Selling Child Sponsorship: The Communication and Representation Practices of Plan International

Steven Slade
Abstract

Child sponsorship has long been a contentious topic since its inception and subsequent mainstay as one of the key models in development for acquiring funds. As a tool for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), it is a popular and therefore competitive practice that requires able communications that simultaneously can promote sponsorship and maintain the ethical ideals of the organisation. The aim of this paper is to develop further understanding and increased knowledge of how Plan International, a prominent NGO and a proponent of the practice, present and communicate child sponsorship. Within the confines of a case study, the paper sets out to establish the methods, purposes and considerations that Plan International have when they communicate and market child sponsorship, one of their primary ways of accruing funds and thus mobilising action. Drawing on a triangulation of collected empirical data, and under a defined theoretical framework that advocates a post-humanitarianism approach, this thesis makes tentative conclusions that whilst Plan International are making strides to modernise their child sponsorship approach they are at the same time encountering continued challenges of representation, framing and strategizing their message.

Keywords: Child sponsorship, communication, representation, Plan International, humanitarian communication, post-humanitarianism
# CONTENTS

1 Introduction

1.1 Introducing the Topic ............................................................... 5

1.2 Research Problem .................................................................. 7

1.3 Research Objectives ............................................................... 8

1.4 Research Question ................................................................ 9

1.5 Chapter Outline ................................................................. 9

2 Literature Review and Conceptual Framework: The Communication and Representation within Child Sponsorship ................................................................. 10

2.1 Review of the Literature ........................................................... 10

2.2 Historical Overview ............................................................... 10

2.3 Representation ....................................................................... 13

2.4 Tensions within Communicating Development ........................ 15

2.5 Humanitarian Communication ............................................. 17

3 The Case of Plan International ................................................... 20

3.1 Origin and Vision .................................................................. 20

3.2 The Approach ....................................................................... 21

3.3 Structure and Financing ....................................................... 22

4 Methodology and methods ..................................................... 24

4.1 Theoretical Framework .......................................................... 24

4.2 Research Philosophy ............................................................ 24

4.3 Case Study ........................................................................... 25

4.4 Data Collection ..................................................................... 26

4.4.1 Interviewing ....................................................................... 26

4.4.2 Document Analysis .......................................................... 28

4.4.3 Video Analysis ................................................................. 29

4.5 Ethical Considerations .......................................................... 31

5 Analysis ................................................................................... 32

5.1 Strategy for Analysis .............................................................. 32

5.2 ‘We know that looking right into the camera helps’: The Presentation and Representation of Children at Plan International ......................................................... 32

5.3 Framing: An Audience to Persuade ........................................ 35

5.4 The Message: A World with or Without Plan? ....................... 37

5.5 A Strategic Plan ................................................................. 39

6 Conclusion ............................................................................... 41
6.1 Addressing the Research Question ................................................................. 41
6.2 Limitations, Reflections and Future Research.............................................. 44
References ............................................................................................................. 46
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

The plurality of actors working in the vast industry of development reaches across a broad spectrum that includes governments, supranational agencies and aid organisations. For all the super-rich donors, the corporate philanthropists and the celebrities invited to speak at the United Nations, there are a thousand times more aid professionals, emergency relief workers and people who simply donate a small part of their salary each month that contribute to this, perhaps aptly named, ‘industry’. It is one which is awash with billions of dollars each year and whilst the aims and causes may differ, it is, in academic terms, all gathered under the umbrella-term ‘development’. The means of acquiring the funding which can promote a cause or to advance a specific purpose are multifaceted and multifarious and are of decisive importance to the work of development agencies.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) comprise a central and vital sphere within the industry of development. Although the term ‘NGO’ is in itself one of ambiguity to a large degree (Martens, 2002), it is one we define as a non-profit organisation that is independent from the government and state. NGOs exist by the million and serve a vast array of purposes of which many relate to Development (with a capital D). One characteristic which defines them all is the need for funding in order to work towards their goals. This is, to an extent, where the label ‘industry’ really applies – the competition for developmental funding is complex and conflated as it involves such a multitude of similarly ideologically led organisations competing for what is, pragmatically, a limited and finite amount of money. Many NGOs rely on a large amount of small donations to operate rather than a small amount of large donations and, despite the importance of larger donations – such as governmental, foundation-based and philanthropic – the topic of this paper concerns these significant and sought after smaller and individual donations.

One of the primary and best known ways that NGOs working within the field of development go about acquiring funding is through child sponsorship. Child
Sponsorship is a type of fundraising in which an organisation associates a donor-sponsor with either a particular child beneficiary or with a particular community of which the specified child is a part of. The sponsor usually donates a specific sum every month and receives updates on the progress of a child and its community in which the NGO is working in. The types of projects that the organisation is involved with are relayed to the sponsor through letter or email and there is often provision for the sponsor to be able to communicate with the child. Estimates of funds raised in this manner range between US $3 billion and US $5 billion each year (BBC, 2013).

As a concept, a type of child sponsorship was first initiated in 1920 by the Save the Children Fund and then in 1936 by Children International, quickly followed by Plan USA (now Plan International) in 1937. Some of the other more notable international child sponsorship programmes being run today in developing countries are organised by Children International, Action Aid and World Vision. It is a prevalent form of fundraising which has garnered significant media attention and is thus uniformly associated with the work of development NGOs by the general public, especially in the Global North.

This recognition and familiarity with what child sponsorship does, naturally, meant it is of considerable importance to the operations of many NGOs. It is a ‘go-to’ method of fundraising which has historically appealed to potential donors through a discourse of which can be simplified as ‘she needs you now’ (van Eekelen, 2013: 471). The ‘pulling of the heartstrings approach’ has long been relied upon by NGOs to raise funds and child sponsorship is undoubtedly one of the mainstays of how numerous NGOs get their work done. It is certainly a form of fundraising not without criticism and many of the contentious issues that surround child sponsorship will be a part of what I shall address in this thesis.
1.2 Research Problem

The research problem that I am concerned with for this degree project is to further understand the ways in which NGOs communicate the subject of child sponsorship as one of their primary methods of acquiring funds and mobilising action. The research topic shall be built upon the methods, purposes and considerations that NGOs have when they represent the potential beneficiaries of child sponsorship in their communications; what is being communicated, how it is being communicated and why it is being communicated in the manner it is. How NGOs present both imagery and rhetoric to promote child sponsorship is at the centre of what I wish to study in this thesis, and I intend to do this by placing the large and well-known development organisation Plan International as the case study.

