

Labour of love



BY Amy Fallon

WHEN WE THINK of an “orphan” we think of someone who has no family.

But many children around the world who have been abandoned do have a surviving parent or other family.

In several countries – from Afghanistan to Bolivia to Sri Lanka – at least 80 per cent of orphans have a mother or a father, the Better Care Network has found.

The network supports kids who have no proper family care, but it doesn't put them into orphanages because research has shown that being in an institution for a long time is bad for children.

'ORPHANAGE TOURISM'

Yet many kids around the world spend their childhood in care homes or are adopted by foreigners who don't know there are mums or dads or aunties or grandparents desperate to be reunited with the children.

Another problem is when international volunteers visit orphanages to try to help, because the children can end up confused and upset.

The West Australian senator Linda Reynolds recently warned parents and schools about the

dangerous impact of “orphanage tourism” in Cambodia.

Nearly 12,000 children live in homes in the south-east Asian country, but about 72 per cent have at least one living parent, says UNICEF, which is the United Nations' children's organisation.

In Uganda, in east Africa, about 2.4 million children are said to be orphans, but many do have family. And now charities are working to reunite them.

'WHERE WE BELONG'

When 'Lidia's' parents separated in 2013 her mother found it hard to look after her.

Kids Club Kampala found 'Lidia', who was 13, living in a slum and working as a maid. It took her to its "Ewafe" home. ("Ewafe" in the Luganda language means "where we belong".)

"Life wasn't easy," says 'Lidia'. "Getting food and sleeping was hard. I was missing my family."

She stayed in the Ewafe for a year while the Kids Club found her mum and eventually the two were reunited.

Today 'Lidia' is back at school thanks to Kids Club, which is paying her school fees. "I want to be a nurse," she says.

As well as reuniting biological families, Uganda is also successfully promoting adoption, which was once considered taboo.

Ugandans Adopt, a government program, has placed 62 children with local families since 2013.

A new law in Uganda makes international adoption a last resort for children and allows it only if there are no family or locals who can look after them.

Above, 'Lidia' (left) reunited with her family. PHOTO Supplied

Right, stories like these feature every week in newspapers such as New Vision in Uganda



Paris floods: museums close to save art

BY Fran Blandy, Isabel Malsang

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



PARIS'S famous Louvre and Orsay museums shut their doors in a race to move art treasures from their basements as the River Seine neared its highest level in more than three decades on Thursday.

At least 17 people died in floods in parts of Europe after days of pounding rain, trapping people in their homes and forcing rescuers to row lifeboats down streets turned into rivers.

Parisians were urged to stay away from the Seine, which spilled over its banks in places.

The French President, Francois Hollande, made a late night visit to the Louvre, where dozens of volunteers worked through the night to save some of the 38,000 artworks thought to be at risk.

Firefighters warned people to keep away from dangerous parts of the river, but crowds still gathered on the famous Pont du Carrousel bridge to watch the swirling waters.

"It is a reminder that nature is more powerful than man and we cannot do anything, only wait,"



The Pont de l'Alma in Paris. This bridge across the Seine and the statue of the soldier, the Zouave, on the river provides an indication of flooding: when the water touches his feet flood precautions are taken. PHOTO AFP

said Gabriel Riboulet, 26, as he pulled his bicycle over to take a picture.

DEADLY WATERS

Eleven people were killed in the German states of Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg, and two in Romania, and a beekeeper died in Belgium while trying to save his hives.

In France, a man on horseback drowned on Thursday after being swept away by a swollen river in Evry-Gregy-sur-Yerre, south-east of Paris.

Officials put up emergency flood barriers along the Seine in the capital, where several train stations were closed, and workers piled sandbags on platform entrances.

Boat traffic was banned, and a regional train line that runs along the Seine has been suspended.

IN PICTURES

Every picture tells a story

This is the second instalment in Australian photo-journalist Dallas Kilponen's postcard series from Europe. Each week Crinkling News will bring you an image from his travels.



This is the Chateau Chillon dating back to the year 1150 on Lake Geneva at Montreux, Switzerland.