1980s that ‘…most of PLAN’s children are uncompromisingly foreign to their Foster Parents. They come from cities and villages with names like Ouagadougou, Tegucigalpa, Kathmandu and Iloilo…’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 302). A widening literacy gap in the 1980s may also have been an issue for some organisations, leading field staff to write or have other adults impersonate children and fabricate correspondence (Dellios & Anderson 1998a, paras 6-12). In any case, facilitating meaningful letter writing in a non-institutional setting was difficult:

What had been simple for a Spanish child in 1937 could be very hard for a child in Mali in 1987. Plan now worked where literacy was low, education was poor and letter-writing uncommon. (PLAN International 1998, p. 54)
Where donors are willing to write and communicate with sponsors, there are numerous pragmatic challenges inherent to facilitating meaningful communication between sponsors and sponsored children currently. These include difficulty in bridging cultural or age gaps, mediating the culturally insensitive exchanges generated by sponsors, funding the necessity of costly translation services, accessing remote areas and children who are not readily accessible or who may be transient, protecting sponsors from additional requests for help, protecting children from sexual predators and guaranteeing cultural sensitivity in the exchange of images. Filtering and censoring of correspondence can be difficult and in some cases leads to dictation of letters to children and en-mass provision of non-personal information. This may account for confusion caused in 2008 when an Australian ABC Foreign Correspondent team visited Ethiopia and presenter Andrew Geoghegan, who had sponsored a girl for a decade and had been assured that she was learning English, discovered that she was unaware that she had a sponsor, had received no direct benefits, and could not read or speak English (Wilesmith 2008, paras 3-4).

The disappointment of some children who receive no contact from a sponsor is evident in personal comments made by sponsored children reported on in section 6 of this thesis. When asked, one teenage boy wrote ‘I would be happy to know who my sponsor is so I can know who he or her is. If I don’t know him, who he is, then it will all be in vain.’ Unfortunately, entirely honest are often not written to sponsors because large CS INGO processes rarely allow for truthful communication beyond superficial exchange. In the cases reported in section 6, it was possible because an independent researcher gave students permission to
circumvent the standard practice of a teacher in an institution dictating the letter or writing it in full on a blackboard for students to copy. This is not to say that CS cannot be intimate, and letter writing important, just that it is unlikely to often be so and in very large CS programs somewhat less likely. There is some controversy around the degree to which sponsor perceptions of intimacy are self-constructed or if they are mutually shared. It is noteworthy that Plan International began to emphasize dialogue rather than friendship from 1983, reducing the number of letters required of foster children from six per year to one, with an annual report facilitated by Plan International staff (PLAN International 1998, p. 54). In hindsight this may be seen as tacit admission that direct communication was enormously costly and increasingly difficult to facilitate.

Prevalent in early CS critique was the widespread notion that sponsorship of children to attend schools, especially boarding schools, was harmful and that communication with donors created empty aspirations. In a 1989 article (New Internationalist 1989b, para 2) journalists dramatically suggested that provision of Christmas cards by well-meaning donors to non-Christian children was equivalent to Western children receiving a copy of the Koran by benefactors in the Global South. Further the authors claimed that programs which provided education for individual children was essentially training them to leave rural areas. In their opinion this ensured that:

They are educated to uselessness, unable to obtain well-paid white-collar work in their own towns or village and unwilling to do low paid
‘menial’ labour. As adults they either remain at home dissatisfied, or take their skills further afield, away from the community that needs them. *(New Internationalist 1989b, para 6)*

In the 1970s CCF had been advised by a consultant that a sole focus on education often resulted in rural-urban migration, draining resources from poor areas and prepared children for ‘urban occupations that they couldn’t find jobs for’ *(Tise 1993, p. 84)*. CCF’s retrospective self-critique was harsh, and one wonders to what extent it was based on anecdotes or longitudinal studies in the pre-millennium development goals era that would prioritise universal education for all children. Nevertheless, with refreshing honesty CCF staff apparently concluded after much soul-searching that ‘…the effect of most of the education supported by CCF during this period was to Westernize and urbanize the youngsters. It tended to remove them irrevocably from their own, often rural contexts and place them in urban job markets that were frequently unable to support them’ *(Tise 1993, p. 85)*. Evident in this analysis is a shift in CCF ideology away from education as key to poverty reduction.

Given the reality of current rural-urban migration patterns in the Global South, and the Millennium Development Goals relating to education, such critique now seems questionable for children of primary school age and perhaps more defensible for children sponsored to study in senior high school though even this is now seen as an act of nation-building. Other lesser criticisms may have underestimated the ability of children to contextualize communication from donors. For example, it was speculated that ‘a child who learns of a sponsor’s
large house and reads about their skiing holidays or big cars can become
dissatisfied with his or her own community...’ (New Internationalist, 1989b, para 7). Implying that there were many such cases, Stalker cited one case of a
sixteen-year-old girl who ‘honestly believed that someday her sponsor, who lived
in Toronto, was going to invite her to go and live there’ (Stalker 1982, para 12).
He referred to this as creating ‘empty aspiration’, a term equally applicable to the
creation of hopes and dreams that a good education would lead to a pathway
out of poverty. However for the most part, these and other claims have remained
untested and unstudied in organisations that retain direct benefits to children or
families. These anecdotal accounts must be treated with caution.

It is evident that by the 1980s child welfare activities were increasingly out of
favour with large and rapidly growing CS INGOs. For CCF this involved a shift
from school-based to community-based projects that still emphasized the
importance of education (Tise 1993, p. 85). Clearly, as community development
and community empowerment ideology became pervasive in the 1980s, and
orphan care became more costly and closely regulated, CS INGOs devoted to
orphan care, direct handouts and direct service delivery were increasingly
motivated to transition sponsorship to a funding tool for community
development, direct service delivery to poor families, and poverty reduction.

The cutting of direct cash transfers to families who had become used to ongoing
support was especially difficult, as it is in Western countries when welfare
payments are withdrawn arbitrarily. In 1985 the New Internationalist could report
that according to a Plan worker in Bolivia:
We don’t want to be paternalistic, so, we’re making the families work in local groups, and the contributions are going more to those projects now, and we’re cutting down the aid to individual families. A lot of them don’t like it. They’re writing letters asking their sponsors not to send donations for the groups because they’re afraid of losing their money. (New Internationalist 1985 p. 3)

Part of the problem was that by the 1980s, community development programs involving preventative health, women’s literacy, primary and vocational education, improved farming practice, local infrastructure and micro-enterprise (see Korten 1987, p. 148) were upheld in the INGO sector as having greater potential to reduce poverty and catalyse sustainable change than child welfare activities and handouts linked to direct service delivery, educational support and cash transfers over long periods of time. This shift in thinking was often more difficult to explain to beneficiaries and sponsors who had become dependent on the reality and idea of direct handouts. Ultimately, transitions in beneficiary and donor expectations would require INGOs to be ‘...empathetic, thorough, gentle and require a substantial investment in time’ (Pratten et al. 2007, p. 25). While this section does not discuss issues in CDCS (Community Development Child Sponsorship) it is noteworthy that the transition was often difficult and ironically, would lead to significant criticism that CS INGOs were fundraising using a paradigm of individual child welfare while delivering programs based on pooled funding for community development. This, it was said, was frequently misunderstood by sponsors and there were certainly many instances of animosity on the part of CS INGOs that felt that the best of their programming
had been subsumed by organisations utilizing an incompatible, expensive and misleading sponsor recruitment system. Investigated by journalists, this would lead to damaging claims in the 1990s that CS INGOs lacked transparency and had or were perpetuating a myth of individual child support while rapidly evolving project activity away from it.

*Figure 5f Summary of Key Issues for Historic CS Programs Involving Individual Support and Direct Benefits to Families (IFCS)*

Source: Watson et al. 2014, p. 79
5.5 Impact of CS on sponsors

Manzo (2008, p. 652) describes similarities between the images frequently used by CS INGOs and missionary iconography utilized in the colonial era, arguing that ‘starving baby’ imagery just as much represented shared values of humanity while representing one part of the world as infantile, passive and inherently inferior. In similar vein Jefferess (2002, p. 1) has argued that World Vision Canada’s television fundraising appeals constructed Canadian sponsor identity in relation to a ‘needy’ Third World other using structures of identification akin to earlier forms of colonial discourse. A commonly expressed concern in the limited CS literature is that CS advertising has contributed to the ‘...creation and solidification of stereotypes,’ including that of an African continent dominated by disease, dependence, poverty, hunger and helplessness (Mittelman & Neilson 2009, p. 66). In this way CS advertising is said to have perpetuated a post-colonial mindset in which sponsors viewed themselves as enlightened saviours rushing to the rescue of the helpless South. Combined with claims that sponsorship could result in miraculous change in the life of child, this would inevitably lead others in the development sector to conclude that the value of CS was overestimated and the marketing discourse contrary to the aims of development education.

For critics of sponsorship in the 1980s, the commodification of children by CS INGOs, can be seen as an act where sponsors gladly perpetuate and indulge their ignorance, contrary to developing an enlightened view of capacity in the Global South, cultural diversity, hegemony and racism. Photographed as passive victims the children presented to sponsors have been associated with a
distorted image of the ‘Third World’, bereft of context and real understanding of causes of poverty. Concern over the commodification of children, at the expense of truthful representation, is seen below in Figure 5g. In the late 1980s Butron, director of Save the Children Bolivia, hinted at the difficulty in catching a donor’s eye, stating:

We’re trying all different ways of making the children come out more attractive. They don’t look good against a plain background or wall. Now we’re doing them against natural landscapes or colored weavings. Even some quite ugly children have been sponsored…

(New Internationalist 1989a, p. 2)

Figure 5g New Internationalist Cartoon - Fostering Racism

Interestingly for CS INGOs, Yuen (2008, p. 49) describes the presence of money in a love-based relationship as problematic, though this view may well be affected by western cultural ideals. Likewise, McDonic (2004, p. 77) suggests
that money invalidates relationships between the children and sponsors though this remains untested and many a parent in the Global North would suggest that love for children is inevitably accompanied by gift giving and financial sacrifice on their behalf. While the cliché that ‘love can’t buy friendship’ is true for many sponsors, and symbolizes western ideals of relationships based on emotion, the extent to which donors view sponsorship as an act of consumerism, or a quest for friendship, and the extent to which sponsored children view financial assistance as irreconcilable with friendship requires further investigation.

At the heart of critique directed against CS INGOs in the 1980s and 1990s was concern that sponsorship diverted much needed money from the important task of addressing actual needs identified in local communities, and used it instead to provide services expected by donors who were enculturated into individual gift giving and a mode of charitable handouts. Arguing that many historic CS INGOs were doing little to address factors that had rendered children destitute in the first place, Small (1997, p. 586) described CS as the epitome of a donor-oriented program which ‘...not only failed to challenge the misunderstanding of donors but it actively pandered to them, packaging the problem into a saleable commodity...’ Small has argued that NGOs were often torn between the choice of being wealthy and pragmatic (by commodifying children if necessary and perpetuating a false understanding of causes of poverty) or poor and principled (rejecting sponsorship). For many smaller INGOs that chose not to engage in CS fundraising, the consequence was a degree of dismay. The harsh reality was that as a product in the market place, CS was more saleable, and based on a formula that had stood the test of time.
Generally speaking, through trial and error, INGOs have discovered what works in eliciting response over several decades of not inconsiderable effort. Burman (1994, p. 2) points out that the 1950s and 1960s were ‘…the heyday of the hungry child images…’ and as a heavy user of child images Oxfam’s income peaked in the 1960s with each pound spent on advertising yielding an enviable 31 pounds raised. Similar success had been experienced by the UK based S.C.F. in the 1920s. Action Aid UK began mass marketing of CS in the mid-1970s with pre-trialled, enormously successful ‘postal parents’ advertisements, often in the form of off-the-press advertising and loose-leaf inserts. Conceived by Harold Sumpton, the advertisements featured close-up black and white images of children and statements such as ‘Won’t you be my ‘Postal parent’ for 4.33 a month?’ according to SOFII (2009) ‘for press advertising off-the-page they were masterful examples of how to use a small space effectively, with not a millimetre of wasted space.’ Action Aid learned that head and shoulder shots were more effective, that four head and shoulder shots worked better than one, and so on. In virtually all organisations the conclusion made by marketing staff was similar. Imagery depicting hardship was necessary. Imagery depicting women suffering was more effective than imagery depicting men. And imagery showing children, especially young children suffering, was most effective.

The notion that one life could be radically impacted for a small sum of money, given regularly, has formed the basis of CS since the 1920s. The idea that sponsors could help themselves is a more recent idea although even in early S.C.F. publications merits were listed in sponsoring others. Implicit in much sponsor recruiting but explicit in World Vision Canada’s tagline was the concept
of ‘Change a life. Change your own’ (cited in Yuen 2008, p. 50). Generally speaking, the very idea that a small monthly donation could significantly change the life of a child and the life of a giver has been ridiculed however this is perhaps unfair. Many stories exist of individual children who were impacted greatly through sponsorship so the question naturally becomes whether significant individual impact is more or less likely in some types of sponsorship. In theory, an abandoned, starving, double orphan child rescued by orphanage staff and sponsored in a well-run orphanage was radically impacted. Likewise, very poor children who were subsidized through sponsorship to attend school, and who were academically gifted or unlikely to receive any education at all, could conceivably be greatly impacted.

In the context of large direct assistance projects in the 1980s where beneficiary children received small payments, often superficial gifts, or who clearly were not benefiting from pooled funds for community development, it seems evident that beneficiary children were unlikely to be impacted greatly. A more valid criticism is that CS INGOs that were transitioning away from family helper type projects or gift giving to individuals, were slow to communicate the reality of pooled funding for community development. Early 1980s experimentation with advertising for Childcare Partners by World Vision USA, Canada and Australia was consistent with a 1979 plan to move 50 per cent of programs to a community development model, a shift that would promote self-sufficiency and the Area Development Program (ADP) which became a standardized approach to World Vision’s CS in the late 1980s and 1990s (Pratten et al. 2007, p. 1).
A critical issue for CS INGOs is the addictive nature of the CS fundraising paradigm which either provides direct assistance to individuals or maintains the pretence of doing so. World Vision has grappled with the extraordinary task of moving donor expectations beyond paternalistic giving to individuals. In early experimentation, World Vision Childcare Partners provided donors with folders containing information about representative children in a community, and sought to move beyond individual sponsorship. Unfortunately, by 1985 the two-year trial revealed ‘a substantial reduction in their sponsor fulfilment rates’, mandating a return to use of specific, named children (Watkins 1998, p. 5). When Save the Children Canada terminated its individual CS program in the early 1980s and replaced it with community sponsorship, the backlash was severe and it apparently lost 3,000 of its 8,500 sponsors (New Internationalist 1985, p. 4). In Australia a rapid transition to pooled funding for community development and advocacy led to the loss of a significant proportion of sponsors at one small INO where supporters were unhappy with the change (Sell & Wever 2014, pp. 233-234). Unfortunately the reasons for sponsor cancellations are not available and it is not clear how many may have taken the opportunity to cancel giving to a program they were already growing dissatisfied with. A comment from Robert Brooks, National Director of CCF in Australia in the early 1990s illustrates the tension within CS INGOs well:

Community development is a better way of helping people... but that’s not something people are moved to give money for; it doesn’t give them an emotional reward. Whereas they are rewarded emotionally by helping an individual child. (Tise 1993, p. 73)
Unfortunately, appeals from CS INGOs to their constituents to abandon individual child support and sponsor villages or communities have frequently failed to result in the same enthusiastic response, necessitating careful programmatic realignment and years of sustained development education for ethical INGOs. Understandably, CS INGOs have tended to continue to offer individual sponsorship while transitioning to community development and advocacy work in order to avoid the backlash experienced by some. For Plan Netherlands (Foundation Foster Plan Nederland), a board decision in the mid-1990s to move away from individual support of sponsored children resulted in heated constituent reaction and a backlash that rang alarm bells in CS INGOs worldwide. Hondius (2002, para 6) states that ‘To outside observers, the violence of the conflict was puzzling.’ It has been noted that sponsorship funds are ‘hot money’ and in the case of Plan Netherlands this seems to have been abundantly true. Publicized accounts of sponsorship of children who had died or relocated, and allegations that only approximately 50 per cent of donations reached children (van Krimpen 2012, p. 15), combined with concern over a shift away from individual support, resulted in a stream of negative publicity, a series of legal challenges, loss of thousands of sponsors and identification with Plan as a scandalous brand.

The gap between programmatic imperatives and INGO communication about the need to pool funding for communities rather provide individual support is features as one of four key problems in Figure 4g. Plan Netherland’s success in promoting CS to Dutch citizens had been phenomenal to that point insofar as ‘By 1994, almost 40 per cent of Plan’s worldwide child sponsorships were being
financed from Holland alone’ (Smillie 1995, p. 200). In the Philippines this had resulted in significant programmatic growth and evolution. Between 1976 and 1983 explosive growth in the Netherlands sponsorship program had increased from 36 Dutch Foster Parents to 105,000 children with support from all ranks of Dutch society (Molumphy 1984, p. 321). The changes introduced by Plan Netherlands alienated sponsors who were operating from a paternalistic mindset without the benefit of a sustained development education process.

*Figure 5h Summary of Key Issues for Historic CS Programs Relating to Impact on Sponsors in the North*

Source: Watson et al. 2014 p. 83
5.6 Impact of CS on CS INGOS

As a fundraising mechanism, CS has been identified as an impediment to rapid and necessary change due to its relational nature, the strong influence of sponsors and the correspondingly strong influence of marketing staff with a vested interest in maximizing funds raised. In listing several dangers and drawbacks of traditional forms of CS, Herrell expressed concern that the sponsor:

...wants a long-term relationship with the child. He wants to watch a child grow up so that he can feel pride in having nurtured the child along as much of the way as possible from infancy to childhood. This may, unfortunately, inhibit the agency from shifting its support from one program to another, for fear of terminating a child-sponsor link. (Herrell 1974, p. 685-86)

Herrell was acknowledging the growing tension within CS INGOs whose programming staff recognized the need to transition away from paternalism yet whose support base and marketing staff resisted change. He also noted that interest in one child could, for sponsors, eclipse their recognition of the need to assist non-sponsored children or the community surrounding the child, which would be more beneficial in terms of sustainability.

The need for effective service provision and, arguably, community development, was flagged as early as the 1920s by Eglantyne Jebb, who asserted that 'In some of the stricken lands, education and sanitation would go a long way
towards solving the social problems which lie at the root of much of the suffering of people today’ (Freeman 1965, p. 40). Interestingly, the need for community development activities implied in this statement would not become a feature of many large CS programs until the 1980s although education would remain central to many CS programs. Writing in the mid-1990s Smillie (1995, p. 136) argued that ‘Although most child sponsorship agencies now target communities in their field work as much as the child, the child remains the publicity anchor, and projects are therefore smaller, more parochial, and are often less cost-effective than others.’ While Smillie did not say smaller and more parochial compared to what, a common perception within the INGO sector at large is that the CS fundraising mechanism may have slowed the progress of many CS INGOs in their transition away from individual child welfare activities, to community empowerment and development.