The selection of a research topic concerning children in the study of development is based upon a rationale which covers both an academic and personal interest. The issue of child sponsorship has for a considerable time been one of contention, both in the study and practice of development, whilst playing a significant role in the work of many NGOs. Child sponsorship programs have repeatedly been accused of representing children from the developing world in a way that reinforces common perceptions that people in the Global South are powerless and hence dependent on help from the developed North. These perceptions are often decried as being formed by the communication materials that NGOs use to acquire funds, with particular regard to imagery and rhetoric. The array of criticism from scholars (Chouliaraki, 2010) and practitioners (CCIC, 2008) alike is often due to what is seen as the inherent contradictions in child sponsorship of hoping to empower whilst at the same time facilitating situations of dependence. Helpless and suffering children in faraway communities are strewn across our television screens, our social media pages and information pamphlets in such a ubiquitous manner that it has become a mediated norm.

The intention of this communication is without doubt – it draws attention and it produces results. In this way, the communication strategies of NGOs must be viewed upon as not unlike marketing materials, as a deliberative means to an end. The organisation must focus its communications to effectively promote its work and to meet its objectives. Yet, unlike the marketing materials produced to induce profit by corporations and businesses, these not-for-profit organisations work towards goals
which remain unencumbered by organisational financial success in the traditional sense. They strive not under the constraints of customers and shareholders but rather for the recipients of their aid and using the funding of their donors. The use of child sponsorship in the acquisition of funding is, in my eyes, a fundamental illustration of both the difficulties and opportunities that NGOs face. Navigating the responsibility of representation and avoiding the commodification of suffering whilst at the same time evoking awareness and action from their audience is a challenge that is beholden to NGOs. It is one which piques my interest to learn more about the ways in which they communicate and present child sponsorship in order to work towards their goals.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As stated, the principle aim of this degree project is to better understand how NGOs represent and communicate the issue of child sponsorship in their work. But the objectives of the study incorporate greater nuances than simply that. Within the broader framework of this study, I hope for the following to be addressed: How is child sponsorship, as one of the main sources of fundraising for development NGOs, communicated by the case, Plan International? If NGOs are the public faces of development (Smith, 2004) - both through the imagery and the rhetorical practices they employ in the representation of children and the means by how the NGO presents it - how do Plan contextualise the issue that sponsoring a child can contain? Are discourses of hegemony and power relations (Bornstein, 2001; Orgad, 2013) addressed and if so how? In what ways do the ethical ambiguities of child sponsorship (Nolan & Mikami, 2012) influence its communication to its intended audience? These points of interest for me, which are for now framed as questions, are a part of what I intend for this study to shed light upon.

In terms of the empirical data gathering and subsequent analytical section of this thesis, I have chosen to conduct a case study, that of Plan International. Whilst I shall elaborate upon this in greater detail in the methodology chapter, case studies have often been applied in studies that bear a resemblance to this one (Benthall, 1993; Lidchi, 1993; Dogra, 2012 et al.) and I think it is an appropriate choice in that it allows me to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 1984). By
placing the analytical lens upon Plan International, I hope to be able to advance knowledge within the field by increasing understanding of how Plan go about communicating child sponsorship. The study will attempt to contribute to the cultivation of a greater understanding of this issue by learning how Plan engage with child sponsorship. For these reasons, I am confident that this study shall demonstrate its significance and why it is worthwhile to research and relevant to the field.

1.4 Research Question

To assist in managing my research problem and to meet the purposes of this study, I have formulated the following central research question:

**How does Plan International, as a prominent child sponsorship-based NGO, represent and communicate the issue of child sponsorship as part of their fundraising activities?**

1.5 Chapter Outline

The chapter that follows is a comprehensive literature review which lays the groundwork for the theoretical framework which will govern the analysis. Chapter 3 offers an introduction to the case, that of Plan International. Chapter 4 details the methodological approach, selected methods and reasons for their suitability in this study. In addition, it describes the empirical data and the ethical considerations I have made. The fifth chapter is the analytical chapter – here I describe, discuss and interpret the empirical findings of the data and construct a detailed analysis. Finally, the sixth and concluding chapter discusses what is most important that has emerged from the study, as well as the limitations I have faced during the whole process and suggestions for further research.
2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE COMMUNICATION AND REPRESENTATION WITHIN CHILD SPONSORSHIP

2.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The section that follows is a literature review of what I perceive to be the core issues and debates relevant for this thesis. Firstly, I shall present a historical account of child sponsorship, including its communicated aspects, before elaborating on and discussing the key themes that are applicable to the analysis further on.

2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The origins of child sponsorship are not easy to clarify – they are, according to Ove (2013: 56), “lost in the mists of time or to the vagaries of marketing personnel”. Various claims have been made as to where this humanitarian phenomenon emanates from and whilst this need not be covered in detail here, it is worthwhile noting its historical context. From ChildFunds adoption of sponsorship in Chinese orphanages in the 1940s (Tise, 1993: 5) to the more well-known narrative that British journalist John Langdon-Davies conceived of it after covering the Spanish Civil War in 1937, the idea of sponsoring children as a fundraising device has, regardless, its roots in the suffering of children. Watson (2014), in an entire chapter based on its origins, has firmly established that child sponsorship did in fact begin as early as 1920 in Great Britain by the Save the Children Fund as a means of raising funds for famine relief. Monthly or annual fees were encouraged in brochures and newspapers to ease the suffering that poverty brought, and the programme was expanded widely in a short period of time. As the sponsorship of children - managed by NGOs and funded by donations from the public - became more and more prevalent after the Second World War, the form it took was generally one and the same.
The one-to-one sponsorship programmes were at the epicentre of early NGO work with children, even in some cases up to the 1980s. The notion of providing direct handouts and child welfare to individuals has largely been seen as an anachronism in the preceding decades. But contextually it is of significant importance contemporarily and this will be elaborated upon in themes that are addressed further on. There is now a high level of cynicism directed towards these practices and the amount of conceptual criticism levelled at one-to-one programmes stems from far and wide (Ibid: 47). The criticism led to a programmatic shift for the vast majority of child sponsorship NGOs away from individual beneficiaries of donations to a more community-led concept. Community empowerment and capacity-building were placed at the forefront and the principle of sponsorship became more of a fundraising tool (van Eekelen, 2013: 478).