The very rapid growth of a small number of early CS INGOs, and the proliferation of much smaller copy-cat organisations, created significant tension within the INGO sector in the 1980s at a time when the legitimacy of NGOs was increasingly being contested. Issues of overhead expense and administration costs had already been politicized by various voluntary agencies eager to promote themselves as more efficient and more deserving of public support than government agencies (Lissner 1977, p. 231). From the 1970s CS INGOs began to experience critique from non-CS INGOs in relation to their financial transparency. For example, Lutheran World Action (LWA), informed readers that ‘...the overhead in many such organisations runs from 30 to 50 per cent or more, so that sometimes less than half of what you give usually gets to that child. This
is a very expensive business, when mass needs are met on an individual case basis’ (cited in Lissner 1977, p. 233). The criticism was not without merit, for subsequent investigations would indeed show that the cost of maintaining CS programs was high with some extraordinary examples of low amounts reaching beneficiaries. The high cost of maintaining one-to-one contact has received particular criticism.

In Lissner’s (1977, p. 228) view many INGOs, not just CS ones, have followed a zigzag course between income maximization and adherence to agency conviction. Nevertheless, there is a common perception in the aid industry that CS INGOs are especially costly to run. In his expose of Save the Children USA’s domestic sponsorship program, Maren (1997, p. 152) charged that on average only $35.29 of $240.00 raised annually through sponsorship for each child was disbursed to their direct benefit. Also concerned by the apparent disjunct between what was fundraised and what seemed to make its way to children internationally, former CCF board member Professor Thomas Naylor’s 1994 report triggered 14 front-page articles in the Richmond Times-Dispatch (later picked up the Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, Christianity Today and NBC News) alleging lavish spending by executives and a misleading accounting system that indicated 80 per cent of donations benefited children directly when in fact the figure was closer to 50 per cent (Naylor 2011, pp. 1-2).

The marketing messages of large CS INGOs and an apparent propensity for creative accounting designed to hide the true costs of CS and of running expensive marketing campaigns has not gone unnoticed. Smillie (1995, p. 153)
identified ‘dramatic subterfuge’ by World Vision Germany in the late 1980s when
the organization had been newly established and was growing rapidly, but
needed to demonstrate cost-efficiency. According to Smillie, the organization
advertised that 80 per cent of donations went overseas to the benefit of children
however did not inform donors that eventually, ‘a hefty proportion was
transferred back to Germany, to a marketing company...’, apparently to defray
fundraising costs. If Lissner’s (1977, p. 228) argument is correct, it would seem
that at this time World Vision in Germany may have been zigzagging towards
income maximization at a point in its history where establishment costs were
excessive yet it needed to demonstrate low overheads.

For the *New Internationalist* staff (1985, p. 4) CS in the 1970s and 1980s was
clearly uneconomical. There were better ways to help, so it was argued, and
‘The money that is spent on sponsoring a single child for one year could
immunize 31 children against the six major child-killer diseases...’ The value
judgment implicit in this statement is ill-conceived and revealed ignorance even
then that CS could loosely be classified as IICS or IFCS. Regardless of the
programming, the administrative costs of linking individuals to individuals was
questioned. Daniel Borochoff, from the American Institute of Philanthropy, was
blunt in his assessment of overhead costs stating ‘Just think of the savings if the
charity didn’t have to do this charade of matching up an individual with a kid’
cited in Moore 1998, p. 16). The financial issues were arguably more complex
than Borochoff implied insofar as the cost burden of CS INGOs in Northern
countries was also impacted by high start-up costs associated with expensive
advertising campaigns, and required contributions to parent INGOs.
Critique was not limited to the 1980s. Referring to a 1970s USA General Accounting Office study of five large children’s charities (including Plan and Save the Children) which cited evidence of poor fiscal management or misrepresentation of policies, popular columnist Jack Anderson wrote:

The renowned Christian Children’s Fund, like the old lady who lived in the shoe, has so many children it doesn’t know what to do. Worse, it doesn’t know what it did with $25 million, which was raised to feed, clothe, and educate needy children around the world. (cited in Tise 1993, p. 79)

Though CCF would brush off the allegation and attribute some instances of misappropriation to various missions and institutions it partnered with, the real cost of CS interventions versus administrative overheads would continue to be questioned. Reasons cited for high costs in traditional CS interventions in Southern countries are varied. Singling out CS INGOs for mention, the 1993 Human Development Report (UNDP 1993, p. 89) noted that ‘Agencies that receive money from child sponsorship organisations, for example, have to spend much of their time collecting copious quantities of personal information about the sponsored children – and employ large teams of ‘social workers’ for this.’ Direct and pointed criticism of one type of NGO was remarkable though not surprising given the weight of opinion at the time. For many CS INGOs this may be a continuing issue. In accounting for significant overhead expenditure, Van Eekelen (2013, p. 475) cites high costs in identifying children, monitoring their progress, writing reports, communicating with sponsors, facilitating sponsor
visits and following up on difficult cases. In its 1989 article entitled ‘Letters to a
god’, *New Internationalist* staff quoted the head of Save the Children Bolivia:

Sometimes a sponsor will contact head office in the US asking for a
photo. They don’t realize how much time expense that means. We
reckon it costs $19 a photo with all the administration, work and
materials. That’s equivalent to a month’s sponsorship. (*New
Internationalist* 1989a, p. 1)

An interesting question at time of writing is whether technology has reduced the
costs of tracking individual children or if the underlying costs of tracking and
communicating with individual children have remained as high as previously. An
untold story is the way some large CS INGOs have outsourced communications
to developing countries where costs are low. The high cost of maintaining large
donor-support teams has also been cited as a reason for significant overheads
in traditional sponsorship programs, as has high levels of engagement with
celebrity advocates and mass media. It has been somewhat galling for small
INGOs with lean marketing budgets to observe the rapid growth of large CS
INGOs which historically reinvested over 20% of income into further marketing
and PR activities.

Although CS INGOs have claimed that the act of CS and communications
exchanged in CS are effective as a form of global citizenship education (or
development education) debate over public fundraising for CS INGO work has
centred on CS as a potentially defective marketing tool, especially in relation to
their depiction of children/beneficiaries, their truthfulness, and the consequent
impact on Northern publics. According to Mittelman and Neilson (2009, p. 63)
‘The marketing of child sponsorship programs has been laden with accusations
of deceitfulness and disrespect towards the dignity of the children they purport to
help.’ Lissner’s *The Politics of Altruism* questioned images used by humanitarian
organisations for fundraising and can cautiously be attributed as a precursor to
the term ‘pornography of poverty’. Concerned that Northern NGOs often
misrepresented the South via fundraising strategies laden with unrepresentative,
concluded that:

The public display of an African child with a bloated Kwashiorkor-
ridden stomach in advertisements is pornographic, because it
exposes something in life that is as delicate and deeply personal as
sexuality…

The unpleasant phrase ‘pornography of poverty’ has been cited previously in
this thesis to account for use of images that exploit the poor, portraying them as
helpless or passive objects (Plewes & Stuart 2007, p. 23). Whether they
functioned as cynical master-manipulators of public sentiment for their own gain,
or were motivated by pragmatic awareness of what worked, CS INGOs in
particular have been identified as frequent past users (by non-CS INGOs and
others) of emotionally manipulative imagery, which potentially humiliated,
demeaned and inadvertently misrepresented reality in the South. Plewes and
Stuart (2007, p. 23) go so far as to say that CS INGOs have been
‘...demonstrably the biggest users of pornography of poverty images, whether
for sponsorship or for fund-raising for humanitarian emergencies.’ For Holland (1992, p. 154) such imagery can inadvertently position children and their communities in ‘…a dangerous area between sympathy, guilt and disgust.’ Repetitive use by Save the Children of Kevin Carter’s Pulitzer-prize winning picture of an emaciated Sudanese child with a vulture waiting nearby, is perhaps the most infamous example of this.

Unfortunately, CS advertising in the 1980s frequently featured starving or malnourished children in need of emergency aid, while the reality of most CS interventions involved school support and various family-helper, education or direct service provision programs in non-famine areas. One explanation for this disconnect is the rapid growth of CS INGOS and their employment of senior administrators and specialist marketers with little or no experience of programs and no mandate to engage in development education. Herrell’s advice could have been considered in hindsight. He cautioned:

> Some sponsors may not understand the broad international economic and social forces that have placed certain countries and cultures at a disadvantage in economic development. Instead these sponsors may take a condescending view toward the country, culture and even the family of the child. Sponsorship agencies must resist the temptation to pander to this tendency. (Herrell 1974, p. 687)

Despite the arguments cited above, CS marketing has been promoted by CS INGOs as an effective form of development education. For example, a school teacher and sponsor of one CCF child said,
It’s an education I’ll never forget – a wonderful education… It’s a fine geography lesson too. I knew Africa was over there, but from the TV you’d think there’s nothing but dust and dirt. When the children write, you really find out something. Their lives are very different from ours. It puts a very human element on what living is all about. (Tise 1993, p. 96)

More often however CS advertising and communication is criticized as an impediment to effective development education. Interestingly, as early as 1920 Save the Children Fund in Britain had already been criticized for not being ‘…sufficiently educational and constructive’ (S.C.F. 1920b, p. 21). To its credit, in 1925 Save the Children Fund urged readers to consider the importance of not just feeding the hungry (a key aim of the child sponsorship program) but making hunger impossible. Quoting *My Life and Work* by Henry Ford, the editor of the Save the Children Fund’s publication (S.C.F. 1925, p. 39) began with the warning that ‘It is easy to give; it is harder to make giving unnecessary. To make the giving unnecessary we must look beyond the individual to the cause of his misery…’ The advice was excellent and at first glance provides a sharp rebuke to many historic CS programs which came to focus on direct cash transfers and gift giving or education of children in isolation from their families.

Commenting on the daunting logistical challenges evident in serving CCF’s 400,000 sponsors and 533,000 children in the early 1990s, CCF’s Sponsor Services Director noted 25,000 outgoing phone calls and letters to sponsors in one month alone and enthused that each communication was an:
...opportunity to educate the sponsors about what life is like in other parts of the world. When a sponsor learns that the reason letters take so long in Sierra Leone is that there’s no reliable postal system, he or she is being educated. (Tise 1993, p. 99)

Perhaps of greater value than learning that some countries did not have a reliable postal system, was learning about CCF’s new development approach, exemplified in the case of Ruth Matthews who sponsored a 12-year-old boy in Colombia. In this case sponsorship funds benefited 60 landless peasants, including the boy’s father, and presumably, it was of benefit to Ruth Matthews to learn that assisting the community around her child was as essential as direct benefits to the child. Unfortunately, the reality is the often justified perception that CS marketing practices have been designed to trigger giving rather than develop in-depth understanding. A challenge for contemporary CS INGOs is to do development education much better, a task taken more seriously by large INGOs such as World Vision Australia which seeks to influence the curriculum of Australian secondary schools.

Academics are not so easily placated. In his review of development education in New Zealand, Small (1997, pp. 585-86) notes the proliferation of NZ NGOs since the 1980s and widespread use of messages and images that exoticize poverty, undermine international solidarity and fail to draw attention to sustainable people-centred alternatives. Similar sentiment is expressed by Dogra whose interest in dominant themes of ‘difference’ and ‘distance’ in INGO messaging leads her to the conclusion that INGOs in general resort to discursive
strategies of infantilization and feminization that reinforce colonial ways of seeing things (Dogra 2012, p. 31). This superficial and sometimes harmful disregard for effective development education is seen below in Figure 5i.

*Figure 5i Summary of Criticisms of CS in Relation to INGOs Themselves.*

Source: Unpublished- Brad Watson

5.7 Conclusion

Referring to Plan’s evolution over time, Molumphy (1984, p. 302) argued that the ‘transition from child welfare to child, family and community development has not always been a smooth and orderly process.’ This was undoubtedly an understatement and much could be said for other CS INGOs and indeed, other
INGOs over the same time period. It is conceded that in the 1930s and 1940s, when Plan was establishing its work, humanitarian endeavour tended to be talked about in terms of charities and missionaries in an era yet to witness the emergence of concepts such as NGOs and ‘integrated rural development strategies’ (Molumphy 1984, pp. 301). In the context of the criticisms raised in this section it is therefore appropriate to acknowledge that many large CS INGOs have been on a bumpy and at times controversial journey.

Theodore Roosevelt’s 1910 speech at the Sorbonne, Paris, provides a relevant warning to those critics who tend to condemn all historic CS activity without reference to historical setting, intent and evolution over time:

> It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again...

(Roosevelt, 1910)

It is noteworthy that programs staff in leading CS INGOs have been instrumental in moving CS interventions from orphan care, to family helper programs and beyond to pooled funding for service provision, holistic child development, community development activities and advocacy informed by a child rights mandate based on the idea that to help individual children sustainably, one must hold duty bearers accountable and build stronger governance and support systems. Those who imply that the push for change came exclusively from
outside CS INGOs, and portray CS INGOs are reactive only to external critique, do a grave injustice to the sector. However, it is important to acknowledge those critics who have been motivated by the compelling logic behind Winston Churchill’s reminder that criticism is necessary to correct an unhealthy state of things. There can be little doubt that over time CS has been fraught with difficulties and, in some cases, that large CS INGOs, as well as smaller ones, have struggled to embrace change, moderate sponsor expectations and move from a charitable model of handouts to one of empowerment. In some instances CS INGOs have acted unethically, dishonestly and their success may have, in some instances, bred complacency.

Having discussed a range of historic criticisms of CS as they relate to the individual sponsorship of children in institutions (IICS) and the support of children in the context of their families and home communities (IFCS), it should be evident that much critique needs to be grounded in its historical context. Importantly, it is argued here that much of the critique that continues to dominate discussion over CS, is based on older models of charitable activity rather than current programs. In critiquing the critique, it is evident that sensationalized media accounts of deficiency based on anecdotal evidence do not provide sufficient evidence to discredit any one type of CS activity, and, in the absence of quality research, CS INGOs need to better demonstrate the impact of their programs. Variation in CS INGO programs necessitates a case-by-case approach to evaluating their legitimacy.

On this note, the thesis will now turn to a case study found in Section 6.
Section 6 - ChildHelper Case Study

6.1 ChildHelper Overview

ChildHelper is a fictitious name given to a small Australian INGO. A condition of field research and a grant provided by the INGO was that the Australian INGO’s name be withheld in this publication. Furthermore, the identity of partner organisations and beneficiaries was also to remain unstated. The need to maintain the anonymity of the organisation concerned, as much as is possible, necessitates abandonment of formal referencing within the text of this chapter for a small number of ChildHelper sources that would otherwise identify the organisation concerned. An attempt has been made to identify the nature of the source in the small number of instances where this is possible.

According to staff, in August 2014 ChildHelper sponsored a total of 7,243 children in Southern Asia. This total consisted of 4,825 children and youth in India, 1,802 in Bangladesh, 528 in Nepal and 88 in Sri Lanka (Childhelper 2014 personal correspondence). Additional children are sponsored by ChildHelper USA increasing the total to approximately 9,100. Although the organization supports a number of non-CS projects, income derived from CS provides the large majority of the income stream, the total of which amounted to $4,348,215 in the 2013-2014 financial year (ChildHelper 2014 Annual Report). Child sponsorship was responsible for over 80 per cent of this. In the Australian context, ChildHelper may be described as a relatively small CS INGO, evidenced in its location in a regional town, rather than a capital city, its lack of government funded project activity and, until recently, its signatory status to the
Australian Council for International Development. As a case study the research project is of merit because it features a model of sponsorship that has remained intact over several decades with remarkably little change. No similar studies are identified in the literature that make use of mixed-method research to construct a case study describing the perspectives of students, teachers, principals and church administrators on a IICS program.

Established in 1968, ChildHelper began when its Christian founder visited an orphanage in Seoul. According to ChildHelper’s longest serving voluntary president the founders were directed by God, resulting in the establishment of a small organisation to sponsor children in an orphanage and ship clothing to South Korea. As was the case with other new sponsorship organisations in which a founder journeyed afar to discover material needs in the orient, ChildHelper’s founder was touched by the desperate plight of young children. Promotional materials explaining the origins of the sponsorship program state that the founder ‘…visited an orphanage in Seoul, and when she saw people dying of the cold… asked, ‘What can I do?’ (ChildHelper 2014 promotional material). Sponsorship of children followed in Vietnam however the fall of Saigon in 1975 resulted in loss of contact with children there and led to a shift in project activity to India and Pakistan. A small sponsorship program involving support of children in Christian schools eventually ceased in Pakistan however has continued and expanded in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The CS model utilised by ChildHelper is clearly one of individual and institutional Child Sponsorship (IICS) and has remained so since inception of the
organisation’s work, though sponsorship of children now favours support in a school setting rather than an orphanage. At time of writing, poor and disadvantaged children are selected by partner staff in developing countries and assisted directly through funds disbursed through partner organisations to education providers. It is notable that ChildHelper does not disburse funds or provide services directly to children or their family members, as was common in family helper programs pioneered by large CS INgos in the 1950s and 1960s. Nor does ChildHelper pool funding for community development activities to benefit sponsored children, their families and other disadvantaged beneficiaries in the general community. On the contrary, sponsorship funds cover the costs associated with private education (either day schooling, boarding school, special education in boarding schools or costs associated with higher education).

The large majority of children and youth sponsored by ChildHelper in India and Nepal attend a local primary or secondary school as day scholars or boarding students. Sponsorship funds sourced from Australia are dispersed directly to NGOs in the beneficiary countries and then direct to a Christian private school. This is a legitimate strategy insofar as in India, for example, Article 30 of the constitution allows religious and linguistic minorities ‘to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.’ (Constitution of India, 1949) The private education provider ChildHelper partners with in India enjoys rights and privileges including selection and admission of students from religious and other minorities. These minority educational institutions are not however obliged to reserve 50% of their educational seats for ‘Scheduled Castes’ and ‘Tribes and Other Backward Classes’ however the sponsorship program favours highly
disadvantaged children and youth who would not normally be able to attend a private, English medium school.

Sponsorship covers or heavily subsidizes the cost of tuition, uniforms and other educational expenses in ‘day’ or ‘boarding’ schools however a small number of students live at orphanages funded by the INGO or attend special schools including a school for the blind and a school for the deaf. It should be noted at the outset that for much of its history, the CS model of intervention utilised by ChildHelper has been driven by donor offices in Australia and the USA. At time of writing there are 5 levels of sponsorship. These are listed in Figure 6a.

Figure 6a ChildHelper Sponsorship Rates 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsorship rates for children in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$25/month (Day School): Your sponsorship will pay for the child’s school fees, textbooks and uniform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30/month (Day School Plus): Your sponsorship will pay for the child’s school fees, textbooks, uniform and a mid-day meal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40/month (Boarding School): Your sponsorship will pay for the child’s school fees, textbooks, uniform, accommodation and meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50/month (Boarding School Plus): Your sponsorship will pay for the child’s school fees, textbooks, uniform, accommodation and meals. It will also ensure special care is available to orphans and/or special-needs children at school or at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100/month (Special Boarder Rate): Your sponsorship will pay for students to study at tertiary (university/college) level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ChildHelper 2014

The discussion that follows is the author’s attempt to develop a case study utilising data gathered in a mixed-methodology research process incorporating document review, focus group activity, individual interviews with key informants
and formal surveying. A discussion of the methodology can be found in section 3. The number of participants in each category is found in Figure 6b.