It is pertinent here to touch upon the historical nature of the criticism that child sponsorship has received. This is, in part, because the same criticism still resonates today irrespective of whether it holds true to the actual practices of NGOs working with sponsorship. A dearth of historic studies investigating how direct one-to-one programmes were made, but it was Peter Stalker’s scathing article in the New Interventionalist in 1982 “that epitomised the tension over child sponsorship-funded interventions” (Watson, Lockton & Pawar, 2014: 66). As an example of the mainstream journalistic criticism that NGOs faced, Stalker mocked the approach with a headline depicting an image imploring ‘Please do not sponsor this child’. Child sponsorship approaches were accused of being divisive to societies and plethora of negative portrayals flooded the media.

A particularly common critique that remains to this day was that of how NGOs represented children in their fundraising communications. Images of the ‘starving baby’ peaked in the 1960s (Manzo, 2008) but still the visceral phrasing of the ‘pornography of poverty’ (Tanguy, 2003: van Eekelen, 2013: 477) evoked strong feelings against NGOs well into this decade. The portrayal of children as helpless, passive objects or of ‘needy others’ (Watson, Lockton & Pawar, 2014: 88-89), were a part of the “emotionally manipulative imagery” (Plewes & Stuart, 2009: 23) that pillared the criticism. Imagery of this type was seen to reinforce Western perceptions of people in the Third World (Young, 1996; Radley & Kennedy, 1997: 436) whilst Escobar (1995: 70) went further with his cynicism when he wrote that NGOs attempted to personalise children “so that
they do not seem to be the unnamed and undifferentiated faces of the teeming masses of the Third World”.

However, some have suggested (Watson, Lockton & Pawar, 2014: 66) that this criticism did not acknowledge the evolution of sponsorship orientated NGOs over time. The ‘evolution’ asserts that NGOs have moved away from a welfare-based approach and many have embraced a more ‘development spectrum’ ideal – that is to encourage sustainability through capacity building rather than continue as ‘service providers’ which, they acknowledge, has led to dependency (Watson, 2014: 49-50). Nowadays, in the communication materials, the sponsored child is positioned as an ‘ambassador’ representing their community (Ibid: 58). An example of the change is through Plan International and their Child Centred Community Development (CCCD) approach that follows an activist model, of which I will go into more detail later on.

This historical overview section has been included to serve dual purposes. Firstly, to provide a background to the topic of child sponsorship by summarising its history. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, it is to demonstrate how I wish to position my research problem in context. It is vital to provide historical perspective in order to investigate a contemporary issue; by contextualising the topic I believe I can approach it more selectively and carefully. The brief illustration of some of the criticism that child sponsorship NGOs faced is to highlight the identity crisis that took place in the 1980s and 1990s. Part of the discussion that I shall have, further on in this paper, will be to reflect upon whether contemporary critique concerning the communication of child sponsorship is warranted today.

The following sections shall attempt to thematically address the literature that I think are applicable to this study and that shall help leverage its theoretical framework. I will begin with the theme of representation and then move on to the tensions that are within the communication of child sponsorship. Finally, I shall discuss humanitarian communication as a theme in the literature and one upon which I will build my theoretical foundation for this study. It should be noted that much of the literature organically intertwines these chosen themes to some extent but it is I as a researcher who finds them useful to separate in order to interpret them in such a way that will help guide my eventual analysis.
2.3 REPRESENTATION

As has been touched upon in the previous section, the way NGOs convey their messages in terms of what they depict has, to a significant degree, changed over time. Yet there remains a sense of contention amongst scholars and practitioners alike in so far as what is an ‘acceptable’ level of representation that NGOs can present in their communication materials. In what ways can NGOs help bridge the gap between distance and division? How are depictions of others contextualised in a manner which attributes dignity but also evokes empathy? How is the dualism of ‘oneness’ and ‘difference’ (Dogra, 2012) reconciled in the materials that NGOs produce? These are all questions which much of the literature delves into and, for this study, it is vital to position these points of contention in the way in which NGOs represent child sponsorship.

Within the broader development discourse, any issues surrounding children are always at risk of being emotive in nature. Subsequently, how children are represented is a subject that has historically drawn plenty of ire from critics and, despite progress, continues to be a matter of controversy in many quarters. Representations in the communication practices of NGOs are, of course, visual, textual and aural. The textual elements are usually displayed through documents or advertisements but it is the visual ones which draw the sharpest response. Orgad (2013: 296) is at pains to remind us of the importance of “visual representations to awaken social conscience” in the work of NGOs. NGOs, as “visualisers of solidarity”, are keen to be a conduit between the audience and the sufferer, to build a repertoire of reaction from those who view the image or the video. These organisations when working with child sponsorship, as the public faces of development (Smith, 2004), are acutely aware of the emotive value of what is visualised and communicated, what is concurrently being presented and represented in what is shown to the audience.

A common theme throughout the literature concerns how problematic these representations can be. The evocative alliteration first uttered by the Canadian International Development Agency (1988) – ‘the pornography of poverty’ – and since repeated en masse is referred to frequently. Nathanson’s article of the same name (2013) talks of the “trivialised representations of people in developing countries” that are aimed at “a public wholly unaware of the complexities and root causes of world poverty”
(Ibid: 104). Imagery which depicts “a widespread sense of helplessness” is “constantly reinforced by media and fundraising campaigns” (Young, 1996: 144) and children, as “depoliticed agents of universal innocence” (Bornstein, 2001: 606), are presented as tools for fundraising. Criticisms include the “dehumanisation of the poor” (Nolan & Mikami, 2012: 58), the dangers of undermining human dignity (Nathanson, 2013: 106), the allusions to dependency (van Eekelen, 2013) and “the infantilisation and feminisation” (Dogra, 2012: 31) that comes across as being represented through the imagery and rhetoric.

Orgad explains why these forms of representations are made, or were made, when he writes that “the image of the emaciated child translates into more emotional engagement than the active, self-sufficient empowered individual” (2013: 301). NGOs publicly create ‘regimes of pity’ using specific representations “to allow spectators to link to an emotional level with those who suffer” (Lugo-Ocando & Hernandez-Toro: 2015: 3) and hence mobilise a response. It is also suggested by Nathanson (2013: 114) that this form of decontextualization is a deliberate feature of some representations in order not to “beget an overwhelmed public” and “when context is ignored, the poor themselves are most often held responsible for their own plight” (CCIC, 2008: 5).

Yet the literature too, particularly from more recent years, is not hesitant to offer a counter of some of the classical criticism that is levelled at NGOs. There is a ‘politics of representation’ that surrounds their depictions of poverty which plays against the financial and logistical struggles and pressures which are experienced by NGOs as organisations in a competitive ‘industry’ (Orgad & Seu, 2014: 23). They point to seminal studies conducted by Benthall and Lidchi which were both ethnographic investigations into how NGOs deal with the dilemmas concerning representation. Benthall (1993) highlights the pull they face between short-term fundraising goals and the more longer-term educational goals; Lidchi (1993) goes further into detail about the organisational struggles that play out within an NGO regarding what should be depicted to successfully acquire the required funding whilst maintaining the ethical balance that the NGO sets itself. These studies, both few and far between, “illustrate the valve of investigation that explores the realities within which texts and images which are produced in order to develop an effective critique of a constructivist intervention in the practices and frameworks of NGOs” (Orgad & Seu, 2014: 23). Finally, they state that
more of these types of empirical studies are needed to understand the effects and consequences of the representations of humanitarianism in development (Ibid: 25).

In addition, it is argued that there has in fact been an important shift in the representations of children in particular. The imagery and videos on YouTube have for a great part moved away from “miserable, starving children” to “picking winners” (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008; Bell & Coicaud, 2007) in terms of what is shown. Van Eekelen (2013) writes that imagery has moved on from emphasising helplessness and vulnerability to a focus on empowerment, self-sufficiency and community and even asserts quite emphatically that “accusations of the use of unethical imagery are no longer warranted as they now systematically follow ethical guidelines in the depiction of children” (Ibid: 479).

2.4 TENSIONS WITHIN COMMUNICATING DEVELOPMENT

When problematising how representation is manifested in the communications of child sponsorship NGOs, it is apparent that there are parallel tensions that exist in the broader discussion of communicating development. Child sponsorship, as a model within development, illustrates in part some of these tensions and this is present throughout the readings.

Watson and Clarke, in their comprehensive and “the first of its kind” book on child sponsorship (2014: 317), acknowledge that there is an inherent tension in the model of child sponsorship itself. In the concluding chapter, the editors deride the lack of academic research on the subject as “perplexing” and note that many of the criticisms labelled against child sponsorship NGOs are outdated and poorly analysed (Ibid: 318). Yet even these scholars and practitioners concede that there are potential contradictions in the intentions of child sponsorship and its practice. On the one hand, it concerns the improvement of children’s lives through economic linkages which set out to provide them with a better standard of living. But on the hand, there is the fundamental “knowledge that the best way to help children is to fund development interventions or empower communities to demand their rights” (Ibid). Although many NGOs do of course work towards the latter, the authors concede that reconciling these two objectives
is a challenge. The acquisition of donations is dependent on communications that appeal to the public, that are able to compel people to willingly give of their own, and Watson and Clarke accept that this does not always coincide with the principles of the NGO.

That these practitioners must attempt to ‘balance’ the ethical – truthful representations of reality – and the instrumental – acquiring donations – is echoed by Orgad (2013: 304). Tensions can arise in “maintaining what they consider the ethical representations of their ‘beneficiaries’ and enhancing the identity and ethos of the organisation (Ibid: 300). As with the broader subject of development, there is a battle within NGOs between short-term fundraising goals and long-term effects of ‘messaging’ for social change (Ibid) – a battle which is complicated by the demands of the immediate need and the desire for structural change.

What is communicated impacts upon those who are represented in the materials in more ways than simply serve as them being potential recipients of aid. Discursive practices are formed from how development agencies communicate poverty and suffering and in so doing they perpetuate further representations of similar type. These presentations become dominant and subsequently “a certain order of discourse produces permissible modes of thinking and being whilst disqualifying and even making others impossible” (Nathanson, 2013: 107). The practice of child sponsorship communications is not exempt from this – Bornstein (2001: 609) reminds us that child sponsorship in its very essence brings an awareness of structural relations of power and inequality. Child sponsorship organisations have to tread very carefully in order to avoid accusations of hegemony and this the literature makes very clear, despite the protestations of Watson, Clarke and co.

This thematic discussion of the literature concerning the tensions surrounding communicated child sponsorship shall also be apparent in the following section regarding humanitarian communication.
2.5 **HUMANITARIAN COMMUNICATION**

Humanitarian communication is a term which can be used in myriad of ways, both within and without academia: It can encompass media strategies during famine or how information communication technologies (ICT’s) operate in times of disaster or it can refer to conflict reporting – these as just a few examples. However, for the purposes of this thesis, I will be referring to the term in most accordance with the definition of Chouliaraki – “as the rhetorical practices of transnational actors with universal ethical claims, such as common humanity or global civil society, to mobilise action on human suffering” (2010: 107).

As a humanitarian endeavour, the communication aspect can be viewed in part as an ideological practice. Thus, there are on inherent strains on their communication work that must be pragmatic and instrumental in a way which accords with these ideals (Nolan & Mikami, 2012: 55). Smillie (2000: 14) notes that the “child sponsorship format of marketing has emerged as the pre-eminent lens through which a very large and growing number of Northern citizens view the South”. When humanitarian communication is broken down, it is about practitioners focusing their efforts in convincing people to donate to support their organisations (Lugo-Ocando & Hernandez-Toro, 2015: 1) – it is indicative of trying to persuade.

To be able to persuade effectively, NGOs rely on successful communication strategies (Cottle & Nolan, 2007), and to raise funds “they must produce response-inducing messages and imagery most likely to engage audiences” (Orgad, 2013: 298-299). Nathanson (2013) discusses that the audiences’ response is shaped by framing – how the message is framed for a particular purpose. NGOs thus have been inclined to equate the target of their message with linkages and interdependencies to the audience it is aimed at, often by showing individual and personal suffering. He argues that child sponsorship agencies have in fact been working against what framing theory suggests: that frames that present the social and political context will be more useful than ones that rely on the personal (Ibid: 116).