Figure 6b Research Participants by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sponsored youth (S) + Previously Sponsored (Ex)</th>
<th>Teachers (T)</th>
<th>Principals (P)</th>
<th>Church Leaders (CL)</th>
<th>NGO Staff (HWS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups (FG)</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken as a whole, the case study explores perspectives on CS gathered over three months of site visits with multiple stakeholders. Individual interviews and focus group discussion utilising a participatory ranking activity (used to summarise group opinion) are, in hindsight, considered to be the most important single data-set gathered in the case study, followed by the formal survey. These participatory activities were conducted with both teachers and students (in separate groups) with between two and 10 participants in each group. An example may be seen below in Figure 6c in which a group of high school teachers (in focus group 8) discussed, listed and ranked positive benefits of the ChildHelper sponsorship program under the categories of impact on sponsored students, family members and communities.
In total, 133 youth (sponsored and previously sponsored) contributed to focus groups (typically at a school), in which they discussed negatives and positives of the sponsorship program, then allocated, using principles of group consensus, their observations to one of five faces on a poster spanning unhappiness/deep concern to happiness/satisfaction in relation to outcomes for individuals, families and communities. 30 school teachers in several groups participated in the same activity. The research used the issues raised in focus group activities to identify, code and analyse themes in individual interviews using NVivo. For the purpose of this case study the 139 valid survey respondents provided interesting
supplemental data of interest to the researcher. Sample questions from the formal survey may be seen in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6d Sample Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. I know who my sponsor is.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My sponsor writes to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I want more letters or pictures from my sponsor.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In letters and cards to my sponsor I must write what I am told.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Positive Features of the ChildHelper CS program

Each of the cohorts is impacted by the bounded system of the ChildHelper CS program in some way. Based on a review of individual interviews, focus group activities and the survey, it is apparent that individual sponsorship enabling study at a private, English speaking school is, for the most part, valued highly by sponsored youth, educators and church administrative staff who participated in this research. In interviews and group activity, participants repeatedly stressed that individual sponsorship for Indian and Nepali children was a remarkable opportunity and a benefit to those fortunate enough to have been selected, regardless of their level of poverty and caste. Although virtually all of the children could, in theory, attend a government school, principals and teachers emphasised the relative merits of private education combined with the disadvantage of the majority of students that, in their opinion, justified
continuation of the ChildHelper sponsorship program. As can be seen in Figure 6c, teachers in a focus group at a school for hearing impaired children asserted that many of the sponsored children were ‘very poor’ and would ‘not have gained an education’ with such an intervention. Sponsored children in their opinion, experience the following benefits ‘Learn about Jesus. Hope for the future. Freedom, friends, community, family. Feel able. Better here than govt schools’ (Teacher FG#2, 2.3.2011).

The role of sponsorship in redeeming or rescuing children from disadvantage and poverty was communicated persuasively by a staff member in a ChildHelper NGO partner office. Reflecting on his childhood and experience of sponsorship he said ‘I used to be one of those boys running around the road, without a shirt ...just running on the road whistling and using abusive language and all sorts of things. Now it gives me a dignity to see how I was, what I was out of, that poverty’ (HWS#1 3.6.2011). Not surprisingly for a long-term sponsorship program that covers the costs associated with schooling, access to education through individual CS was the primary benefit reported in the case study. One might safely guess that those young people who did not see strong value in education had exited the program. Unfamiliar with community development ideology, virtually all participants extolled the merits of education as a primary means of lifting a child out of poverty, resulting in improved incomes, choices and personal dignity.

As a source of funds used to cover the cost of education, the ChildHelper program is well valued. In the words of a highly experienced high school
principal, ‘Since many of them are below poverty line, the first thing... is they are not able to pay their fees. They have difficulty, so this is like a blessing for them. They could educate their child in a Christian Institution, and in an English speaking school’ (P#8, 1.6.2011). A senior church leader insisted that the ChildHelper IICS program blessed parents, siblings and the child, providing free or almost free education which took a great deal of stress away from poor parents who ‘...don’t need to struggle much or borrow from elsewhere to educate their child.’ When pressed to consider the existence of long-term benefits of CS, the same respondent replied adamantly ‘Very much, very much, because once the child is educated he gets into his profession, work, and he is supporting his family. Not only his family, his brothers and sisters, his neighbours, he is a great support to the society.’ (CL#3, 17.05.2011) The value of a private school education leading to well-paid employment was implicit in such commentary.

Concern over the quality of government schooling was a common feature in interviews with principals and teachers who tended to disparage government schools while extolling the merits of their own education provision and educational settings. A senior church administrator who was initially sponsored through school and university by ChildHelper, explained that local government schools in disadvantaged, remote areas were often badly run and understaffed however, contrasted this with the observation that sponsored children:

...get quality education from our institutions, good education. They get good food from the boarding schools, whichever boarding schools
where they study, they get better food than at home. Then they are more secure. And they go through a good education system, where once you come up through the curriculum you can go to any part of the world and study. Probably this kind of education system we cannot get outside the church… (EX#1, 20.04.2011)

It can be seen then that the idea that CS helps students ‘come up’ from a lower status and rank in society, redeeming them from poverty and the constrain of an ineffective public education system, is a powerful refrain for educators and beneficiaries who view quality education of children as the primary function of CS.

Although the researcher noted numerous instances of private schools employing high school graduates as teachers, or of poorly resourced schools, and questioned this politely during fieldwork, it seems that there is a strong perception among beneficiaries that private schools run by the denomination affiliated with ChildHelper, are better run than government schools, staffed by more disciplined ‘moral’ teachers, and offer a stronger English education which, collectively, provide a competitive advantage. Certainly, several of the schools affiliated with ChildHelper are prestigious senior secondary schools well out of the reach of many poor families. For capable and academically gifted students this can be beneficial in the short and long term, as seen in an account where:

...through ChildHelper I was able to come up in life. And after I finished my lab I started supporting my brothers, I supported my
sisters, I used to work and turn by turn we helped each other and we came up in life. (EX#1, 20.04.2011)

Thus it is that ‘coming up in life’ is more than the individualistic notion of one person getting ahead and attaining a higher standard of living. When comments were made that ‘…this sponsorship has helped them to be educated, okay? And this education has played a major role seeing that these children come up in their life’ (CL#3, 17.05.2011) it seemed to include the presumption that as one child ‘comes up’ in the world and begins to escape the vicious cycle of poverty, he or she also brings family members, especially in the case of boys. When asked what they would do if they attained a good job in the future, the researcher was assured that the increased income would be used to benefit the entire family and often to subsidize the education of younger family members.

The holistic nature of Christian, private education is thus upheld by church leaders and school staff as superior to government schooling, enabling students to grow physically, mentally and spiritually (P#6, 26.5.2011) rather than drop out of schools where they were not cared for (P#3, 2.5.2011). While church and school leaders may be understandably biased towards the merits of sponsorship of children in their schools and institutions, the positives mentioned by them were routinely identified in research with children and youth benefiting from sponsorship. The very large majority of survey respondents (138 of 139) indicated that they were pleased to be sponsored on a personal level. This was also reflected strongly in focus group/smiley face activities for currently sponsored students where all participants unanimously agreed that sponsorship
to attend a private school was very good or good. The positives most often mentioned across Focus groups included access to quality education in a private school, exposure to Christianity, provision of hope and a bright future, quality care, shelter and clothing, gifts, acquisition of English language skills, improvements to social life, a beneficial relationship with an international sponsor, protection from harm, acquisition of values and self-discipline.

For students in the orphan care program, sponsorship was often described as a form of rescue and means of redemption, a method of saving especially disadvantaged children from despair and a bleak future. An especially moving testimony was given by a teenage orphan boy sponsored in a traditional, dormitory style orphanage by an Australian sponsor recruited by ChildHelper. He said:

When I was small me and my sister were brought here… my father used to come and drink and bang me. And he used to bang my mother… Yes, he used to beat my mother. And after that my mother get angry and she burnt us… and she put kerosene and burnt us. So after that time my grandfather, my father’s dad… brought me here. So from that day I am very happy to have sponsorship. So I’m very happy here. (S#3, 2.6.2011)

To be fair, such ‘rescues’ from extreme violence and abuse were rarely reported in this case study. More commonly, the positive features were of a practical nature, some of which are featured in the left column of Figure 6e, as identified by 10 students who were sponsored to attend a boarding school at time of
interview. Students in this group were more detailed in their response and among other benefits of sponsorship highlighted the importance of quality teaching staff, good dormitories, a well-equipped school, positive social life and financial support for tuition, uniforms and exams. AY and activities refer to the spiritual program of the school which typically take place on weekends and were often identified as an enjoyable extra-curricular feature of the denomination’s schools.

**Figure 6e Participatory Activity Undertaken with Sponsored Students FG#3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Sponsored Student</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
from the family in the short term while providing potentially improved income in the longer term when the investment in education resulted in higher family income. At the community level they argued that there was a long-term benefit because they would help their communities one day and would share the hopeful message of Christianity.

For parent, CS was identified consistent among all cohorts as a positive phenomenon, providing a potential pathway out of poverty and in some cases, with psychological benefit to parents distraught by the inability to educate their children and provide a better life. According to one principal the burden could be so great that ‘...these parents... they’d have to kill or they themselves have to suicide because of the poverty of these children...’ (P#5, 3.6.2011) While this statement was made in the context of orphan care, and the principal concerned had a penchant for exaggeration, the feedback from a small number of parents interviewed suggested that for the most part, they too were very grateful for the sponsorship program and held high hopes that education would provide a long-term avenue out of poverty for their families—especially with the education of boys who would remain.

Unfortunately, ChildHelper has no records or evidence to suggest what proportion of children drop out of the sponsorship program prior to high school graduation or the proportion of those who graduate who do go on to acquire good jobs or attain entry to post-secondary or university education provider. While it is possible to document their aspirations and hopes, it is impossible to assess impact in the absence of any longitudinal study of some sort.
ChildHelper staff are hopeful that students they support benefit spiritually, physically, socially and economically however a formal evaluation of long term impact is long overdue.

As can be seen in Figure 6e, students often struggled to enunciate any immediate benefit to the broader community except for the argument that Christian children were a positive influence in the community and a benefit to Indian society in general because they were prepared to model good morals and values. This was implied by a secondary school principal who asserted that ‘…once they've finished, go back to their respective places, they are getting the truth… the knowledge of God, the moral teaching, they are getting’ (P#5, 3.5.2011). To some extent the value attributed to sponsorship reflects the increasing popularity of Christianity in minority and low caste groups who view Christianity in predominantly Hindu society as a liberating force, and one that promotes honesty, healthy living, some support in the context of an oppressive caste system, and a drug and tobacco free lifestyle. However, despite some anecdotal accounts, it is unclear even what proportion of children do go back to the respective places and remain there over time, let alone what proportion exercise a positive influence.

For many of the principals and administrators interviewed it was essential that disadvantaged children be educated to impact on home, often rural communities, as expressed in the following statement by a sponsorship field officer:
Yes it’s good for the community also because as you know, in India there are more than 2000 castes and racism and the higher class people, Brahmin, they don’t want the lower community people to be educated. They want them to be uneducated so they can work for their farms. So sponsorship has changed a lot of community...

(HWS#4 3.06.2011).

This sentiment was echoed informally by a well known church leader who was not formally interviewed however assured the researcher that he thanked God daily for his sponsorship because it allowed a dark-skinned, low caste tribal like himself to acquire an international preaching reputation and a high caste wife decided in a love match rather than via a culturally expected arranged marriage. There can be little doubt that some proponents of the sponsorship program position its merit as a potentially liberating force in a complex social milieu characterised by exclusion, exploitation and discrimination. The idea that poor or low caste children may be singled out for preferential treatment is profound and contributes to the theme of redemption commonly expressed by church leaders. A retired school principal expressed it this way:

Some years back when I was a principal here I cycled all the way to looking for students who would be, you know, beneficial, appropriately helped. So I picked up two children from a village… and asked the family ‘where are the children?’ because I knew this. They had gone to bring firewood from the forest…. so I sat there until I saw those two kids appearing from the forest area with a bundle of
firewood on their heads. I said ‘no, God didn’t create the head to carry the firewood’ so I was emotionally moved, took their picture, brought them into this… school and there it was, they began their life and they did well. (P#9, 20.04.2014)

It is interesting in the account above that the principal saw himself as a compassionate rescuer, and that life for the children concerned did not truly begin until they were admitted to his school.

The emphasis of the CS program on supporting low caste and disadvantaged children is seen as a matter of social justice and complementary to church growth. This is seen in the following statement:

…ours is a minority, our Church and we are mainly educating the people, the children, from the lower strata of society who are very poor, some of them are orphans, some of them the parents can’t get work to provide even a square meal for a day and we are bringing up the children… and bringing them to our boarding and because of the sponsorship are able to give them food, clothing the education. And then … the total life concept is changed and therefore because of that, the sponsorship is very much benefit… (CL#2, 18.5.2011)

While it was obvious that children sponsored by ChildHelper had little impact on their communities in the short term, both children and adults defended the practice on the basis that educating poor children was improving society over a longer period. For proponents, individual sponsorship is an investment in a fairer
and more egalitarian society though, one must cautiously recognise that the
denomination affiliated with ChildHelper views society according to those who
are pure/saved and those who are unclean/lost. Further, growth of Christianity
among low-caste Hindus and tribal Indians (tribals) is frequently identified in the
media as a cause of conflict in society rather than a harmonising influence.
Nevertheless, all of the 138 sponsored youth surveyed agreed or strongly
agreed that sponsorship makes them happy (see Figure 6f below).

*Figure 6f Survey Response Descriptive Statistics Showing Student
Satisfaction/Happiness With Sponsorship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Valid per cent</th>
<th>Cumulative per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ChildHelper has not conducted a study to identify the proportion of sponsored
children who do in fact go on to serve the church or broader community, or who
continue to approve of their sponsorship experience after it has ceased, and this
study was limited by the prevalence of anecdotal accounts of individual success.
There was, in short, an insurmountable gap between anecdotal evidence and
hard statistics. Nonetheless, it was clear that a small percentage of
disadvantaged students who were sponsored through to senior high school and beyond to a post-secondary course had achieved remarkable successes and function as role models to others in the sponsorship program because ‘…they really study and come up, some children. Some even become doctors, nurses and things like that’ (P#11, 7.6.2011). With the benefit of having observed the impact of the CS program over some thirty years, a church leader explained:

Some of them have become teachers, some have become preachers, pastors, ministers taking the gospel into the communities and showing them the light of the Lord and many have become nurses and gone abroad, they are spread out over all the world and if not for the sponsorship I don’t think they even would have completed their studies. And many of them have become doctors and some of them are practicing in London, some are in Canada, some are in… Ireland and a few are nurses… working even in Australia… (CL#2, 18.05.2011)

This leads defenders of the sponsorship program to presume that sponsored children will one day ‘pay it forward’ by being ‘…helpful to the community…’ locally and globally (P#6, 26.5.2011), by helping other children (P#8, 1.6.2011), by ‘helping some other community work…’ (Ex#2, 7.5.2011) and by inspiring other children and families to educate their children (HWS#1, 3.05.2011).

The theme that sponsorship provides hope undergirded much of the positive commentary about the ChildHelper program. 97.9% of survey students agreed or strongly agreed that sponsorship gave them hope, a sentiment elaborated on
by a teacher who explained that IICS was responsible for ‘...giving them a hope that you have a future, our life just doesn’t end here, you have a future. And they look at us and say I am a sponsored child and now I am working and married and happy’ (T#3, 1.06.2011). It seemed to the researcher at times that CS beneficiaries were deeply concerned with class, social status and prosperity, understandable given the Indian caste system but strangely difficult to relate to for an Australian researcher from a relatively egalitarian, if very multi-cultural setting. Although it was obvious that many sponsored children were not achieving high enough academically to guarantee continuance to Year 12 and beyond to further studies, and teachers reported that completion of high school was not a guarantee for personal success, 97.2 per cent of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that sponsorship would lift them out of poverty. While short-term hope inspires currently sponsored children, the extent to which this hope translates into positive outcomes is unclear.

The idea that sponsorship of disadvantaged children will provide hope and ultimately influence other families to educate their children is interesting and was staunchly defended by ChildHelper implementing partner staff and school leaders. A senior field officer working for ChildHelper in India stated, as if it should have been be more obvious to the researcher:

…neighbours will look at that child in a different way. ‘Here is the son of... He achieved something” in the mission or working outside, that will bring honour and glory to their community. And then it will give a certain type of encouragement for the other neighbours ‘what about
my son, my daughters also.’ Let them have the education, then they will give the insight to send their children to the school. (HWS#1, 3.05.2011)

It is not possible to estimate what proportion of sponsored children do ultimately benefit ‘…his family, his brothers and sisters, his neighbours…’ or to what extent the majority prove to be ‘a great support to the society’ (CL#3, 17.5.2011) or positive role model in home communities. However, a poignant example came from a Christian church worker who had adopted the son of a teenage girl who had been raped while working in bonded labour in a brickworks. In his words ‘…I have myself adopted a son and he is just five years old and I have redeemed him from the valley of death and he’s a gem of a guy’ (Ex#1, 20.04.2011). It was moving for the researcher to eat with the doting father and much-loved child, and somewhat sad to contemplate the reality that had the boy been a girl, adoption and a similar level of pride would have been unlikely.

Although it was difficult to compile tangible examples of individual sponsorship in a school setting benefiting the broader community, it was evident that there were positive impacts on school communities and the denomination affiliated with ChildHelper. Presumably, the presence of effective schools and church congregations in poor communities may ultimately be seen as a component of community development regardless of whether the school is affiliated with a church or the private sector at large. Discussion with church leaders invariably supported the claim that many a graduate is now employed by the church and therefore, by their logic, serving the community in a productive way insofar as,
'they come back to the church to serve as a graduate' (HWS#2, 18.05.2011). A senior church leader reminisced ‘...they are going to be very strong pillars of the Church, whereas if these children had not been picked up from the villages they would have been a pain to the society’ (CL#1, 16.5.2011). The denomination affiliated with ChildHelper in India prides itself on its 7 Indian higher education providers 11 hospitals, 4324 church congregations, several hundred schools and an estimated 1,534,593 members. To the benefit of schools, a small number of sponsored children ‘... can come back to the school and serve the school. They serve as leaders, as teachers...’ (HWS#6, 3.5.2011). Historic advertising by ChildHelper in Australia featured significant numbers of church pastors who had once been sponsored, however compliance with the strictures of the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct (ACFID 2010b) has made this somewhat difficult to promote as a tangible outcome for evangelically minded donors.