When the literature discusses framing and audience, it is pertinent to how communication is managed. Chouliaraki’s far-reaching article (2010) argues for a move away from emotion-orientated to post-humanitarian styles of appealing within
development. It is “a contemporary attempt to renew the legitimacy of humanitarian communication” (Ibid: 107) as a response to the ‘market’ in which it operates today. She, as well as others (Smith 2004; Smillie, 2000; Lugo-Ocando & Hernandez-Toro, 2015), describe its public nature, its strategic and response-inducing approach as delegitimised and counter-productive. It is a “mode of public communication that both reflects and reproduces the inadequacy of the conception of the political, insofar as it aims at establishing a strategic emotional response between a westerner and a distant sufferer” (Chouliaraki, 2010: 110). It is a “means of professional communication (that) evokes the language of power” (Lugo-Ocando & Hernandez-Toro, 2015: 1) and it relies on a ‘discourse of pity to active grand emotions’ (Chouliaraki, 2010).

Reasoning is demonstrated as Chouliaraki runs through the historical criticism of humanitarian communication. The two types of appeal that attempt to mobilise action are discussed: the shock aesthetics of early campaigns which focus on emotive imagery of suffering and the ‘positive image’ appeal that contrarily shows the benefits of public action. What is surmised by the literature (Ibid; Boltanski, 1999; Dogra, 2012 et al.) is a critique that is less about the instrumental effectiveness of this type of appeal but rather the ethical discourse which underpins it. The ‘shock’ appeals, with their passive children silently suffering, are focusing on the distant sufferer in an attempt to establish emotional connectivity between spectator and a clearly defined victim. Distance and suffering are said to “presuppose the Western spectator’s complicity to world poverty…and at the same time enact this complicity in the power relation that is seems to expose and redress (Hattori, 2003b: 164-165). The professional communicators of NGOs aim to sell the spectacle of suffering in exchange for donations (Lugo-Ocando & Hernandez-Toro, 2015; Nolan & Mikami 2012: 59) and in so, Chouliaraki (2010: 113) forthrightly declares:

“The critique of distance, which the shock effect imagery establishes between those who watch and those who suffer, captures precisely this ambivalence that makes the West the benefactor of a world that it itself manages to symbolically annihilate”

‘Positive’ appeals on the other hand are a direct response to the depiction of suffering. Deviating away from ‘victimhood’, these campaigns focus on the agency and the dignity of the person that would benefit from donations. Empowerment too is correlated with audience response – showing how our action can help facilitate change (Ibid: 114).
The representational sense of powerlessness is replaced with one of transformation and seeks to reaffirm the potential of those who are being aided. Yet, as referred to in the *representation* section of this chapter, the literature addresses the criticism that these appeals draw. Campaigns of this nature are said to “lack a certain reflexivity as to the limits of the interventionist project to promote social change” (Sen, 1999). Chouliaraki states that whilst empowerment is the goal of positive images, “such imagery simultaneously disempowers them by appropriating their otherness in Western discourses of identity and agency” (2010: 116). Both the ‘shock effect’ and ‘positive imagery’ are have similar orientations - they rely on photorealism and share a belief in “the power of grand emotions” (Ibid) to evoke a response. Chouliaraki postulates that humanitarian communication in this form therefore seems suspended between distance and identity.

It is from this analysis that Chouliaraki discusses “an emergent form of humanitarian communication” that is geared “toward a post-humanitarian sensibility” (Ibid). She is a proponent of this emergent form which is one that “disengages public action from pity…the activation of grand emotion towards suffering” and instead “engages the reflexivity of the spectator” (Ibid: 117). The author discusses two signifiers of post-humanitarianism, that of their aesthetic quality and moral agency. Aesthetically, photorealism is used as a shift away from imagery seen as witnessing towards a choice in which suffering can be represented. With the use of juxtaposition – in terms of texts and visuals – “these appeals come to remind us that we are confronted not with the ‘truth’ of suffering but with acts of representation” (Vestergaard, 2009).

Moral agency refers to campaigns that move away from normative universal morality to more self-reflective pieces. Chouliaraki (2010) mentions two elements here, the technologisation of action and the de-emotionalisation of the cause. An aspect of the former is that its campaigns “strategically replace moralistic exhortation with brand recognition”. This means that the image and reputation of the NGO is placed at the centre rather than emotionally ‘telling’ the public what they should feel. People decide for themselves which campaigns they care about, which appeals lend themselves to a donation (Ibid: 121).

Chouliaraki describes the de-emotionalisation of the cause as a reduction in the emotive pleading rather than its abandonment. The reminding to the audience to examine
injustices in their own societies leads to self-inspection (Ibid: 121-122) when we view the appeals and draw back from notions of suffering, blame, and consequence. This is what the author advocates through post-humanitarianism in communication – when “the representation of suffering becomes disembedded from discourses of morality and relies on each spectator’s personal judgment on the cause of action” (Ibid: 123). Although Chouliaraki acknowledges the critique regarding this as a commodification of suffering, she eventually rejects this criticism as post-humanitarianism leans away from the discourse of universal morality.

I have in this literature review covered Chouliaraki’s idea of post-humanitarianism with some depth as I believe it shall aid my analysis of how child sponsorship is communicated. The case that shall now be introduced will be built upon the theoretical foundation of what humanitarian communication offers in all its forms. I wish to explore the tools that Plan International use in their campaigns and how and why they are used. It is of interest to me to understand how Plan use their communicative techniques to mobilise action and at the same time maintain their ethical principles concerning the representation of suffering.

3 THE CASE OF PLAN INTERNATIONAL

3.1 ORIGIN AND VISION

Plan International is a very well-known development non-profit organisation and one of the oldest, largest and most geographically diverse children’s development and child rights organisations in the world (Dijsselbloem, Fugle & Gneiting, 2014: 113). Their origins can be traced back to 1937 when the NGO was founded as an attempt to protect children affected by the Spanish Civil War. Today, it is operating in 52 countries with 21 national organisations working in communities with a total population reaching nearly 165 million people. Plan is independent, with no religious, political or governmental affiliations and it is particularly recognised for its child sponsorship
programmes. Its focus is centred around children and its stated vision “is one of a world in which all children realise their full potential in societies that respect people’s rights and dignity” (Plan International, 2017).

The organisation was set up by British journalist John Langdon-Davies and refugee worker Eric Muggeridge with the original aim to provide food, accommodation and education to children whose lives had been disrupted by the war (Ibid). The idea was to develop a relationship between individual children and their ‘sponsor’, or ‘foster parent’ as the donor was called at the time. A child was chosen from one of thousands of homeless children and the foster parent, after the first payment was made, was sent the name, age, a brief history and a photograph of the child. The ‘essence’ of the foster child scheme was the ‘personal touch’ that it enabled – that there was someone there for a child who had lost so much (Molumphy, 1984: 30).

One-to-one based child sponsorship as a model continued up until the 1970s when changes began to happen that would redefine how Plan International managed future programmes. Moves towards community development led to a shift in policy as it was seen that cash transfers and direct family support was problematic in communities where poverty was endemic and linked to ongoing socio-economic causes (Dijsselbloem, Fugle & Gneiting, 2014: 125). Already, there were questions about how community-based development would attract sponsors. But despite the internal rumblings, within the organisation “there was growing awareness that poverty was not so much about people lacking certain things, but rather being unable to make change for themselves” (Ibid: 128). This led to what would be an overall permanent programmatic shift in the way Plan worked.

3.2 THE APPROACH

Beginning in 1997, Plan Bangladesh developed a strategic approach that would eventually “unify Plan’s commitment to children, poverty reduction, community empowerment and sustainable partnership” (Ibid: 129). This was named the Child Centred Community Development (CCCD) approach and was institutionalised throughout the organisation from 2003 where it would underpin Plan’s Programme
Framework. The CCCD drew on existing principles in the approach of Plan which stated that child poverty needs to be tackled by considering the root causes rather than simply the consequences (Plan International, 2017). The “sharing of knowledge and the power of connections” (Ibid) are emphasised alongside the deliverance of measurable outcomes and an assurance to work towards continual improvement whilst having deep commitments to the development and protection of children.

One of the core principals of CCCD is that “by involving children and communities in creating change, not only to have a greater say in how they live their lives, but they become empowered to continue with these actions for years to come” (Ibid). This principle runs in direct accordance with the notion of invoking access and voice as a means of promoting participation (Thomas, 2014: 9). CCCD itself sets out to end child poverty and to provide all children with the right to health, education and protection from violence and this currently forms the basis of Plan’s overall strategy. Involving children and local communities in all aspects of their work is expressed repeatedly throughout their texts – ‘to claim their own rights’ – and this rhetorically adheres to what Waisbord (2005: 87) calls the goal of development which is “building the community rather than transmitting the information”. It is a rights-based approach (RBA), something that is at the heart of what Plan try to convey with all their work. CCCD “emphasises initiatives to empower” (Dijsselbloem, Fugle & Gneiting, 2014: 130) and works strongly with advocacy. The standards that CCCD encompasses are a part of all of Plan’s work (Plan International, 2017), and this of course includes child sponsorship. The funds that are raised from sponsorship goes into communities with the rights and needs of the children at the centre of what is done.

3.3 STRUCTURE AND FINANCING

As a global organisation with significant reach, the structure of Plan International follows a familiar path. The Members Assembly is its highest decision-making body and is made up of members from all 21 national offices and is also responsible for electing its International Board of Directors. The Board is comprised of 11 members and approves policies and procedures in line with the overall Plan strategy and the central headquarters is located in the. Its national organisations are the voice of Plan
International in their respective countries and play a vital role in engaging with sponsors in terms of both fundraising and by providing information on where and how donations are used. Their objects and purposes are aligned with Plan International and they are obliged to comply with specific standards of operations as set out by the Members Assembly (Plan International, 2017).

Funding is acquired from two main sources: Individual donors, particularly dominated by those who sponsor a child; and grants that are given from bilateral organisations, businesses and corporations, and institutions which means there is a significant degree of funding from the private sector. In 2015-16, 44% of funds were raised through child sponsorship, 33% from grant funding and the remaining from other sources such as disaster appeal. Funds are raised in response to specific disasters and for large campaigns, for example for the Because I am a Girl movement. To give an idea of the level of expenditure, in 2014-2015 €822m was raised and €810m spent globally.
4 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the literature review I brought forth a discussion on the thematic elements that shall serve as the basis of the theoretical framework for this study. Representations, tensions within communicating development and humanitarian communication are the points of reference for what I wish to problematise when it comes to my main research aims. I have therefore decided to incorporate four analytical frames by which to structure, discuss and interpret my findings. These frames are: Representation, Framing, Message and Strategy.

As a theoretical framework, I have chosen to use Chouliaraki’s (2010) conception of humanitarian communication to support my analysis. The notion of humanitarian communication as espoused by Chouliaraki designates this form of communication as one that is simultaneously public, strategic, pragmatic, ideological and persuasive. It is communication which is personal but at the same time political; it invokes the language of power whilst conversely attempting to dissolve difference.

Plan International shall serve as the case and, as one of the largest and more progressive proponents of child sponsorship, will allow me to broaden the analytical discussion to the emergent post-humanitarian form of communication that Chouliaraki advocates. I am hopeful that this framework shall provide me with a strong point of analysis in which to study the tools of communication used by Plan in their child sponsorship work.

The following sections shall outline the methodological approach and methods that will guide the project and discuss the reasoning for their selection.

4.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The methodological approach that will govern this thesis will emanate from a constructionist research philosophy which will be built upon by a qualitative research design. An interpretivist philosophy will allow for an inductive approach where I aim to
generate meanings from the data collected. Qualitative research methods are interpretive and are regarded as being able to provide rich, in-depth description of samples (Atkinson & Delamont, 2010), which suites the choice of studying a single case, in that of Plan International. By addressing broad thematic concerns within phenomena discussed in a narrative fashion, I feel a qualitative approach is best suited for me “to make sense of behaviour and to understand behaviour within its wider context” (Vaus, 2002: 5).

After some consideration, I have decided to select a case study as my core method for this project. The components for this case study will be made by interviewing as well as producing a document and video analysis. To briefly surmise, I intend for interviewing with Plan International staff, the analysis of policy documents and reports and a video analysis to act as the empirical data for this thesis. The combination these forms of analysis acts as a means of triangulation (Yin, 2009) which will reinforce and deepen the case study as a whole.