More immediate and tangible benefits to the school system and school communities flow as a result of individual child sponsorship in a school setting where funds are disbursed directly to schools rather than to families in family helper projects. Students insisted that having poor, often lower caste children mixing with more privileged fee-paying students (required in government schools due to the reservation system explained in section 6.1- but not required in private schools) improved the socio-economic mix and created better understanding and opportunities for disadvantaged students who would not normally be able to associate with fee-paying students. Students’ views that sponsorship made their school a better place can be seen below in Figure 6g.
For senior church leaders this was described as assisting with their private school system’s commitment to corporate social responsibility (CL#1, 16.05.2011). A tertiary student explained that breaking down caste and religious divisions was being achieved in his school because ‘all of us we are, whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian we are all brothers and sisters’ (ST#1, 24.05.2011). Although it was clear that in some schools, low-caste sponsored children do experience strong levels of discrimination consistent with that found in broader society, the potential benefit of mixing children was echoed by a ChildHelper staff. Further enquiry would be needed to ascertain whether this was common across ChildHelper supported schools however for a variety of reasons the large majority of the 139 students who were surveyed indicated that sponsorship was beneficial to their schools and school communities.

*Figure 6.g Survey Response data - Does Sponsorship Make Schools a Better Place?*
The financial impact of the sponsorship program has been substantial for many of the 188 schools and institutions in India where students were sponsored in 2013. In that year 69 schools benefited from sponsorship income due to enrolments of more than 30 assisted children. In one instance 530 of the 892 students in the school was sponsored leading to concerns that the school was unsustainably reliant on external income (ChildHelper, 2013 internal correspondence). Noting that 80 schools have less than 10 sponsored children, and have therefore benefited relatively little, it remains the case that sponsorship has been leveraged to develop new schools including start-up village schools, to subsidise non-sponsored children in an unofficial form of school based pooling of sponsorship funds, to attract donations for infrastructure projects including water, sanitation, buildings and to fund some community development activities such as well building in local communities. Most campuses visited by the researcher had at least one building constructed by acquiring loans underwritten by sponsorship income or from direct ChildHelper grants. A principal, clearly confusing the researcher with ChildHelper, and struggling with English literacy in a remote area said:

Sir it is good for the school because for two to three years or so many years we struggled here, we didn’t have so many equipments as now we are having library books, computers and many more things here. Since you are loving us and you are thinking something more for us for our development we are now getting more help and just we are develop our school. (P#10, 21.04.2011)
Referring to himself as ‘a former principal and as a teacher’, another school principal described very positive impacts on the lives of students ‘who come from lower socio-economic foundations’ and for the schools because ‘the regular subsidy flows into the school’ (P#9, 20.04.2011). Another insisted that while school income often fluctuated precipitously, ChildHelper ‘…funds comes regularly…’ enabling the school to ‘…pull along in the difficult times...’ (P#8, 1.06.2014). Remarking on one especially affluent international donor who had been crucial in the sponsorship of 100 children in one school, and its development, he noted that:

…he has provided a dining hall, staff quarters, he has provided a guest house, he has provided girls’ hostel, all these facilities come to this campus because of the sponsored children. And we are very grateful for the sacrifice, for the love that these great donors have taken pain to come and do this. (P#9, 20.04.2014)

In several of the schools visited it was evident that sponsorship did more than link an individual donor to an individual child - it enabled the schools in which children were sponsored to declare their needs to an international audience and so acquire additional donations for investment in infrastructure. To an extent this has occurred over a period of thirty years or more and may be seen as a sustainable form of income generation for those schools fortunate enough to be prioritised by ChildHelper over long periods of time. And so, schools were also said to have ‘come up’ because of sponsorship. Describing a dilapidated school in which students were sponsored, and the impact, a field officer said that
sponsorship ‘...is growing the school... I still remember many years back, it was a tin shed... only hardly 50-60 were there. But now there are 500 students, just because of the ChildHelper Aid program.’ In another case ‘That school was in very bad shape, but now it has come up because of this ChildHelper...’ (HWS#1, 3.05.2011).

Site visits to schools revealed that individual sponsorship can, and does lead to enhanced funding streams for some schools which, in a sense, are adopted by passionate, international donors despite such donors being relatively non-affluent in their own societies. In Jharkhand state for example, two key sponsors over a period of ten years had advocated for a particularly remote school, resulting in fundraising and matching partnerships which had funded construction of classrooms, dormitories, teacher accommodation, office space, wells in the local community and school equipment. Although such flows of funds are by no means sustainable, they have been invaluable in the expansion of the private school system under study in some states and have improved school infrastructure to the point where the school has become self-sustaining and has ‘come-up’ through fee-paying students. It is noteworthy that in this instance the school is in a well-known Maoist area which has received little government investment in infrastructure or education. In support of the argument that sponsorship ultimately helps schools to serve their communities better, the ChildHelper website stated in 2014 that:

...our sponsorship program also extends beyond the educational needs of the child to financially support the child’s school through
teacher salaries, classroom resources, school infrastructure, medical care... and even accommodation. The additional funding ensures schools can then offer programs that benefit the local communities, not just the sponsor child. (ChildHelper, 2014)

In summary, there are a variety of praise points frequently raised when sponsored students, school staff and church administrators are asked to list the merits of ChildHelper’s IICS model. Proponents, such as the enthusiastic principal of a junior high school, asserted that it was a win-win for all:

I find if all the sponsored children get the correct education and the correct guidelines and if they all complete their education I think the Church can be benefitted and the families of those children can also be benefitted. I now remember that the child, that girl, always sends money for her parents, now that she is earning enough working in some company. She sends regularly money to support her parents also. So in this way it’s a very, very beneficial project that is going on. (P#1, 25.04.2011)

For many who were interviewed, it came as a surprise to learn that other INGOs had moved away from IICS or would even want to. For disadvantaged sponsored children, and especially those attending the more prestigious schools, individual CS is equated with remarkable opportunity to attend a private school and escape poverty through attainment of a quality education. Individual sponsorship is both a source of hope and personal inspiration with immediate short-term benefits and potential long term ones for academically gifted children.
For families, individual sponsorship functions as a cost-effective investment in a child’s education with long term potential to improve family income with short-term reduction in costs of education. For the education system in which children are sponsored, income from sponsorship which is disbursed directly to schools provides a reliable source of income that boosts school enrolment (and funding), sometimes leads to infrastructure projects funded by generous international benefactors, and may subsidise other needy students. For the church affiliated with ChildHelper, the sponsorship program is viewed favourably as a source of graduands who have and will continue to staff its expansion and ‘good works’ in Indian society.

Consistent with the ‘benefits’ listed above, when asked how to improve the current sponsorship program, the researcher was often advised to expand it to more schools and more disadvantaged children. It is noted that a raft of issues and criticisms emerged as the researcher dug deeper - findings that are reported below.

6.3 Concerns about the ChildHelper CS program

Despite the initial, overwhelmingly positive portrayal of ChildHelper’s sponsorship program, especially by sponsored youth, there were numerous concerns expressed and suggestions for change. It was evident that research participants were often conflicted in providing answers due to cultural constraints and unwillingness to criticise for fear that their concerns would be misused. As a researcher I often had to go through a process of trust building before research subjects would stop plying me with the positives they thought must be expected
and were obligated to provide. When it was apparent that I was neutral, unattached to ChildHelper and would protect all names or identities in the research, many issues were raised, at times passionately. It was frequently commented that the researcher was the first person to have asked questions about the ChildHelper CS program in such depth and to have sought detailed feedback from students, teachers, school administrators and school principles. Already familiar with often repeated historic criticisms of CS, the researcher was surprised at the lack of awareness of these criticisms at all levels and the somewhat richer local interpretation of ‘problems.’

A good example was the range of concerns expressed about the flow of finances from ChildHelper and its Indian partner NGO. Initial feedback was invariably positive however it soon became apparent that some schools had not received a regular flow of finances or had frequently been caught in disputes as to the true number of sponsored children in the school. At times this had led to considerable angst, as funds were withheld because schools had not provided the quality of information expected. Further, especially in senior secondary schools which were becoming or had become prestigious in the past decade, the sponsorship program was somewhat out of favour. Ironically, as some schools had improved over the years and become more sustainable, the fee structures had increased, resulting in a situation where ‘the funds that they receive is not meeting the exact amount what they charge… to the other students. And so there is a difference between what ChildHelper gives and what they collect from outside students’ (HWS#1, 3.6.2014).
Deeper inquiry regarding the flow of finances revealed that over time the sponsorship funds collected in Australia had not kept pace with inflation or fee increases in India. Consequently, some schools that had been formerly grateful for ChildHelper sponsorship income now felt that their ‘School is actually losing’ and that a large number of sponsorships in a school had potentially become a ‘constraint on the organisation’ (CL#1, 16.05.2011). For some principals it was especially galling that a proportion of children could and should pay more fees, however had acquired sponsorship historically and were effectively being subsidised by both the school and ChildHelper at the expense of poorer children who were, they argued, more deserving.

A strong source of concern about the ChildHelper CS model, as implied above, is the extent to which alleged corruption and mismanagement may have resulted in a significant proportion of children acquiring sponsorship when their families are able to fully or partially fund their studies. Most staff in ChildHelper’s NGO partner in India robustly objected to such claims, insisting that only a very small percentage of children were wrongly sponsored, somewhere in the vicinity of 2% and 5% (HWS#4, 3.6.2004) which was deemed to be undesirable but acceptable. One NGO staff member conceded that the number of children receiving sponsorship who ‘could manage’ was between 10% and 15% (HWS#1, 3.6.2011) however, this was just one dissenting voice within the organisation. Reasons provided by the Indian NGO staff included an acceptance that corruption levels in India are high and it was inevitable that a small proportion of children would receive a subsidised education without stringent and costly policing. In some cases political realities and local circumstances
were said to have necessitated sponsorship - for example, one principal admitted in private conversation with the researcher that he had been forced to sponsor a small number of children, by a powerful Maoist leader who had threatened to close the school. Given this choice, the principal had knowingly referred children for sponsorship who could not be confirmed as very poor and disadvantaged.

School principals, students, teachers and some church administrators were generally quite harsh in their assessment of what was, to them, apparent mismanagement of sponsorship funds given for poor children. When asked directly, and assured that their identities would remain known only to the researcher, students and principals invariably suggested that between 10% and 40% of all sponsored children in the ChildHelper sponsorship program were not poor and ‘could manage’ to pay their own school fees. By ‘could manage’ they meant that the sponsored individual came from a family with capacity to pay part or all of their school fees and in this way were not the most needy. One principal of a large and well established senior secondary school asserted that he knew every sponsored child by name and that ‘… 25%, they can pay their money. The clothes they wear and… mobile phones. Can you believe it? Last year I got 4 or 5… students having mobile phones….Those kind of children should not be given ChildHelper’ (P#3, 2.5.2011)

Ensuring that only poor children receive sponsorship was one of the top three recommendations made by students in focus groups, sentiment echoed by teachers who were frustrated by what they viewed as an apparent injustice.
Teachers at one boarding school estimated that ‘30-40% of sponsored students can manage.’ At another school in northern India teachers estimated that ‘20-30% of sponsored children can manage’ (T#1, 1.6.2011) For teachers this was a source of concern, especially when relatives of school administrators were receiving preferential treatment to the disadvantage of gifted but very poor children in the local community.

Evidence of corruption in the sponsorship program was also inferred in survey results from sponsored children and youth. 9.4% of the surveyed youth agreed or strongly agreed that ‘To get sponsorship you have to pay a little money.’ Given the incidence of petty corruption in India it is not surprising that brokers of sponsorship may request a fee for referral to a sponsorship program. More importantly, 20.2% agreed or strongly agreed that some sponsored children are not poor. Tellingly, 27.3% disagreed strongly, disagreed or were neutral with the statement that their family was poor while 26.3% disagreed strongly, disagreed or were neutral with the statement that they were poor themselves. In Figure 6h below it can be seen that more than a quarter of surveyed children and youth struggled to identify themselves as poor. At a school level this was evident on occasions when ChildHelper supported children were sometimes reluctant to identify themselves publicly to the researcher as sponsored in front of peers. In triangulating commentary from church administrators, school staff and sponsored children and youth, it seems possible that up to one third of children in some schools are not so poor as to justify, in the eyes of their peers and teachers, full payment of their school fees.
This is in contrast to the atypical sponsor appeals found on the Child Helper website, which usually cites the inability of family members to cover the cost of a private school education. Examples of such statements are, ‘The low income he earns from working as a labourer does not cover the costs of K's education’ and ‘Her mother is a housewife and their single income is not enough to provide schooling for A.’ (ChildHelper, 2014) In defence of ChildHelper, it should be noted that such statements are components of short paragraphs which do not overstate children’s needs, avoid use of urgent language, and employ respectful photos of children who are generally well-dressed though abstracted from their social context.

For ChildHelper the inability to guarantee the level of disadvantage of sponsored children is a profoundly vexing problem. Sponsorship is marketed in Australia to donors who expect that they are helping or rescuing a very poor or very disadvantaged child. To offer an elderly pensioner a child who is not poor is viewed as both a betrayal of the trust of a sponsor and a potentially negative lesson to children and their families for whom it is expected there will be a holistic education featuring honesty and ethical behaviour. When asked what sort of lesson children were learning from this process a teacher replied:

…sponsors, they have to work and send the amount for them to survive. Sponsors also they are not getting the money easily, because you struggling, maybe you skip one meal to sponsor the child of the family. So they [student] should also have some responsibility towards the family. (T#4, 8.6.2014)
Although it is unlikely that Australian sponsors are skipping meals to sponsor children, the point is well made that many children associated with the sponsorship program regularly told that their sponsor is sacrificing for them, and where children and their families are knowingly subverting the system, this may undermine the values based education valued by teachers and principals,

*Figure 6h* Survey Data - Surveyed student perception of their own level of poverty

Although estimates varied of the proportion of children who ‘could manage’, there was consensus that a considerable proportion of children were benefiting unfairly from the CS program. Several reasons were given for the existence of a sizeable proportion of children in the ChildHelper program who should not be currently sponsored and why ‘…children from wealthy families are also picked up to be sponsored and recommended…’ (Ex#2, 7.5.2013) One is that sponsorships may last for 12 or more years and in that time family circumstances may improve. Despite improvement in income levels, families are
reluctant to declare or report their improved situation and the ChildHelper model of low cost sponsorship does not allow for a large team of social workers to track individual children. By this logic, a large segment of India’s population has benefited from India’s economic growth, improved social circumstances, and migrant workforce which is remitting funds home to India from abroad. It is therefore entirely possible that some children who were sponsored up to a decade ago now have improved circumstances.

An additional cause is the high degree of geographic spread, making home visits prohibitively expensive. Once in the sponsorship program, children invariably stay until they leave. A perception is that corruption is highest in the best schools, leading one student sponsored in a higher education provider to assert indignantly:

…it’s not reaching the right person according to me, because some of them, for example pastor’s son is getting ChildHelper support or his relatives are getting… according to me 50% is getting for the wrong persons, the sponsorship. It should not be like that, it should get for the right people, like who are really poor and needy, for single parents or separated parents… (ST#1 24.5.2011)

The most common explanation given by school principals for a sizeable percentage of children whose family ‘can manage’ is historic corruption in the referral processes used to recruit children. While walking through one school campus the researcher was bemused to be beckoned to the school canteen where the female manager proceeded to explain, in hushed tones and at her
own initiative, that many children in the school who were sponsored were related to staff members or had acquired sponsorship after going to a poor person’s home to have their photo ‘snapped’ in dirty attire. Suitably warned not to trust the school principal, who, the researcher was assured, would be unlikely to tell the truth, the researcher soon found himself in the principal’s office and subjected to concerns that up to 30% of sponsored children in his school could manage and should have their sponsorships reallocated! According to him the main reason for the deplorable state of affairs in his school was that church leaders and corrupt ministers had imposed sponsorships on the school over time (P#3, 01.06.2011)

Claims by principals that admission of children into the sponsorship program in past years had been manipulated by pastors and church leaders should be balanced with concerns expressed by some teachers that their principles use sponsorship to reward staff and family members. Nonetheless, concern over the role of church leaders may be seen in the comments of a church leader who explained, ‘20 years back I was in charge of the ChildHelper program, we had about almost 250 children studying here and we discovered that at least 50% of the students, they don’t deserve this. But because of the ... president's recommendations ... they were given these privileges, ... a dilution, double standard has been followed.’ (CL#3, 17.05.2011) When pressed about the current situation the same individual said that in his opinion 10-15% sponsored students were receiving assistance best directed at more needy individuals.
The cause of the problem seems obvious with powers of hindsight. The historic referral system for sponsorship enabled principals, pastors and church leaders to identify potential beneficiaries and refer them to schools in vastly dissimilar geographic areas, direct to ChildHelper without assessment from a social worker or adequate peer review. A principal of a large school explained that in his case:

You know what's happening here generally, ChildHelper children are chosen mainly by the pastors of our churches. Ok, from different places. The pastors recommend them. Now this is something I have been having a lot of argument with those pastors. (P#8, 1.6.2014)

At times this process even bypassed the Indian partner NGO with principals in favour with ChildHelper Australia staff able to recommend direct to Australia specific children for sponsorship. While this process did enable rapid recruitment of children, many of whom were poor, the historic referral system may also have lent itself to abuse and evidences poor internal procedures and controls. When asked to estimate the proportion of children currently supported who ‘could manage’, Childhelper’s implementing agency staff in India expressed concern that while donors seek accountability, the processes for recruiting children had not been conducive to this end.

For church leaders and pastors the referral of non-poor children and some relatively advantaged children appears to have served several purposes. Firstly, CS may have been used to subsidise low church worker salaries which explains why some sponsored children are those of staff. Secondly, it functioned as an inducement to join or remain in the church, offsetting some of the disincentives
associated with becoming Christian insofar as sponsorship can be used to ‘bring the membership to the church’ by ‘promising them something – we will get your children an education...’ (P#8, 1.6.2014) Thirdly, it may have consolidated the influence of church pastors and administrators. For school principals who opposed such practices, this could be difficult, insofar as church leaders ‘...could pressurise the principal and say “I’m sending through applications, you make sure you send them...”’ (HWS#1, 3.6.2011). Dissenting principals and teachers, wary of losing their jobs, voiced strong concerns about referral processes past and present.

ChildHelper promotes itself as a professional organisation, stating that input form local educators ‘...meets the needs of the children in the best possible way and is culturally-sensitive’ (ChildHelper 2014 ). The great irony for ChildHelper is that while it was promoting itself as a low-cost, highly efficient CS INGO, it was arguably undermining its ability to ensure that only needy children benefited from sponsorship through inadequate monitoring and evaluation. For many years the organisation boasted that 100% of what was given was forwarded overseas. A low-cost model may have worked as a marketing tool, and required significant sacrifice of staff who travelled on a tight budget, however it did little to fund credible monitoring and evaluation. What, in hindsight, could one Australian director do on annual inspections over a period of decades? For one interviewee it was clear that ‘...whenever she came around she did very well actually but the admin, the administration used to actually eye wash things to her and she believed them the way they told her, portrayed things to her. She believed everything actually that’s not what actually is going on...’ (Ex#3, 5.5.2011).
It is noteworthy that there is a strong bias in ChildHelper selection of children for sponsorship. Whereas the proportion of Indians who profess Christianity is estimated at 2.3% of the population (Census of India 2011), 78.7% of survey respondents classified themselves as Christian. This orientation was also the case for students who participated in focus group discussions and various other activities. As a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, ChildHelper commits to provide aid to children based on need, without regard for their gender, ethnicity or religion. However, the referral system has favoured Christian children in the past. This bias may be seen in Figure 6.9 below and leads to concern that in order to acquire and retain sponsorship, some children may feel pressure to extol allegiance to Christianity, and once in schools, may be pressured to affiliate with the religion of the school system supported by ChildHelper.