### 4.3 Case Study

Case study research “consists of detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, within their context” (Hartley, 2004: 323) and in particular when the researcher wants to develop understanding of how and why something occurs. As the aims of the paper are to understand how child sponsorship is communicated by Plan International, a case study suits this form of study – I want to understand issues intrinsic to the case itself (Schwandt, 2011) and as well conceptually relate that to broader theoretical elaboration and analytic generalisation. It enables study of a contemporary phenomenon in real-life contexts (Yin, 2003) and places the case itself at centre stage. By producing an analysis on the workings of Plan International and extracting descriptive material through data collection, I concentrate on the case itself with the benefit of illuminating the theoretical issues that I apply to it.

The sourcing of data is also vital to a case study. A major strength of a case study “is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (Evers & Von Staa, 2012) – applying the concept of triangulation. The means of triangulation “enhances its
“completeness” and adds to the depth and breadth of understanding of a phenomenon (Ibid: 3). I intend to make use of this as already stated. This, I hope, will fortify my analysis by providing a range of data that can be interpreted, cross-referenced and deepened.

Another advantage of a case study that is pertinent to this thesis is that it allows for continuous analysis throughout the study. The researcher is not limited to a fixed line of inquiry, whether they are applying the data analysis inductively or deductively (Schwandt, 2011). By performing a case study, I shall be able to avoid the limitations of a fixed line of inquiry and refine the questions I seek answers to as the data collection part of the thesis evolves.

### 4.4 DATA COLLECTION

The following sections shall discuss the means of data collection utilised for this study. It will demonstrate the choices I have made in selecting data, the reasoning behind these choice, the limitations I faced and methodological considerations that were made during the process. With the data collected, I have thematically divided them into four different frames (mentioned above) by the identification of common themes and patterns. This categorisation process was managed by a careful reading of all the data and a level of interpretation that closely relates to the phenomenon under study.

#### 4.4.1 Interviewing

As a part of the case study, I decided early on that I wanted to conduct interviews as a means of data collection to be used to contribute to the analysis. Interviews conducted within case studies are a very common and important method of data collection (Evers & Von Staa, 2012: 8) and play a role in contextualising the subject matter at hand. This means of gathering data is a way of extracting descriptive material that cannot always be drawn through other more ‘academic’ methods. It is also beneficial to conduct interviews alongside other means of data collection, such as analysing policy documents, in order to systematically examine the data in a continuous fashion and to
be able to interpret what is important or not in synchrony with other gathered data (Ibid).

Initially when planning the degree project, the intentions were to interview people working in two regional offices of Plan International. As I live in Malmö, I felt it would be best to make contact with the Scandinavian offices of Sweden and Denmark and, in addition, as I am British, the UK. Contact was made via email and telephone and I was also put in contact with Zahra Sethna by my supervisor Tobias Denskus. Zahra has worked with Plan as an editor of their report *Counting the Invisible* (2016) and has much experience working with large media organisations as well as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). She was able to put in contact with the Norwegian office and a number of emails were exchanged. However, both the Danish and the British offices turned down requests for interviews due to time constraints on their behalf. The Norwegian office had said they were happy to conduct an interview via Skype but stopped replying when further information was relayed. I was however able to interview Louise Karlander who is the Head of Marketing at Plan Sverige (Sweden). This interview was made in person at their Stockholm office and recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Although I had this opportunity to conduct the interview over Skype, I felt it more worthwhile to do it face-to-face. Interviews themselves within research are a process of “gaining direct access to an interviewees direct experiences” (Schwandt, 2007: 5). In the end, I felt the process of interviewing Louise in person was a very fulfilling one and that shall be visible in the analytical chapter.

The interview itself was semi-structured and designed to gain deeper insight into the communication practices of Plan concerning child sponsorship. In a qualitative approach, unstructured or semi-structured interviews are more prevalent as they aim to elicit stories of experience (Ibid). I conducted a semi-structured interview as it is vital to be able to make space for open-ended responses and respond flexibly to the interviewees answers (Wisker, 2001). I thematically structured the interview in order that 1) the questions would pertain to my particular area of interest and 2) that it would flow in a way that was clear and methodical. Upon completion of the interview, I transcribed the text into a Word file and thematically and systematically highlighted
sections and quotes that would be useful for description, interpretation and discussion within the analysis.

Lastly, it is very important that the interviewer follows a procedure when conducting interviews. This includes significant preparation such as drawing up an interview schedule and preparing questions, both of which were done well in advance.

4.4.2 Document Analysis

As a way of triangulating the methods to be used in this case study, I decided upon constructing an analysis of various documents that have been published by Plan International. Data is gathered from documents by interpretation in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and this method fits into accordance to what I want to produce from this study. Along with the videos, an analysis of the organisational documents lends credibility to the study in terms of understanding the public strategies for communicating child sponsorship that Plan form. It enables interpretation and corroboration with the other method of data collection; it demonstrates a communicated message that underpins the intentions of Plan – intentions to the public, to the people they work with and to their donors.

I determined which documents to select by making a careful reading of numerous types of policy, strategy, report, advocacy and marketing documents that are all readily available on Plan’s website (https://plan-international.org/). The discussion I had with Louise Karlander during the interview prompted further readings from the Plan newsletter and official blogs. The parameters under investigation – which shall be made clear in the analysis – aided my selection of a variety of documents that would form the collection of data. I wanted to examine a combination of documents that would provide me with a widespread indication of the rhetorical appeals, brand narrative and representations that are framed by Plan concerning child sponsorship in their communications. I selected:
1) Plan International UK Strategy 2017-2020
3) ‘Sponsorship Changed my Life’ (online article on Plan’s website)
4) ‘Fighting a Rising Tide of Apathy Towards Aid’ (A blog from Plan’s CEO)
5) Plan Ireland Strategy 2012-2016
6) One Plan One Goal – Plan’s Strategy to 2015
7) ‘Girls Rights Gazette’ (October 2015)
8) ‘Meet the Community Rising Up Against FGM’ (Newsletter, 2016).