However, the directors of one school insisted that non-Christian children enjoyed the school’s religious program, so much so that ‘...some of the children they like to get baptism but they don’t want to take baptism because of the parents.’

Those children who say ‘we want to get baptised, we want to get baptised’ were described as ‘daring’ and ‘brave’ (TS#3, 1.6.2011). For one pastor the main concern was coercion of children by family and communities opposed to conversion. So while the researcher worried that children may sometimes be pressured in terms of religious practice, a church leader decried the persecution of sponsored children and their families who had attempted to become Christian, asserting:

They have been beaten, their hands are broken, some have been beaten considerably… but in spite of all these problems they’re willing
to remain in the truth than to go back to that same teaching of their religion. They don’t want to accept that anymore no. They said we would forgo going back to our village and our property than to go back to that religion again. (CL#1, 16.5.2011)

Figure 6i Survey Data – Religious affiliation

The sponsored children who are part of this case study do tend to see religious significance in their sponsorship and often express gratefulness for their sponsorship in religious terms. As mentioned earlier, of the survey respondents 77% identified as Christian, 17.3% as Hindu, 2.9% as Muslim and 0.7% were undecided. 97.1% agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced God’s love through sponsorship. Clearly, Christians, Muslims and Hindus all believe in God although two of the religions are mono-theistic while Hinduism is poly-theistic. The survey does not indicate the extent to which respondents ‘feel’ God’s love however there is a strong sense that the large majority attribute the acquisition of a sponsor to the benevolence of a higher power. For some children and
youth, sponsorship was part of a greater plan in which ‘God had a plan for me. To study well and bring up my sisters and my grandfather. So they are the blessings God provided.’ (SP#3, 2.6.2011) At time of writing ChildHelper takes pains to ensure that the sponsorship program is not a means to convert children however the exclusive support of schools in one denomination has resulted in concern that this may be perceived.

There is some religious coercion experienced by sponsored children in the schools funded by ChildHelper though the extent is unclear. When asked if they experience pressure to be baptised, 25.2% agreed or strongly agreed, perhaps reflecting the strong religious orientation of those boarding schools the majority of survey participants come from. This pressure may be seen in Figure 6k although it is conceivable that pressure comes from multiple sources. It is unclear to what extent the majority of sponsors (who are also Christian) encourage commitment to Christianity however given that marketing in Australia has historically emphasised the importance of provision of Christian education, this would appear to be foundational to the expectations of many sponsors. 92.8% of survey participants declared that they worshipped freely (agreeing or strongly agreeing) with 33.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their sponsor sends them letters encouraging them to become Christians. While this probably occurs with good intentions, it is nevertheless, contrary to ChildHelper policy regarding sponsor communication.

Perceptions of religious coercion seems to be stronger in boarding schools and orphanages. In one orphanage visited, teenage boys reported that they were
forced to attend church services and religious programs led by orphanage staff they had accused of being abusive, and for them this was difficult to reconcile. For example, one boy described ‘Keeping some hatred in our heart and going to worship God…’ in a weekly ritual in which ‘There’s no meaning of us going and sitting in the church’ (Ex#7, 5.6.2014). The majority of children nonetheless spoke positively of the religious education they had experienced and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to mix with others of different religious beliefs, to learn about Christianity and to participate in religious programs of different sorts. Dissatisfaction appeared to be highest in institutional settings where virtually all aspects of the child’s life are regulated by staff. For sponsored students attending school as day scholars, there seemed to be acceptance that attendance at the school required participation in the full curriculum.

*Figure 6j Survey Data – Religious Coercion*

For many of ChildHelper’s sponsored youth the sponsor is held in high esteem. For some the sponsor is ‘like God’ in the sense that they are seen as
mysterious, powerful, remote and revered (FG#7, 06.06.11). However, one of the most commonly listed concerns communicated to the researcher was not knowing who their sponsor was or not having enough communication from the sponsor. This was raised in 12 of 16 focus groups as a key concern and was confirmed in the survey. In Figure 6k below it can be seen that over half of surveyed respondents did not know who their sponsor was. It is conceded that some sponsored children who had regular contact with their sponsors appeared to be confident and could proudly name their sponsor or show a photograph. However, given that 99.3% were currently sponsored, their mean age was 14.7 years and the mean for their years of support was 4.96, the researcher concluded that a large proportion of teenagers who have been sponsored for several years have no knowledge of their sponsors at a time when they are embracing curiosity and seeking to understand the nature and shape of relationships impacting on them. For some children and youth this was a source of confusion and regret. Repeatedly, they pressed the point that sponsored children should at least know the name of their sponsor and, ideally have a picture. In focus groups this translated to recommendations like ‘Just one letter to know our sponsor more. Photo. Both’ (FG#2, 13.06.2011).
In total, 41.7% of survey respondents agreed that they knew who their sponsors were. This may be attributed to their receiving letters, postcards, photos and gifts, plus a small number of sponsor visits. However, for those who do not receive a response there is a strong level of curiosity and suppressed disappointment ameliorated somewhat by assurances that the sponsorship itself is a sign of care in an ill-defined though ultimately beneficial transnational relationship. The large volume of letters and cards required of sponsored children over the life of a sponsorship is commented on by a student who remarked, ‘Till now I wrote 60 letters to him but he never replied to me. Then how will I know who is he or who were my sponsors? If I grow busy and settle in my life well then how will I be able to appreciate him or her?’ (S#1, 15.05.2011).

It is interesting in this account that the sponsor is presumed to be male.

Many students hold a positive view of their sponsors. 95.1% of survey respondents referred to the sponsor as ‘good and kind’ with 95.7% agreeing or
strongly agreeing that their sponsors were like mothers or fathers to them.
Perhaps for this reason some sponsored students describe a high need for communication from sponsors, as indicated in the statement ‘If I don’t know him, who he is, then it will all be in vain’(S#7, 15.05.2011). Students who had never received correspondence reported a need to ‘feel that my sponsor is with me’ (S#2, 15.05.2011), ‘share my feelings’ (S#3, 15.05.2011), ‘know him and contact him’ (S#4, 15.05.2011), have the sponsor ‘mould me and tell me about my future’ (S#5, 15.05.2011) seek help in ‘emergency time’ (S#6, 15.05.2011) ‘know who he or her is’ (S#7, 15.05.2011) ‘know each other closely and be like a family together’ (S#10, 15.05.2011).

For students who do not receive communication from sponsors the consequence can be ‘pain to children’ (S#14, 15.05.2011), a perception of lack of love (S#18, 15.05.2011), feeling ‘very sad’ (S#24, 15.05.2011) and feeling ‘very bad’ (S#27, 15.05.2014). 17 student focus groups listed better communication with, or more knowledge of sponsors as one of their top three recommendations. There can be little doubt that many sponsored children view their distant benefactors as ‘foster parents’ however find the lack of communication from a parent-like figure confusing. The strong feelings of some children may be seen in the plea below:

I write so many letters but there is no reply from you. I feel very bad still now I have not received any gifts or letter from you. I feel very bad but then too still you help me. By so many ways you are really good. I thank you for everything. I liked to hear your voice or even see
you, at any movement I would like to see you, please can you send me any gift or a letter so that when I see a gift I feel like seeing you and when I see your letter which you have given to me, I would at least feel like you are talking to me, please don’t mistake me if I have written anything wrong it is because I wanted to see you. Or hear your voice or receive any gift and shot it to my friend and I would feel very happy. When they show me I feel bad, I didn’t get insulted but then to I say them one day when I am going to get it. Yes, I will receive a gift from you. Yours obediently and loving (name). (S#27, 15.05.2011)

According to one group of students it is important to have a ‘Personal touch with sponsor…’ and ‘…a strong bond with them…’ so that when ‘they are in old age it is our turn to do something for them - a token of love.’ (FG#12, n.d.)

The reasons for one-sided correspondence are varied. Interviews with a small number of ex-sponsored beneficiaries explored this issue with observations made that ‘I think in Western World people are very busy so they may not have much time to communicate… I feel they have no time for us…’ (Ex#1, 20.04.2014) While sponsors receive access to the personal information of sponsored children, including names, birthdates, siblings, updates on academic performance and letters of thanks or Christmas greetings, there is no obligation to provide information to those who are sponsored. Obstacles to a mutually beneficial flow of information include lack of policy, the primacy of marketing imperatives which prioritise the needs of sponsors, lack of awareness among
sponsors over the potential impact of their communication, sponsor apathy, and some sponsors concern that even when they write, there seems to be no response or acknowledgement, hence suspicion that their correspondence even reaches children. Additionally, some sponsors support up to 100 children, making personal communication difficult, and some children have lost sponsors but are on the organisation’s books for long periods of time without a direct sponsor.

Unaware of many of these complexities, sponsored youth argued that a sponsored individual should have some information about the sponsor. A problem for children and sponsors who want authentic communication is the censorship of letters and disorganised process involved in gathering letters from schools. Often, a teacher will sit down with groups of sponsored children and dictate letters or write them on the board. For students this can be frustrating. Approximately 41% of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that in letters and cards to sponsors they must write what they are told.

For teachers the steady flow of funding for sponsored children, without the accountability of knowing the sponsor, was a potential cause of low academic performance, apathy, jealousy, disappointment and harm to the school. To nods of approval from colleagues an English teacher explained that:

> It is good for students to know who the sponsor is - they are longing for that. They get help so they need to know and need to share their problems. The sponsor is like God. They will take their studies more seriously. (FG#7, 06.06.11)
Another argued that sponsored children need to know their sponsors so they ‘will know that this person is working and trying to help him be educated. So at least he will know ‘I have to study’” (T#1, 1.06.2011) Implicit in this statement is the concern of teachers that ongoing funding, without the accountability of an individual link, could harm academic performance and lead to a welfare mentality associated with low academic performance. Though there was some perception among students and teachers that a small proportion of sponsored children are lazy and unmotivated students, it is unclear whether this proportion can be verified or to what extent it might exceed the proportion of unmotivated students who are privately funded.

Perhaps a greater issue for several private schools that had become elite over time, was the perception amongst administrative staff and teachers that the recruitment of ‘backward’ children from the ‘lower’ margins of society harmed the academic standing of the school. For private schools, run by a minority religious group, in a setting characterised by fierce competition, this was a significant issue and one that provided an awkward tension with the mandate of the schools to pursue social justice and benefit the marginalised. For one commentator it was evident that most children who were sponsored come from disadvantaged homes ‘...maybe they don’t even have lighting...So they are not able to study properly... at least 30% of them fail...because of these ChildHelper children the institution is down, okay. The school has to bear this pain...’ (CL#3, 17.05.2011).
Taking a more sympathetic line of reasoning, an ex-sponsored church administrator noted that sponsored children can rarely afford the additional tutoring that wealthier children receive, or may transfer from non-English speaking schools only to experience a lack of support, with the consequence that ‘the poor ones are withdrawing themselves, they feel insulted, they feel they are dumb, they feel they are not able to do their curriculum’ (Ex#1 20.04.2011). Bemoaning the power of pastors to refer ‘backwards’ children for sponsorship, regardless of their ability to thrive in a school with high academic standards, a principal decried the high number of children in his city from slum areas who enter school too old for their grade. For him the result was demotion of older children to lower grades and a problem in which ‘...the child is too big in the class and he becomes a problem... loses interest... we find them discouraged.’ (P#8, 1.06.2014)

Ironically, in offering sponsorship to older children from a poor educational background, ChildHelper may be reducing the self-esteem of those children with low academic ability, as well as harming the school’s academic standing. It is not surprising then that the principal above would say ‘So what I personally feel is... if ChildHelper is trying to help children, they should be from very small level, maybe from 1st standard or 2nd...’ (P#8, 1.06.2014). Rather than being viewed as an act of snobbery, or a cynical marketing ploy dependent on the recruitment of only very young children, this recommendation may be interpreted as a pragmatic observation that academic sponsorship is best targeted at more capable students or those young enough to benefit in elementary level. The ethics of maintaining low ability students in private schools through middle-high
school are cloudy when such practices diminish children’s self-esteem, fail to equip them for a non-academic job and reduce the prestige of the school.

Contrary to historic claims that sponsorship demeans children and their families by making them reliant on welfare, approximately 90% of survey respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly with the comment that ‘Sponsorship makes me feel little bit like a poor beggar.’ Only 8% agreed that sponsorship makes some children lazy, with the same percentage agreeing that it makes some parents lazy. The negative impact on a small number of individuals was stressed by a school principal who observed:

Some of the students are not very responsible. They feel that, OK, they don’t have to pay anything, they are free, and sometimes that, they are not very responsible, that we can see. So this is the only thing I feel that some of the students they become irresponsible. But most of the students are quite ok, they are fine, they appreciate what they are getting. (P#7, 26.04.2011)

Students contributing to the case study seemed less preoccupied with the potential for their presence to reduce the academic rank of their school, or reduce the self-esteem of some students, than the apparent inequity existent in not knowing their sponsors and in not receiving gifts. In the words of one student ‘Every student should have a relationship with their sponsor. Give to all equally - they are all brothers and sisters’ (FG#1, 13.06.2014). It is apparent that sponsored youth tend to feel very strongly about this issue as indicated in the statement ‘...I was feeling bad when you did not send me a letters and gifts.'
Every day I remember you in my prayers.' (S#28) Or more simply ‘All students should get one letter, a gift and picture.’ (FG#12, n.d.) Unfortunately, only a minority of students receive regular communication and perhaps fewer receive gifts, an example of which is shown below in Figure 6i.

Figure 6i A parcel sent to a sponsored child in June 2011.

On one memorable occasion, in northern India the researcher was ushered from a small, tea plantation school to the modest, one-room home of the sponsored girl child of illiterate tea-pickers. In the humble dwelling the teenage girl shyly displayed each modest gift and letter sent by her sponsor during the two years they had been linked. The pencils, erasers, notebooks and hairbands had never been used, rather they had been left unopened as a prize possession, taking pride of place high on a shelf in the tiny family home where they could not be
damaged. For the young teenager, having an international friend was clearly a
great privilege, and though she was extremely shy it was obvious that it was a
relationship she valued highly. As an anecdotal account this instance could have
functioned beautifully as a marketing story for the ChildHelper model of
sponsorship. Sadly, the joy experienced by some children in receiving gifts is
contrasted by the sorrow of children who are sponsored for long periods of time
without a card, gift or letter. A teacher recalled the difficulty of dealing with
disappointed children, stating:

Yeah I remember one boy coming and asking me whenever gifts
come… we have to write a thank you letter back and make them write
thank you letter and send it back… one little boy was coming and
asking ‘why is they getting, why not me?’ I said ‘I will tell them to
send, next time you will surely get.’ (T#3 1.06.2011)

The uneven nature of gift giving is evident in Figure 6.13 in which approximately
62% of children surveyed indicated that they had not received gifts direct from a
sponsor.
Figure 6m Survey Descriptive Statistics Showing Recipient Status of Gifts.

My sponsor sends gifts directly to me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Valid Per cent</th>
<th>Cumulative Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noteworthy that 21.5% of survey respondents also agreed that sponsors send money directly to them. This was a surprising finding considering it is ChildHelper policy that sponsored children not receive cash directly, that direct contact with children is discouraged, and that all parcels are sorted, inspected and letters censored. Either children do receive cash somehow or those who agreed that sponsors send cash were referring to the fact that sponsors send cash to India via ChildHelper and thus to them indirectly. It should be noted that several interviews found students who had met sponsors personally on sponsor visits to their country and maintained independent contact afterwards, perhaps resulting in tangible, unregulated support. Historically, staff of Childhelper...
Australia were known to have provided small cash amounts direct to children in adverse conditions and tell them that it was from their sponsor or from the organisation.

For children who directly benefit from ChildHelper’s CS program, a commonly shared experience is varying levels of confusion over their rights and obligations as beneficiaries. The parents of three deaf children who were sponsored explained that they had never received any written information about ChildHelper, the nature of the sponsorship program, its aims, religious affiliation or links to the private school system it supported (P#2, 31.05.2011). Indeed, throughout months of fieldwork it was not possible to identify beneficiaries in a high school setting who had any formal information as to the nature of their sponsorship. Time and again sponsored children expressed concern that although they were delighted to have been chosen, there was little transparency, and no indication of their rights or responsibilities. This was a particular problem for students in the higher education program. When asked if he knew how much his sponsorship was, what his school fees were, and which entitlements and responsibilities applied to him, a university student replied:

Nothing like that. We were not even told like how much is being sent... Okay once the child goes to college, he should be knowing how much his sponsor is sending, what. Nothing is being told. They only just say 'yes your sponsor sends your fees, it will get credited in your college account.' Who knows, okay if the fees are like a hundred dollars, and if the sponsor sends two hundred dollars or one fifty
dollars, where does the remaining money go? Because the child is not even getting that money also, benefit, nothing. (Ex#7, 07.05.2011)

In the experience of the researcher, senior high school students in particular frequently worried because they did not know how long the sponsorship would last, and had not been told how much ChildHelper paid to the school. This left children and their families in the difficult position of negotiating claims by principals that ChildHelper was not paying the school enough, and the families had to make up the deficit, especially for costs such as exam fees, books, uniforms and other ‘hidden’ expenses. Children whose sponsorship periods were not defined were especially vulnerable to psychological stress- as noted by a church leader who said:

Sometimes when a sponsor for a particular child drops out and immediately the child is being informed ‘okay now you don’t have a sponsorship’. So the child is sometimes caught up in that helpless stage. (CL#2, 18.05.2011)

In some cases children had been singled out publicly and had been berated for holding back the school. Senior high school students were especially pointed in their observations about the need for better quality information, revealed in a group’s recommendations that they needed ‘Financial assistance for senior students’, ‘More information about sponsorship’, and ‘More communication from sponsors’ (FG#5 2.05.2011). For this particular group, ‘We do not know fees and costs. Information is lacking e.g. about further studies.’ It was with some distress that the researcher interviewed men and women, long since sponsored, who
had been directed into unwanted careers such as nursing, because those in power had not given them a choice. ChildHelper partner staff explained that this is not uncommon in Indian families, that adults have a responsibility to direct youth into well-paying jobs, and it is not unreasonable to expect that graduates of the sponsorship program should be indentured to the education or health-care system to which they owed their success.

An interesting aspect of this shared experience of sponsorship was a common range of hopes and aspirations in relation to sponsors. Approximately 95% of surveyed youth agreed or strongly agreed that their sponsors were good, kind people with approximately 96% comparing sponsors to parental figures despite a lack of communication and information. Although only 10% stated that their sponsor had promised to visit them or take them to another country, over two thirds thought their sponsor would support them through university and just over 50% indicated that they thought their sponsor would support their travels to a foreign country. In hindsight this question could have been clarified, and linked to financial support however it is argued that in general, sponsored youth have an enormous amount of goodwill for their sponsors and some may have a misguided sense of their sponsor’s generosity. This is seen insofar as 70% of survey respondents agreed that their sponsor would visit them one day (see Figure 6n.
For researchers, what is not said can be profoundly important. And so, it is noted that at no point in the research process did church leaders, school staff or sponsored youth indicate the existence of any form of monitoring and evaluation prior to this research that could lead ‘beneficiaries’ to inform ChildHelper programming or policy. There is no representation at board level for children or those once sponsored and no sanctioned process established to gain the input of beneficiaries. While several ChildHelper partner staff in India were once sponsored themselves, the prevailing organisational logic positioned beneficiaries as grateful, passive and unlikely to express their concerns, draw attention to failings, and partner with the NGO to improve the CS program. Of course, while this directly contradicts key principles of community development and empowerment, the paternalism and top-down management culture of ChildHelper’s Indian partner is a feature of organisational culture.
6.4 The case of institutionalised children

At this point it is appropriate to mention the concerns of children in institutional care who are sponsored by ChildHelper. ChildHelper Australia supports four orphanages in India, each of which may be described as a traditional, institutional form of care characterised by dormitory accommodation on compounds with low staff-student ratios and limited freedom of movement for the children. At the time of research there had been no prior evaluation of the experience of children in these institutions, which were built with ChildHelper funds and were largely reliant on CS. The infrastructure of orphanages varied with not inconsequential outcomes reported by staff. One of the longer running orphanages for example has a large alumni that has completed high school, tertiary studies and in some cases graduands have become foreign citizens. Orphanage staff have organised weddings for orphans, funded tertiary studies and, in some cases, provided short-term stays for married couples (HWS#3 19.06.2011) in a quest to keep the doors open to children long after they leave. They are however traditional in the sense that they segregate boys and girls, and house them in orphanages rather than homes.

Acknowledging the numerous expressions of appreciation for the opportunity to live in an orphanage, it is nonetheless obvious some children and youth have struggled to reconcile the apparent ‘blessing’ of being supported by a sponsor in a well-equipped institution, with a range of negative experiences including cultural confusion, religious coercion, violent physical punishments, favouritism, psychological abuse, separation from family members, restriction of personal liberties and various other undesirable outcomes. The unexpected and
sometimes distressing stories told by youth who had been associated with long-
term orphan care function as a caution against the role CS can play in harming
children despite the best intentions of sponsors.

Despite most children in the orphanages having a surviving parent or closely
related family member, ChildHelper has defaulted to institutional placements
rather than family empowerment and assistance. Left to their own devices, some
of the orphanages discourage family contact, limiting it to a deplorable few hours
per year, sometimes out of concern that if the child is allowed to visit family, they
will not return to the orphanage. One adult who had experienced long term
orphan care summarised the problem well when he commented:

\[
\text{I always missed my parents as long as I was in the hostel. The reason I always missed was I never have had any opportunity to see someone as my father or mother, giving me enough of care, or love that I wanted. (Ex#2, 7.05.2011)}
\]

Justifying this, the same person explained:

\[
\text{Without a sponsorship… I can very well say that my life would have been in the village, ploughing someone’s field and not being anything productive for the community, that is for sure because my parents were very poor and also they had both died. I would have had a very hard time absolutely no income no relatives no one to take care of me so without sponsorship nothing would have happened good but become someone’s servant or slave to someone. (Ex#2, 7.05.2011)}
\]
There is, therefore, often acknowledgement that the dormitory style orphanages funded by ChildHelper, provide unique educational opportunities associated with inadequate levels of psychological and emotional support to vulnerable children separated from their families.

The prevalence of abuse of different sorts features strongly in descriptions of sponsored children in orphanage settings. Speaking of past trials in their youth, three young men explained that:

...we had to stay outside... in one of the watchmen’s room... not in the campus but outside, to sleep there. And then she (the director) wouldn’t care. The same thing’s happening to the other children as well and the boys are being beaten up very badly, put into dark rooms, especially the dogs cage, kennels, one of the boys was put overnight there. (Ex#3, 5.06.2014)

Students described harsh physical punishments when they were younger students:

We can say they have been stripping us naked, and I don’t want to mention the names but being naked, they remove our clothes, they take a belt, the belt that we use, they take it and they hit us. (Ex#5, 2.6.2014)

Others described the actions of untrained orphanage directors as follows:
the director’s husband used to physically abuse me and some other boys by kicking me on my groin area and banging my head against the wall many a times just because I used to urinate on my bed while asleep for which to date I do have some minor headaches even today. (Ex#6, n.d.)

In a letter to the directors of the Indian implementing NGO, the participant above described over 20 years of orphan care associated with frequent acts of severe physical violence. Unfortunately, his experience of sponsorship was coercive. He concluded ‘I also faced mental abuse along with some other boys on the campus. If we raised our voice against the director or her husband to fight for the right we were, blackmailed and threatened and told that we would be thrown out of xxx and our aid would be cut off by the ChildHelper.’ Perhaps for this reason, a group of students stated that monitoring of the orphanages needs to be improved and that external reviewers ‘Must talk to students to know what is hidden. Their concern was that in their experience, international staff ‘…comes, checks ID number and takes pictures and goes. Field Officer does not ask.’ (Ex FG#2, n.d.)

Unfortunately, there were a range of other issues raised in relation to institutional care including alleged sexual abuse of girls (Ex#6, n.d.), unwillingness of staff to share documents for children in their custody (Ex#7 5.6.2011), favouritisms and discrimination (ExFG#1, n.d.), lack of practical education and segregation of boys and girls even when they were family members. Some adult interviewees who had completed tertiary studies
suggested strongly that orphanage directors had forced a student into a particular strand of tertiary study, against their preferences, and that ‘If ChildHelper can’t complete child’s education, make arrangement for loan to complete education. We are not given privilege to be what we want to be.’ (EXFG#2, n.d.) The researcher personally witnessed children locked in their dormitories on Saturday afternoons which was a regular occurrence designed to give staff a break and leads to concern that staff-student ratios in a number of institutions where children are sponsored are lacking.

For the researcher dual accounts of poignant gratitude and chilling psychological or historic physical violence provided a disturbing picture of an unwholesome orphan care experience for some institutionalised children that contrasted greatly with the positive accounts communicated to sponsors in Australia. Though it is discouraged in academia, where restraint and reason must be valued, the reader may glimpse a portion of the anguish and concern that developed in the researcher as young men and women who were once sponsored said that the researcher’s efforts were the first time they had been listened to and believed.

As a consequence of a small number of these stories, the researcher ceased further interviews, reported his concerns to his supervisor and contacted ChildHelper in Australia which reviewed its child protection policy and flew a staff member to India to ascertain whether the issues identified were historic and if children remained at risk. Although the researcher was not privy to the details of the internal inquiry that followed, a subsequent briefing indicated that little
evidence was gathered by ChildHelper indicating direct mistreatment of children in recent years. Despite this, many of the dynamics which may have allowed mistreatment to occur historically continue, and have led to a ChildHelper project designed to improve levels of care.

In summation, orphanages and two other special schools funded by ChildHelper seem to have operated with little oversight from ChildHelper Australian staff who are themselves, (and similarly so with its Indian partner NGO) untrained in social work, ethical orphan care, or in working with children who have disabilities. Governance and legal liability for the orphanages and special schools lies with the denomination and school system associated with ChildHelper however the various governing boards lack high levels of interest, expertise and policy to guide decision making. The special schools were not of their making and originated with the good intentions of international ChildHelper staff and international donors.

In 2011 at the time of field interviews, there were no staff at ChildHelper or its Indian partner with specific responsibility for orphanages or special schools. Monitoring was *ad hoc* and not based on a clear statement on ethical orphan care or familiarity with best practice strategies in institutional orphan care. The field officers appointed in the Indian partner NGO had little guidance on quality orphan care, sided exclusively with orphanage management staff when complaints arose, and were unfamiliar with child rights. The researcher was unable to find any evidence of meaningful contact between the various orphanages/directors supported by ChildHelper. This minimised cross-
institutional learning and cross-institutional checking. Further, there was little evidence of benchmarking against other orphanages or compliance against government standards.

In general, attempts at document reviews indicated that the orphanages lacked approved and documented operating guidelines, clearly expressed rules, admission procedures, financial guidelines, and written policies regarding disciplinary action, child case histories, care standards, budgeting and child rights. Having funded construction of these institutions, ChildHelper had handed them to various entities of the denomination in the absence of specific goals, objectives and standards. In effect, the orphanages and special schools appear to have functioned as a series of disparate mini projects. Understaffed, under-regulated and over funded, it is not surprising that a small number of vulnerable children in one institution in particular would repeatedly try to reveal the issues confronting them over a period of years, only to report being marginalised and silenced, or in some cases brutally punished. Given that many of the children are not double orphans, the researcher has strongly suggested to ChildHelper that where possible, re-unification be prioritised and the program be reviewed by qualified professionals. This would be necessary to ensure that the numerous anecdotal accounts and individual opinions shared in the research process are verified and whether these issues continue to the present day or represent a range of historic problems that have been adequately dealt with.

A minor note is required on special schools funded entirely by ChildHelper, such as those for blind or deaf children. These institutions evidenced excellent
facilities, strong levels of international support and apparently grateful students. Unfortunately, in the two schools visited, staff interviews made it clear that they were not staffed by specialists, dormitories were unsafe for small children, child protection was not a high priority and in one case, the school was not registered and could not issue a school leaver’s certificate. Operating as boarding schools, they tended to isolate children and no effort was being made to include parents or family members in the educative process. Like the orphanages, there was reluctance to benchmark the performance of these schools with government funded special schools. Two anomalies were discovered, one of which was that deaf children were learning American sign-language whereas other children in the state were not, with the other being that some parents were receiving government support for their children and were entitled to free special education, while their children were supported by international sponsors in private schools. These schools lack appropriate resources, adequate funding, and an appropriate teacher-training program.

6.5 Recommendations and conclusion

It would likely be beyond the mandate of a case study to make pragmatic recommendations for programmatic change. However, given that throughout the research process participants were asked for their recommendations, and these reflect their experience of CS, it would be remiss not to make six key recommendations. It is noted that the ChildHelper model of CS can be categorised as IICS and has, for over thirty years, involved direct transfer of funds to private schools for the benefit of disadvantaged children. These funds function much like scholarships and are used to cover the cost of fees, uniforms,
books and in some cases, medical expenses and accommodation. Unlike CS
other organisations which became subject of journalistic critique in the 1980s
and 1990s, ChildHelper is small, lean financially, did not seem to engage in
poverty porn at time of review, and had avoided to a large extent the gift giving
and family transfers which had proved so difficult for other INGOs. A perusal of
the website and promotional materials suggests that ChildHelper’s discourse is
lacking reference to child rights and there is room to develop a strategy for
integrating development education with marketing and communications material.

It is noted that the research process did not adequately capture the perspectives
of parents or siblings. Thus, while approximately 92% of survey respondents
objected to the idea that sponsorship caused jealousy in their family, it would
have been much better to ask this question of siblings.

**Recommendation 1 ‘Investigate those who can manage’ (FG#15)**

A shared feature of students, teachers, principals and church administrator’s
experience of the ChildHelper CS program is concern that sponsorship funding
should only target the neediest students. Presuming that the sponsorship
program remains largely the same into the future, there was agreement that a
significant proportion of sponsorship beneficiaries ‘can manage’ and should not
be receiving the level of support they do from ChildHelper. Estimates gathered
by the researcher ranged from 5% to 50% with many sponsored children
themselves struggling to identify themselves as very poor. Suggestions for
dealing with this ranged from eliminating non-expert staff from the referral
process, to a comprehensive review of all sponsored children using an intensive
case-work approach with home visits, peer interviews and an agreed disadvantage assessment methodology. Destined to be expensive and difficult to manage, (as found by large INGOs that have abandoned the use of case workers and individual child support) such a systemic review of each ‘case’ might lead to the ‘dropping’ of those children who obviously are not poor and the gradual transition of others out of the sponsorship program. To the credit of ChildHelper, since 2010 there has been increased scrutiny of admissions and the employ of field staff to add rigour to the process.

*Recommendation 2 ‘More information about ChildHelper support’ (FG#20) ‘How is the money spent?’ (FG#21)*

From the perspective of children and youth, it is imperative that the sponsorship process be accompanied by clear information, and a documentation of their rights and responsibilities. Sponsorship for education in a private school is more complex than it first seems. Sponsorship can simultaneously be a source of great joy, hope, and it can cause confusion, result in dependency, and provide a powerful weapon in the hands of those who would misuse it. Not knowing their sponsors, or even if there is an individual sponsor is troubling to many youth who are inadvertently positioned as passive recipients. The current sponsorship program is positioned in a paradigm of paternalism and with that comes significant disadvantages for children and youth who do not know the nature of their support, the size of their scholarship, their obligations and rights.
Recommendation 3 ‘All students should get one letter, gift and picture. Information about sponsor’ (FG#11)

ChildHelper’s model of child sponsorship is founded on the idea that personalised giving from one individual to another is relational, personal and effective. A process review indicated that sponsors in Australia and New Zealand receive annual academic updates on the progress of their sponsored child, photos and letters. What sense they make of these, and what they do with them is unknown. However, they have the opportunity of knowing if they choose to take an interest. For more than half of the sponsored children interviewed or surveyed this option is impossible to exercise for various reasons. Some children mistakenly believe that they have an individual sponsor when in fact they may have none. Some share a sponsor. Many are confused and disappointed not to receive any form of communication or personalised gift from the apparently caring foreigners who assist them over long periods of time.

Without respondents expressing it in this way, the researcher’s interpretation is that many children and staff believe sponsored individuals who themselves must communicate regularly, have a right to know more about the source of their funding. The extent of this knowledge should be explored in a framework of partnership rather than of charity. If this is not possible it may be wise for ChildHelper to abandon the emphasis on friendship building (as seen in the work of Plan International) and the inequitable, sometimes coercive exchange of personal information and personal correspondence. At very least, ChildHelper is advised to follow the lead of ChildFund which requires in its Programme Standards (2008, para 12) that the organisation promote the development of sponsored children through correspondence with sponsors on an ongoing basis.
**Recommendation 4 ‘School and Orphanage registered.’ (FG#1)**

ChildHelper’s orphanages and special schools require urgent, professional, external review to ensure sponsorship funds are not being used to inadvertently harm children through well-intentioned though second-rate institutional care. In reviewing the early history of CS funded orphan care programs by Plan International and ChildFund (see section 4) it is evident that similar problems affect ChildHelper, namely ensuring high standards of care, minimising harm and avoiding the long-term institutionalisation of children who have surviving family members. Noting that large CS INGOs such as World Vision, ChildFund and Plan International (see section 4) have moved away from orphan care for complex reasons, at time of writing ChildHelper is undertaking a full review of the orphan care program and has established a capacity building project for special schools. Reviews might consider the need for special schools and orphanages to be formally registered despite the obvious costs, and subject to stringent standards ensuring best practice.

**Recommendation 5 ‘If students can manage, it is not necessary to sponsor them. Get another poor boy.’ (FG#21)**

With permission to add a researcher perspective and take license with this statement (it has been dealt with in Recommendation 1), it seems that ChildHelper can and should respect the principle that CS is best directed at the poorest of poor. Refocussing its sponsorship model might not stop at finding another poor boy, or girl for that matter, but might find and assist very poor and marginalised communities where the sponsorship dollar can benefit family and community members. Incorporating child rights and community development, in partnership with the denomination concerned, justifies pooled funding for
projects in keeping with the community empowerment model of child centred
development utilised by the ChildFund Alliance (ChildFund Alliance 2008, para 1). Importantly, this would require a transition of several years and is a
suggestion informed by western community development ideology rather than
the perspectives of the research participants who almost universally support the
current paradigm yet want it improved.

**Recommendation 6 Consult with and engage beneficiaries.**

The ChildHelper sponsorship program is characterised by a deleterious lack of
consultation with children, their families and communities. As such it presents as
a paternalistic, charity-driven organisation that has not sought to recognise the
dignity and agency of the poor in improving the sponsorship program from
below. Again, ChildHelper would be wise to consult the ChildFund Programme
Standards and consider the merits of ensuring that ‘...the voices of all
stakeholders are taken into account during evaluations, and that these voices
are adequately reflected in reporting and subsequent planning processes.’
ChildFund Alliance, 2008 para 15. Indeed, a significant step forward would be to
develop program standards in consultation with implementing partners.

It is not the purpose of this case study to outline a specific evaluation and
monitoring program for the ChildHelper model of CS and it is noted that as a
consequence of this research and ACFID guidelines, ChildHelper has begun a
formal transition of its CS program. Nevertheless, should the current program
survive in some form over time, it would be advisable to consider efficiency and
effectiveness criteria of evaluation procedures and the application of a
standardized approach throughout India in particular. Of particular interest are possibilities for participatory program evaluation using CS beneficiaries and teachers, longitudinal studies of CS beneficiary success after graduation and more careful tracking of attrition. ChildHelper is advised to further consider collection of evidence which may be used to justify long-term support of children in institutions, and the impact of CS on psychological, cultural, social and spiritual well-being.

As a case study, the use of a mixed methodology research process (individual interviews, focus groups, surveys and document review) has resulted in a provocative, intimate and sometimes distressing attempt to make sense of the ChidHelper CS program in India and Nepal. It would be a grave injustice for the researcher not to point out that the study was commissioned by the NGO out of a commitment to programmatic improvement and a desire to serve the interests of children better. In 2015 ChildHelper staff in Australia are deeply committed to addressing a range of complex issues identified in this thesis and unpacked in separate consultancy reports presented to its project staff. By the time this thesis is submitted for review, some of the commentary will already have become dated due to a gap of four years between fieldwork and publication. Having finished with a review of issues and required improvements, it would be wise to recognise and respect the appreciation of the vast majority of research participants who, despite the complexities, view sponsorship as a positive feature of philanthropic giving. The question for ChildHelper is whether it wishes to deepen its commitment to effective education scholarships for individual children, and how to do so while avoiding past pitfalls, or venture into rights
based community development and capacity building in which case it will need to radically think its philosophy, activities and partnerships. A possible way forward is likely to entail a tightening up and eventual contraction of the current sponsorship program with phase-out of ‘those who can manage’ with a new emphasis on selection of very needy communities where sponsorship funding can be used to address underlying causes of poverty.
Section 7 - Conclusion

7.1 The value of CS: a legitimacy debate

In closing, it seems evident that debate over the merits of CS for fundraising and programming is likely to be ongoing and will essentially involve questions of legitimacy, as is the case for the INGO sector at large. To a degree CS INGOs have, and will continue to construct their own legitimacy, based on perceived benefits of what has become a tried and tested fundraising method, some of the benefits of which are listed in Figure 7a below. Despite such obvious advantages, CS is likely to remain an area of contestation. Harris-Curtis (2003, p. 1) has correctly observed that INGOs in general are increasingly challenged to demonstrate their legitimacy by the media, public, governments and academia. As a prominent sub-set of this larger group, CS INGOs are unlikely to be exempted from additional debate about their role in child welfare provision and poverty reduction. Utilising figurative language to convey the same point Racelis (2007, p. 203) has posited that the ‘halo of saintliness’ around INGOs is under threat, an observation from which CS INGOs are by no means immune. At time of writing, vociferous and enduring critique lingers from the New Internationalist reporting of the 1980s, the Chicago Tribune’s investigative reporting of 1998 (see Section 5) and exposes such as that of Michael Maren (1997). Among INGOs, those involved in CS have experienced especially strong levels of criticism, the echoes of which resonate in many an online discussion, dismissive statements in non-CS INGO FAQs, or debate over the merits of CS as a fundraising tool. Current critique of CS INGOs is much more subdued,
however within the aid industry the perception continues that CS tends to be expensive, donor-driven and of questionable impact.

*Figure 7a*

Source: Watson & Clarke 2014, p. 320

Although further discussion about CS INGOs is likely to be framed within a broader legitimacy debate applicable to all INGOs, it is unlikely that this will provide adequate clarity or the basis for informed discussion. Legitimacy is a slippery and somewhat difficult to define concept, a circumstance alluded to in Section 1. According to Edwards (2000, p. 20) it ‘...is generally understood as the right to be and do something in society – a sense that an organisation is
lawful, admissible and justified in its chosen course of action.’ However, as Collingwood (2006, p. 444) points out, the concept is multi-levelled, implying both agreement with the rules and a perception that the behaviour of the organisation is justified. Thus, ‘To describe any behaviour as legitimate or not thus not only demands knowledge of what the rules are, but also an appreciation of the way in which the behaviour is perceived and judged.’ The trouble for those who claim to know, is that perceptions of legitimacy may vary according to the cultural, professional and legal contexts within which INGOs and their critics operate. Such contexts are influenced by epistemological assumptions.

Clearly, cultural theory may be applied to corporations and INGOs alike (Evans 2007, p. 1) and unpacking culture becomes incredibly important in understanding perceived credibility or otherwise of INGOs operating in international contexts. If culture is the collective programming of the individuals and social groups (including organisations) that allows them to distinguish themselves from others (Hofstede 1981, p. 24) we must assess these constructs with awareness of our own culture, beliefs and values. Reflecting on the organisational culture of a Swiss NGO in Nepal, Schueber (2009, p. 506) describes the complex interplay between underlying Swiss appreciation of democracy, fairness, equality, punctuality, inventive behaviour, egalitarianism, cost efficiency, and a can-do attitude, and Nepali culture characterised by fatalism (linked to Karma), and subordination to leadership (linked to Adesh and the ritual of Chakari). Who we might ask is best positioned to evaluate the legitimacy of a Swiss INGO and its activities in Nepal and how is this impacted by the cultural orientation of the critic?
Perplexingly then, claims and counter-claims of legitimacy are subject to the vagaries of perspective, time and cultural context. While political theorists and sociologists find it difficult to agree over what legitimacy means in domestic contexts, and might especially struggle in terms of welfare provision, as opposed to community development, the concept poses even more difficulty in an international context (Collingwood 2006, pp. 444-445). To some extent this explains why, in the case study presented in Section 6 of this thesis, Indian ChildHelper staff view their model of CS as valuable if not ideal, while international programs staff in Australia view it as somewhat dated and paternalistic. Both views may be defensible in their cultural setting with the former stakeholders preoccupied with the role of CS in welfare provision, school support and individual child development, and the latter increasingly influenced by contemporary development ideology and a child rights agenda congruent with their own notions of legitimacy. In this sense, the western staff of ChildHelper’s funding partner (and the primary researcher) are more like the Swiss in Nepal in terms of their cultural expectations. Arguably, each group utilises different heuristic processes to judge the validity of programs and activities with a divergence evident in simple rules of thumb. Projects staff in Australia for example, call on rules of thumb formed through experience, sure that participatory community development trumps individual support, and that bottom up participation and capacity building would result in more sustainable outcomes.

Inferring a charitable approach, and undoubtedly concerned that some INGOs function superficially as ladles in the global soup kitchen, Fowler (1997, p. 188)
has argued that demonstrating satisfactory levels of achievement is the first step on the legitimacy ladder. However, this raises the issue of who decides what satisfactory is, and what satisfactory involves for particular types of intervention. Relatively little thought is given to how organizational culture and the underlying culture influences one’s understanding of satisfactory - a tension grappled with by the researcher. In the case of ChildHelper, a lack of democratic feedback and the presence of a beneficiary/donor mentality presses the author of this thesis to conclude that it is difficult for sponsored children and their families to bestow legitimacy other than through passive participation as beneficiaries and grateful acceptance (combined with a degree of confusion) of sponsorship’s tangible benefits. Nevertheless, issues of concern raised by participants in Section 6 include of a lack of transparency, corruption, one-sided flow of communication, minimal impact on family or community and potential harm of institutional orphan care which does little to present the CS program in a positive light. Invariably, ChildHelper staff and beneficiaries were preoccupied with how to make the existing program better, while funding partner staff are preoccupied with seeking a new operating paradigm. Caught in debate influenced by conflicting notions of legitimacy, the future of the ChildHelper program will depend on whether a conceptual understanding of legitimacy can be constructed and shared between ChildHelper Australia staff, and its implementing partners, if not beneficiaries. Without this, a strong level of partnership will be unlikely.

Generally speaking the broad, historic criticisms of traditional orphan care described in Section 5 of this thesis may also be ascribed to a shift in the way in which children were valued in society, plus a shift in an professional social work
culture which discredited institutional care and ultimately gave way to a prevailing discourse of empowerment and community development which has been applied to goals of poverty reduction in international contexts. Such criticisms apply well to ChildHelper’s orphan care program, a number of which have been explored in Section 6. It is argued in this thesis that the large-scale institutional orphan care programs funded by CS INGOs in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s acquired tremendous support from the general public because they were firmly rooted in ideals of benevolence, charity, paternalism and sometimes political ideology (doing one’s bit to stop the spread of communism) despite the fact that they represented significant divergence from the intent of the earliest CS program (which was essentially based on targeted child feeding and institutional support as a short term measure for children regardless of the underlying politics). A critical issue for ChildHelper is the need to engage in effective development education with sponsors prior to programmatic change.

That the construction of orphanages fuelled unsustainable ‘orphan rushes’ is recognizable with powers of hindsight, as is the irony that as support for northern orphanages waned, support for southern ones waxed. The bleak view of orphanages that developed among child welfare professionals and academics in western countries assumed that any amount of orphanage experience is harmful and damage to children increased with length of stay. (McCall 1999, pp.129-30). Although the case study reported in this thesis cannot be used to substantively verify this claim, ample evidence was gathered that institutional care for some children is traumatic, harmful and contrary to the expectations of sponsors and ChildHelper’s intent. Of importance for small INGOs like
ChildHelper is the question of whether sustained charity for children in inadequate institutional care is not just harmful to children in care, but ultimately harmful, for disadvantaged communities footing the opportunity costs associated with some forms of sponsorship.

In an INTRAC discussion paper, Pratt (2009, para 2) acknowledges recurring confusion over the use of the term legitimacy however argues that for INGOs legitimacy requires ‘having some form of acceptance by others’ and concedes that this may entail support of a constituency or external validation of the work of the NGO. ChildHelper’s sponsorship of a small number of ‘orphans’ remains a popular fundraising tool however this aspect of its work has not been validated by local or foreign experts, resulting in a dynamic where the legitimacy of the program is constructed by a small number of marketing staff. Packaged emotively for consumption by sponsors in the North, the invitation to sponsor an orphan or orphanage is welcomed by sponsors who, for the most part view the work as a worthy expression of charity in the absence of a meaningful understanding of best practice. Further, in the instance of the case study described in Section 6, it is clear that children, teachers and school principals value ChildHelper’s IICS program as a form of scholarship provision while finding it problematic. This stance is perhaps not incompatible with Pratt’s conclusion that key components of legitimacy are accountability, representativeness and transparency with paternalism functioning as an impediment to each (Pratt, 2009).
No doubt also opposed to paternalism, Lister (2003, p. 3) similarly links legitimacy to perceptions of accountability, representativeness and performance, prioritisation that is undoubtedly affected by the emergence of socially constructed ideals of western organisational culture. Further, as stated above, there is often a gap between the perceptions of legitimacy held by a superficially informed public, or the ideals held by insiders, academics and critics, and the poor themselves. In asking ‘Whose Reality Counts?’ Chambers (1995 p. 173) took exception to the tendency of professionals to impose universal, reductionist and standardized views of poverty which often differed from those of the poor themselves. Interestingly, Chambers explored neglected dimensions of deprivation including vulnerability, powerlessness and humiliation. Similarly, this thesis must ask whose reality counts when assessing the merits of the Child Helper IICS program. To some extent the case study reported in this thesis provides a first attempt to consult with beneficiaries, their families and communities as active agents in their own development. A critical issue for the Child Helper sponsorship program is that both sponsors and beneficiaries seem to lack enough awareness of alternatives to effectively critique the CS program beyond their personal experiences. This undoubtedly is a similar problem for other INGOs committed to bottom-up evaluation and participatory evaluation.

In keeping with a western, managerial interpretation of best practice, judgements about the credibility of CS INGOs would likely factor in organisational culture (presence of upward accountability from beneficiaries), financial prudence, quality of staff, integrity of public communication, engagement in effective development education, level of networking with other
INGOs and recipient status of government funding, as indicators of legitimacy and efficacy. Despite warnings that not all INGOs can, or are able to, or should evolve, there is a perception that those which remain at the welfare end of the welfare and development spectrum (see Section 4) are less legitimate than those that have transitioned. Korten’s ‘Generations of INGO’ may be misused to imply that third and fourth generation NGOs, emphasising upscaling, ‘sustainable systems development’ and strong peoples movements with emphasis on advocacy and rights, are more legitimate and likely to have greater impact (see de Senillosa 1998, pp. 2-3 for broader discussion). Small CS INGOs are unlikely to have the capacity to evolve in this manner however they can engage with INGOs that have and they most certainly can engage better with their beneficiaries and partners so their reality counts! It is notable that the case study contracted by the Australian funding partner for ChildHelper, and reported on in this thesis, has confirmed for staff that evolution is possible, desirable and defensible in terms of best practice. At time of writing ChildHelper is addressing a number of the issues raised by beneficiaries and while it is likely that IICS will continue based solely on individual student scholarships, a transitional approach will experiment with both innovation in the orphan care program and direction of CS generated funds into a smaller geographic area where community development and a rights based approach is emphasised.

A feature of this thesis has been its attempt to debunk various claims about the founding of CS in the 1930s and 1940s, and instead trace it to 1919 in post World War One Europe. It is hoped that confusion over its apparent emergence in the 1930s may be laid to rest. Remarkably, historic debate over the value of
CS originated in the 1920s, when CS emerged as charitable giving practice rooted in western Christianity (Watson 2014a, pp. 20-21). It is argued here that at this time, INGOs were largely excused from a legitimacy debate informed by principles of community development and poverty reduction, and instead, S.C.F. programs were informed by emerging ideas and practices surrounding child welfare. Early debate over its activities emerged soon after use of CS by S.C.F. and the Society of Friends in Austria at a time when the neutrality and innocence of children was not universally recognised and universal child rights had yet to be formalised. The fact that sponsorship benefited those less poor children excluded from aid by the ARA may be seen in a positive light though in more recent times this would be viewed with concern given the emergence of practice focussing on the poorest of children.

Although at that time public critique emphasised the melodramatic nature of S.C.F. appeals, and S.C.F.’s early reluctance to assist disadvantaged children in England, other issues were to emerge. Eglantyne Jebb herself insisted that CS was to be temporary, so as to avoid long-term dependence of beneficiaries. In this sense the CS program of ChildHelper is quite different and room for development of dependency is much greater. The aim was to ‘(1) ...tide the younger children, who were not provided for under the American scheme, through this period, and (2) to help to put the local children’s institutions on their feet again...’ (Jebb 1922, p. 20). It therefore appears that even in its early years, key thinkers were cognizant of the potential for long-term support of children and institutions through CS to create a degree of undesirable dependency, a finding mirrored in the case study. Claim’s of S.C.F. staff to legitimacy emphasized the
experimental nature of its work, the provision of aid irrespective of nationality or religion, its links to the emergent field of child welfare, and its support for what it claimed were scientific practices in provision of aid. In providing long term school scholarships in its IICS program (sometimes for as many as 15 years), ChildHelper’s model is fundamentally different to the one pioneered by S.C.F. and is relatively naïve regarding the long-running dependency debate.

While much of the public debate over S.C.F. interventions in the early 1920s is lost, it is evident that from its early days S.C.F. enjoyed rapid growth associated with a concerted effort to construct its child-welfare work as legitimate, life-changing and pioneering. In support of their claims to legitimacy, Quaker staff were insistent that a fine piece of work had been accomplished by S.C.F. during the early 1920s in helping individual children in their homes rather than in an institutional setting. In their opinion such a method of care, funded by CS, often proved to be ‘...a more satisfactory way of helping them- especially the younger ones- than by taking them out of their own surroundings’ (Houghton 1922b, p. 4). The restrained critique of institutional care inferred above would eventually be acknowledged by large CS orphan care providers such as World Vision, Plan International and Childfund resulting a move away from the support of institutional orphan care over time. It remains to be seen whether Child Helper can reform those institutions it has birthed and funded, or whether it too will conclude eventually that its efforts are best directed elsewhere.

The emergence of domestic child sponsorship for disadvantaged children in England in the 1920s (for example S.C.F. benevolence evident in providing food
rations and holidays to sponsored, disabled children or family members in England) may be seen as an effort to defend S.C.F.’s legitimacy as a social welfare provider in the UK and ward off criticism that S.C.F. there was not helping its own. In terms of its legitimacy, it seems the issue was not so much the method but the geographic location of beneficiaries and its targeting. School feeding programs had, after all, been initiated in 1906 welfare reforms in the UK (Drake et al. 2012, p. 3) with one free meal available to all UK children from 1944. This may be seen as congruent with the overarching child welfare emphasis of the era. Accordingly, those children helped were to be worthy of protection or care. Similar emphasis on individual child welfare legitimised the school feeding programs funded by the ARA throughout post World War One Europe and school based feeding programs funded by the American Save the Children’s early work in the 1930s American Appalachian region. We might note that school feeding programs remain popular in the 21st Century and in the case of America may be traced to the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935 which enabled government distribution of surplus meat, dairy products, and wheat to needy families and schools, the National School Lunch Program of 1946 and the Child Nutrition Act (CNA) of 1966 which recognized a ‘demonstrated relationship between food, good nutrition and children’s learning ability (Pollitt et al. 1978).

A central question for this thesis has been how is it that what was so popular in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (the collective idea of CS) could be so embattled by the 1990s? The key to understanding the nature of debate over CS, is realizing that while a number of large CS INGOs persisted with IICS and IFCS in the 1970s and 1980s (evident in orphan care, payments to families, and family
helper programs), or began to transition slowly without adequately communicating this to sponsors, community development and poverty reduction ideology increasingly transcended and repudiated a handout approach as the primary means of addressing child welfare and child poverty in the global south. Evidence of this shift may be seen in the evolution of some INGOs such as Plan International which between 1937 and 1983 was involved in a ‘…transition from child welfare to child, family, and community development …’ (Molumphy 1984, p. 302). Though the early trend to empowering communities has been traced to the work of social reformers in industrializing countries in the late 19th century, transmission to developing countries in the post-colonial era is best seen in the UN’s 1948 definition which asserts that it is a process designed to ‘…create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community’s initiative’ (Head 1979, p. 101). Where a child welfare model of charity could justifiably emphasize the individual rescue and care of children, a community development approach demanded, among other interventions, broader service provision, economic empowerment, agricultural activities, primary health care, and non-formal education, all in the context of high levels of community participation and ownership, as pathways out of poverty. A feature of the case study is that the CS program continues to provide school subsidies in the absence of systematic attempts to engage in community development. This leaves ChildHelper on the margins of legitimacy within the Australian aid sector, but still within its bounds for many sponsors and beneficiaries who have yet to be swayed by INGOs involved in effective development education.
An emerging emphasis on rights-based programming in the 1990s would further shift INGOs away from a role as dispensers of charity and as sources of direct service provision, although in states where government is dysfunctional there remains a key role for INGOs to provide services. To some extent engagement in advocacy is the new benchmark of legitimacy, especially where the capacity of the poor to advocate for themselves is upheld. However, it is a truism that from the 1970s the mantra of poverty reduction trumped that of individual child and family welfare insofar as community development leading to poverty reduction increasingly came to be seen as the only truly sustainable and realistic means of improving a child’s life. In short, the discourse of community development and poverty reduction acquired legitimacy in the aid industry and within western academia while discourses of charity, child welfare and individual child-saving were questioned, in the international context at least, as legacies of western paternalism. Bound by sponsors’ expectations of individual benefits of children, CS INGOs found themselves criticized especially when they did neither well. It should be said that this is essentially an insider or academic view of the aid industry. Arguably, the general public has remained largely oblivious to the ideological disputes over efficacy but more likely to be roused by arguments of cost-inefficiency, deceitful communication and unfair gift giving.

The ways INGOs have represented poverty and the apparently poor have become an important benchmark of legitimacy as credible international actors. To what extent, we must ask, do CS INGOs perpetuate myth-making and hinder global citizenship education? A common feature of CS INGO claims to legitimacy throughout the 20th Century has been the way they have, and
continue to seek to uphold their activities through carefully constructed and widely accepted discourses of child saving. ChildHelper is certainly involved in a similar process. Manzo (2008, p. 632) has argued that the iconography of childhood utilised by such organisations expresses institutional ideals and key humanitarian values of solidarity, impartiality, neutrality and humanity. Evidently, CS INGOs have both propagated and thrived on this potent mix of ideals, staking their legitimacy on notions of ‘child saving’ and ‘child rescue’ which are, to a large extent, justified by the western casting of children into important roles, as symbols of innocence, world harmony, seers of truth and embodiments of a better future (Bornstein 2003, p. 7). While alignment with the needs of children bestows legitimacy on CS INGOs, it is speculated here that this is superficial without rigorous assessment of impact. Such studies are, for CS INGOs, rarely funded and in this sense the staff of ChildHelper are to be commended for their integrity in allowing external scrutiny of their CS Model evidenced in this thesis. For the researcher, future claims to legitimacy should rest on what is done with the research findings.

Returning for a moment to the issue of alignment, the portrayal of the universal innocence and neutrality of children is widely recognised as a positive feature of 20th century charity and has been especially well received by Christians in the Global North for whom the act of sponsorship can be important, enabling them to, ‘find a way to actively enact their faith…’ (Yuen 2008, p. 46) Of course, the need to do good, be seen to be doing good and to affirm one’s own sense of moral virtue is not limited to those of religious persuasion and so we might also argue that CS provides a vehicle for a broad cross-section of society to
participate in the socially accepted task of child-saving. This may in turn be linked to important epistemological questions. Unfortunately, the intersect between marketing strategy and development education remains an area of strife. Referring to the enormously profitable advertising campaigns of the 1980s, The Save the Children UK website (2012) acknowledges that coverage of famines in the 1980s ‘...perpetuated negative and destructive stereotypes of people in developing countries, who were seen as dependent and helpless.’ Although this observation cannot be read as admission of guilt, it is loosely applicable to CS INGO advertising past and present and represents a feature of CS marketing evident since the early 1920s. There can be little doubt that the repetitive use of images of malnourished, unclothed or shabbily dressed, sad and decontextualized children by some CS INGOs was a damaging message (Coulter 1989, p. 2) that did much to stereotype the ‘other’ (Manzo, 2008) while ignoring Northern complicity in creating inequality (Plewes & Stewart 2007, p. 24) To a large extent the ChildHelper case study reveals an ongoing tendency of smaller CS INGOs to decontextualize children and absolve sponsors from any real understanding of the underlying causes of poverty. For the most part, children in the ChildHelper program are unable to engage in a mutually beneficial exchange which counters this.

Given the shifting perception of legitimacy surrounding INGOs, within academia and the aid industry, it is not surprising that some large CS INGOs in the 1990s found themselves embroiled in very public and very damaging claims that they were both less effective and less honest than often claimed in advertising which positioned CS as a magic bullet for child welfare and poverty reduction. With
powers of hindsight, it can be said that they were fast to claim and propagate a superficial definition of legitimacy out of step with emergent ideals of best practice. In this context Maren’s (1997, pp. 144-47) claims that less than 50% of the Save the Children sponsorship dollar went to field programs, despite claims otherwise, was damning, as was the 1993 Human Development Report’s (UNDP, p. 89) comment that CS INGOs ‘have to spend much of their time collecting copious quantities of personal information about the sponsored children and employ large teams of ‘social workers’ for this.’ The former accused Save the Children of deceit and poor financial stewardship, while the latter implied a high administrative burden and overly expensive method of intervention.

Unfortunately, the perception that large CS INGOs are still less effective and less than honest is misguided. Key CS INGOs such as Save the Children, Plan International, ChildFund and ActionAid, are thinking, learning organisations committed to improvement as evidenced in their transition to CDCS and RBCS. Arguably, these large CS INGOs have transitioned from what Edwards, Hulme and Wallace (1999, p. 15) refers to as a mindset of aid for individual welfare, to development as delivery and beyond to development as leverage. As such, their use of CS funds may be leveraged to experiment with programming for innovation despite the uncomfortable tensions surrounding donor education, donor expectations, and ongoing effectiveness of one-to-one linkages. This sort of experimentation may be seen in Save the Children’s Literacy Boost project which pools sponsorship funding for assessment, teacher training and community action (Dowd et al. 2014, pp. 106-107). Relatively small CS INGOs
like ChildHelper can make such a transition (see Sell & Wever’s 2014 account of the transition of BWWA) however doing so will be difficult and is likely to be constrained by local perceptions of legitimacy.

In keeping with Fowler’s ‘onion-ring’ strategy for INGOs (Fowler 2002, p. 22) it seems clear that some large CS INGOs such as World Vision, do have a credible ‘core’ of projects and successive ‘skins’ or ‘layers’ of important activity. These layers increasingly include research, evaluation, advocacy and development education, with a commitment to human rights and structural reform, difficult though this may be. Plan International for example envisages a theory of change model in which ‘Capacity changes of young people and duty bearers are expected to trigger citizenship changes whereby young people become aware of their power and use this to effectively participate in decision-making processes’ (Williams & Kantelberg 2011, p. 2). To what extent Plan International’s theory of change plays out in reality is beyond the scope of this thesis - the point to be made simply is that it and several others have moved well beyond a handout mentality for individuals.

7.2 The future of CS - principles and recommendations

Arguably, the ongoing, fragmented and often unproductive debate over the merits of CS at the intervention level has been constrained by lack of awareness of the evolving nature of CS programs over time and the lack of a typology of CS-funded activity presented in its historical context. As stated in Section 2 of this thesis, current detractors of CS rarely stop to consider that CS activity may loosely be categorised as involving support to individual children, often in an
institutional setting such as an orphanage or school (IICS), support to individual children and their immediate families (IFCS), support for community development activity (CDCS) to the benefit of individually identified children and non-sponsored peers, and support for a range of relatively recent activities and programs increasingly linked to, and planned in relation to child rights (RBCS).

Noting that few INGOs completely abandon their old ways, and rarely change rapidly, this thesis speculates that the majority of small CS INGOs (notably those that sponsor less than 1,000 children) will continue to offer forms of IICS because they lack economies of scale and qualified staff to do otherwise, while large and very large ones continue to evolve towards CDCS and RBCS. In short, diversity in the sector is likely to remain a feature. Taking a pragmatic approach, the legitimacy of actors within this typology is best decided by expert review of their marketing, programs, staffing and commitment to best practice within their area of presumed expertise. For example, in the case study presented in this thesis, supposing that the sponsorship program remained as a form of scholarship provision to disadvantaged children, legitimacy might be demonstrated through careful selection processes of the most needy, relatively gifted children, placement of children in schools where sponsorship catalyses academic development, careful engagement with institutional care benchmarked against local and international standards of best practice, inclusion of children and beneficiaries in program improvement, transparency and excellent beneficiary support using a casework approach in a defined geographic area. Combined with effective evaluation and longitudinal studies of beneficiaries, one might cautiously conclude that such a program has merit as a child welfare
intervention, without presuming to impact the broader community or reduce poverty in a wider sense. Likewise, a CS INGO using CS to fund orphan care might be assessed not just for the quality of care offered, but for the extent to which it works carefully with government agency, its willingness to reunify children with family or place them in alternative care, and commitment to best practice by avoiding dormitory accommodation, by enabling freedom of religious association and by maintaining family connectivity. Clearly, the time has come to evaluate CS programs in the context of a typology.

Additionally, it is necessary to bear in mind that the recruitment of children into CS programs and their ‘offering’ to sponsors now varies from attempts to identify and recruit neediest children, to selection of children as child ambassadors best able to represent their communities or to selection of a representative child with little pretence of a one-to-one bond between sponsor and child. Informed debate over the legitimacy of CS INGOs, and evaluation of their activities, must recognise that there is considerable diversity in the sector with broad preference of smaller INGOs for IICS. Among CS INGOs in each type, there are likely to be some with greater or lesser efficacy and credibility. Critical debate may well emphasise the relative merits of community development and rights based initiatives over individual support of children in institutions, however it should also recognise best practice within categories of CS-funded activity.

This thesis will now be concluded with 10 broad principles that the author considers key to the broader debate over legitimacy of CS INGOs. In making these recommendations it is evident that the author is strongly influenced by
ideals of community development, community empowerment and a number of features of management practice that are culturally biased. As such, the author recognises that he is a product of a Western education system and liberal democracy that heavily favours a discourse of development.

**Principle 1: Recognize Child Sponsorship as a fundraising tool linked to diverse programming strategies.**

Child sponsorship is a fundraising strategy almost 100 years old. The enduring success of linking an identifiable child to a concerned patron is rooted in Western religion, synergistic with the charitable ideals of many world religions and is now an important part of the culture of charitable giving in the Global North. It is, arguably, aligned closely with the paternal and maternal instincts of adults in a variety of cultural settings. However, discussion about CS must account for at least four main types of programming spanning individual child sponsorship to family helper programs, and beyond to community development and child rights. To this may be added the original model which provided food aid to individual children over short periods of time. The legitimacy debate over CS INGOs should benchmark performance within the typology as well as provision a broader debate over whether there is still room for welfare oriented CS given the dominant discourse of community development, rights and advocacy.

**Principle 2: Educate while recruiting and nurturing Donors/Sponsors**

CS INGOs must be transparent and open in describing the type of CS they fund, its merits and potential weaknesses. For CS INGOs that continue to emphasize individual and family welfare, there is a responsibility to do this well, avoiding
pitfalls of paternalism and dependency as much as possible. For those involved in community development, there should be a responsibility to engage in effective development education in which INGOs decouple knowledge transfer of development from further fundraising appeals and encourage donors to ‘consider larger issues of inequity, power imbalances, national security, et cetera’ (Clarke & Watson 2014, p. 326). In all cases, effective education requires avoidance of simplistic narratives and frank acknowledgement that poverty is pervasive, difficult to overcome, and that good interventions are invariably costly. A reprehensible aspect of INGO fundraising is ongoing focus on cost efficiency, in the absence of discussion about effectiveness.

**Principle 3: Position children as active agents in their own development**

As stated above, there are a number of distinct approaches to programming premised upon CS fundraising activity. However, most CS INGOs still present a child as the focal point of concern, and require construction of a semblance of a relationship between sponsor and beneficiary. While this works well for many sponsors, who at least require a veneer of relationship and appreciation, children who are required to communicate with them may find themselves powerless in regards to their knowledge of the sponsor and desire for more information to help them rationalize and understand the significant relationship they are seconded into.

The case study reported in this thesis suggests that while mutual communication may be beneficial to sponsors and sponsored children alike, if coerced or one-sided it may result in confusion, distress and sometimes apathy for children.
Respect for primary beneficiaries will therefore reposition children as rights holders who are entitled to know the conditions of their sponsorship, acquire details about their sponsors (if they even have one or just imagine this to be so) and exercise choice in the nature of their communication. CS INGOs should avoid promoting the appearance of mutually beneficial communication and relationships if this is clearly not an emphasis of their CS model. To knowingly marginalize children in a relationship is fundamentally subversive, abusive, and thus hypocritical for those who claim to be engaged in child-saving.

**Principle 4: Image children in context**

Historic critique has focused on the representation of children by CS INGOs as helpless, passive, needy recipients of aid in a decontextualized or stereo-typical environment. It remains a common practice to present the child in isolation from their family, their community or without regard for their own agency. In recent years there has been a shift in leading CS INGOs to using positive images of smiling children as a reaction against stereotypes of the past. Rarely however, are children pictured with family members and community assets. This gives rise to the suggestion that if blatant paternalism is to be avoided, ‘Organisations utilizing the CS model ought to recognize this familial and community connection through including families and communities in their images and place children in these social settings to limit sponsors inclinations of sole responsibility’ (Clarke & Watson 2014, p. 327)
**Principle 5: Clearly explain the true costs**

The length of financial support provided by individual donors to CS INGOs is often quite significant and provides a predictable, reliable income stream. However, even where they are interested, sponsors often find it difficult to find a description of the true costs of administration with corresponding evidence of impact. They therefore lack informed choice. CS INGOs collectively confuse advocacy with marketing costs, and the perception remains that CS requires heavy administration overheads, adding to the cost of delivery or programs. The true cost of personalized communication about individuals is rarely disclosed to sponsors, some of whom, it is speculated, would likely choose alternatives including fundraising schemes that do not carry such administrative costs. Providing sponsors with informed choice can be key to developing in them awareness of alternatives and sometimes more cost-efficient interventions.

**Principle 6: Highlight the agency of beneficiaries**

As a form of terminology ‘beneficiary’ is undesirable because of its potential to reinforce paternalism however it is functional in the context of western philanthropy, charity, and prevailing ideas of giving and receiving. The dependency of a child on a concerned adult is the hallmark trait of the historic use of CS however derived notions of dependency can and do lead sponsors to view children (and their community) as helpless, hopeless and lacking agency. Organisations utilizing the CS model can explicitly promote the equality of both child and sponsor and promote sponsorship as a mutually beneficial experience in which the Global South and the Global North can teach and enrich each other.
Central to this argument is the guiding principle that the dignity of the child be maintained at all times. This means that images of the child used for marketing and public communications purposes avoid representing the child as dependent, helpless or hopeless or at least balance this with the reality of circumstances where all is not so apparently hopeless. At risk of turning away some sponsors, the needs, aspirations, strengths and capacities of the child and their families and communities should be identified and celebrated. CS INGOs pooling funding for community development activities should be especially cautious of selling sponsorship as individual charity to needy cases, when in reality they work respectfully with communities to dignify their strengths.

**Principle 7: Select beneficiaries ethically**

CS INGOs typically communicate to sponsors that the neediest of children have been chosen. However it is apparent that the neediest children are often least suited to function as ambassadors for their community, as effective communicators with sponsors and as agents in community development. It is proposed therefore that CS INGOs engaging in child welfare activities select individuals based on need and likelihood of benefiting from program activity. However, for INGOs utilizing community development or rights based development, a strong case is made for selection of children, as a negotiated process with the local community, not based on their need, but on their ability to function as ambassadors and change agents within their communities. Such selection criteria should always be explained carefully to donors and communities.
Where possible, ethical CS will endeavor to empower the community to make the selection of children for CS in consultation with INGO staff. In most cases, the needs of children and their families are best understood by communities themselves and the empowerment of communities necessitates, wherever possible, that children should be carefully selected by members of their own community, regardless of whether they are direct beneficiaries or representative beneficiaries.

**Principle 8: Align CS with current best practice**

Remaining cognizant of the differing models of CS, it is important that organisations utilizing CS implement their programs in alignment with current ideals of best practice. As discussed earlier in this chapter, legitimacy is socially constructed and as such is fraught with difficulty where INGOs seek approval from different stakeholder groups. Legitimacy however may best be bestowed from interaction between a variety of commentators and constituents, with the expectations of beneficiaries mediated by those of practitioners and experts who have a grasp of the alternatives. For those engaged in community development and rights based initiatives, it is essential that programs be identified, designed, and implemented through community-led participatory practices, that gender analysis is central to these determinations, and that outcomes are sustainable.

**Principle 9: Integration of evaluation and research to inform practice.**

High quality monitoring and evaluation of CS programs, with subsequent dissemination of learnings to sponsors, is not common place in CS INGOs due to fear that negative publicity will compromise the legitimacy of their activity.
Quality research within a typology of CS INGOs is particularly lacking. Consequentially, a large number of small and medium sized CS INGOs operate with little oversight, sectoral collaboration and without the benefit of quality learning for what are often mutually shared activities. Noting the case study in this thesis, where ChildHelper activities carried on in isolation from other INGOs for over thirty years, it is deeply important that the lessons learned around successes and failures be more widely shared to improve practice across all these organisations. Above all, in constructing their public perception of legitimacy, CS INGOs should position themselves as learning organisations whose credibility is measured by willingness to adapt, change and respond.

**Principle 10: Ensure good governance**

Historically, some CS INGOs have been marginalized and defensive due to critique arising from a relatively slow or troublesome shift from welfare to community development ideology. Misuse of CS for both fundraising and programs may also be partially attributable to their rapid growth, the perceived supremacy of the needs of sponsors, and the governance structures of INGOs. As large CS INGOs have prospered, it has become increasingly common to appoint senior managers without experience in the development or humanitarian aid sector, and boards of directors who are troublingly unschooled in the history of poverty and development studies in international contexts. Further, many boards lack a member from the constituency of beneficiaries the organization seeks to represent and help.
Ensuring that management boards have at least one expert positioned to counter the narrow imperatives of senior staff who are fixated on growth or donor relations, with concurrent peer review of programs, would be invaluable for both large and smaller organisations. Further, though it is probably overly ambitious to expect competing organisations to collaborate, building in a peer review process for INGOs might be a helpful way of reducing the siloing so evident in the sector. While helpful, codes of conduct are not in themselves adequate to ensure the levels of accountability and transparency required. The fact that CS INGOs rarely use the same basic method of constructing annual reports is especially confusing.

7.3 Personal reflections

The first steps taken in this thesis actually began in 1995 when, freshly returned from a year’s work in West Africa, I sponsored a boy in Mali with Plan International. I was 22, studying, and I allowed the sponsorship to lapse after just 12 months. I still wonder what became of Issa, the dark skinned, dignified child whom I can still picture so clearly and whose lapsed sponsorship I regretted intermittently for so long. Various sponsorships continued over the years, resulting in a number of unanswered questions primarily relating to the critique that those who sponsor children may do more harm than good. In 2011 and 2012 I was able to visit two of my sponsored children in India. I first met Bala in 2003, at an orphanage, and after 11 years of sponsorship still find myself subsidizing his studies. He is achieving A’s in a business course at an Indian higher education provider so he can fulfil his lifelong desire to become a hotel manager and build a new home for his mother. Discomforted by a trip to his
village near Hyderabad, and news that her ageing mud home collapsed in heavy rain, I continue to wish that the sponsorship program he is part of could somehow help her, and other very poor children in the community. I would very much like to see her family develop the capacity to repair her home, a goal well beyond my role as a distant benefactor. Strangely, she is satisfied that her son is becoming an educated man. For his part, Bala emails me infrequently and occasionally I have interceded on his behalf when circumstances at his orphanage demanded it. Curiously, proposal of a typology of CS activity has allowed me to make peace with myself as both a proponent of community development and an uncomfortable scholarship provider for a poor but gifted student from a disadvantaged family. The high costs, misleading marketing, dubious gift giving, jealousy provoking cash transfers and unethical practice documented in Section 5 do not seem to apply to the program he is enrolled in. As a disadvantaged but gifted student, my sponsorship dollar may be justified - but only, I assure myself, as a form scholarship.

Namlen I met in Jharkhand state, at a remote school in a heavily forested area. She washed my feet and avoided eye-contact as is the tradition in her tribal culture. She, I am told, is a ‘silent girl’ and I do not know, and seem unable to decide whether my sponsorship will be to her ultimate benefit or to that of her family. Both write to me and I to them. Bala’s correspondence is direct and uncensored, bypassing the NGO staff via email. Namlen’s letters I am sure, are formal, predictable and likely dictated by a teacher, much to my dismay. Both discomfort me though each assure me that my family is making a difference - to
them at least. Perhaps that’s why one of them prefaces each letter with ‘Dear Dad’ and finishes it with ‘your loving…’

Herein lies an unexplored aspect of CS, notably, the sometimes complex motivations, experiences and questions of sponsors, dealt with partially by Francis Rabbitts (2014) and routinely ignored by commentators on CS. For me at least, sponsorship is unsettling, perhaps evidenced better in my disregard for another boy in India I sponsored, whose school I visited without even stopping to consider that he was there! He has since dropped out of school after struggling to succeed academically, however as a consequence of my interest in sponsorship and this thesis I will undoubtedly be promoted, gain better pay, become more published, and aspire to climb the academic ladder. And so, before concluding I would like to acknowledge the complexity of my own journey and formally thank the many children, teachers, principals, church administrators and the NGO staff who embraced my research. I hope that their voices shine through in the case study and that this thesis provides in some way a platform for a better and more nuanced discussion of a phenomenon that continues to affect millions of children.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

Arguing that the CS sector has grown rapidly despite widespread critique, and that large CS INGOs in particular have evolved considerably, this thesis (and the author’s book Child Sponsorship: Exploring Pathways to a Brighter Future) has sought to revisit a variety of issues surrounding CS and lay the foundations for a more nuanced and informed discussion of a phenomenon in the aid sector that
has received relatively little academic scrutiny. To do so, it has sought to
describe CS as an important niche feature of the aid industry, identify a paucity
of literature on the activities of CS INGOs, locate the origins of the phenomenon
in the post 1919 work of S.C.F. and the Society of Friends and highlight early
tensions in formative CS programs. It has proposed a typology of CS-funded
intervention, accounted for the emergence of critique of CS in the 1970s through
the 1990s, and explored a case study of a current IICS program. In regards the
case study, it has argued that although there is significant evidence that
ChildHelper does positively impact children, and the school system within which
they are schooled, there is considerable scope for improvement and transition.
Having completed these tasks, it is appropriate to have positioned CS within a
broader legitimacy debate and to have provided an overview of key issues and
recommendations likely to the impact CS practice into the future. It is hoped that
this thesis and the book Child Sponsorship: Exploring Pathways to a Brighter
Future, will enhance the quality of debate of what is arguably one of the most
controversial fundraising devices in the aid industry.
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