(See Appendix for links)

4.4.3 Video Analysis

In addition to interviewing and analysing documents, I felt it was vital to include a method of data collection that examined communications through visual-audio means. In essence, the communication of child sponsorship is one which must appeal, persuade and engage an audience into action. Mobilisation is managed through both emotional and intellectual influence; it is characterised by the equipping of the public of the knowledge to incite action. ‘Action’ in this case equals sponsorship and ‘influence’ refers to the communication. Visual media have a power that differs from other marketing materials in NGOs as a whole – they resonate impact, they illicit emotion and they capture stories. Thusly, videos cannot be underestimated in their importance for an organisation such as Plan International in their pursuit of funds.

To conduct an interpretive analysis of the selected videos, I decided upon a method incorporating approaches to textual analysis as most appropriate. In communication research, a textual analysis is often applied to describe and interpret the characteristics of a visual message (Tienari & Vaara, 2010). One form of textual analysis is rhetorical criticism which allows the researcher to describe, analyse and interpret the messages within a text. One of its functions it to shed light on the purposes of a persuasive message and to examine the relationship between a text and its context (Frey, et al.,
The interpretive nature of this approach enables me to examine the themes from the videos that I deem relevant to the aims of this study. The communications of Plan International’s videos regarding child sponsorship serve several purposes and, in combination with the other methods outlined, an analysis of videos as texts will help me to draw conclusions about what the communicated message is, the intentions behind it, and why it is produced.

The videos that I have selected were sourced from either Plan International websites or the official YouTube channels of various offices of Plan. Again, as with the documents, selection was based upon an extensive viewing and subsequent reading of these texts and their deemed appropriateness to the aims of this study. There are many hundreds of Plan videos available online and, of course, I was limited in my selection due to the scope of this study. However, in line with the objectives I have set out and the themes I consider most important, I believe I have made a representational selection. I have limited it to videos either produced by the Plan International headquarters themselves or Plan International UK. This is because a sample of this scope is most aligned with the other methods of data collection and the context in which I place this study. The videos selected are:

1) ‘Meet Marisol - A Day in the life of a sponsored child’ -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaBl_fbH1P4
2) ‘What do girls really learn at school. Learn Without Fear’ -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5TrHh1AQQog
3) ‘Meet Micah, 14 – Sponsored Girl from the Philippines’ -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dd4HwaK1zAs
4) ‘Sponsor a Girl with Plan UK – sponsoragirl.org’
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4f1QYY8Ass
5) ‘Because I am a Girl – I’ll take it from here’ -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-ZZeE7C7uM
6) ‘We are Plan’ - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zj9FPxsIjAQ
4.5 Ethical Considerations

There were few ethical considerations to be made regarding the collecting of document and video data as these are publicly available, free to access and permission does not need to be sought. However, with regards interviewing, ethical issues of honesty and trust are of course vital as is being fully open with the interviewees beforehand about the purpose and aims of the process (Wisker, 2001). I informed the interviewee of the research purpose behind the interview and made it clear I was grateful for their participation. The recording and transcribing of the interviews was made with accuracy and diligence and of course the interviewee was asked beforehand it was acceptable to record and include the interview in the final paper. In addition, I have no connection with Plan International other than them being an organisation of interest from a research perspective. I am not a sponsor with Plan nor any other NGO and have never been.
5 ANALYSIS

5.1 STRATEGY FOR ANALYSIS

In this chapter I shall describe the empirical findings from the case material – derived from interviewing, documents and videos from Plan International. I shall discuss these findings in relation to the theoretical framework (that of humanitarian communication) and thematically analyse them with constant due consideration of the research question in mind. The different forms of data shall act as a means of triangulation throughout the analysis and the analysis itself shall incorporate description, interpretation and discussion. A formation of an analysis applying these three categories, which are not mutually exclusive, is useful because I already begun the process of analysing during the data gathering stages. In addition, a strategy of this kind shall assist me in producing an analysis which selectively designates the key areas of interest to this study as gathered from the findings of the data. The interpretation and discussion shall run alongside the descriptive findings throughout the chapter which is divided into the four analytical frames that I have developed: Representation, Framing, Message and Strategy.

5.2 ‘WE KNOW THAT LOOKING RIGHT INTO THE CAMERA HELPS’: THE PRESENTATION AND REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN AT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

The quote within the subtitle above (spoken by the interviewee), like all representations, needs contextualising. By only presenting the quote, I am at risk of trivialising it, of manipulating its intended meaning and of neglecting to position it in context to everything else that was communicated around it. This challenge of representation is one which Plan International faces continuously with its primary donation-generator, child sponsorship.

In the reflective approach, to represent is to reflect the truth as it already exists in the world (Hall, 1997) but this is not the only approach. Intentionality is key in
representation (Orgad, 2013: 304) and this is evident in how Plan communicate – what is being depicted is deliberate and for a reason. Throughout the interview, the participant spoke frequently of ‘balance’. Balance in maintaining representations which both induce response yet depict reality; balance in the costly and “old-fashioned” process of the continuous administration that surrounds sponsorship and balance in justifying their funding:

“The more funds we get in the more we can help children, so it’s always a balance of how much we prove what we have done for the money, and the Programme Department – they don’t have the administration that we have but they have extremely high requirements for product feedback to SIDA, the EU... they have to measure every single thing.”

This attempt at balance is notable in the videos too. Agency and capability are shown in the form of hard-working adults and children building up their communities but in conjunction with the hardships and difficulties they face in videos #1, 5 & 6. Potential is juxtaposed alongside need in the visuals and the text; in video #5, the message is unequivocal – ‘Give me a chance and I’ll take it from here’ but that the chance needs to be given from the outside, the donor. This is echoed somewhat more overtly by the online testimony of Laura on the Plan sponsorship page (Document 3). “Sponsorship enabled her to live the life she’s always dreamt of” – here her potential is shown to be realised but only through the sponsorship provided by Plan. Both hope and hopelessness are being communicated here which is conspicuously disempowering (Chouliaraki, 2010: 115) the child, her parents and their community.

Yet balance is restored in other documents - #1,2 & 8 make use of positive imagery (van Eekelen, 2013) and empowering rhetoric to demonstrate transformation and change through the deeds of the beneficiaries themselves. The financial contributions of donors are held up to be stimulators rather than agents of change. In documents #1 & 2, there is evidence of Chouliaraki’s (2010) notion of emergent post-humanitarianism in the complete de-emotionalisation that is present (or not present) throughout the papers. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, only two of the six videos analysed avoided the grand evoking of emotions (Ibid) discussed so frequently throughout the literature. Representations of “innocence wronged through no fault of its own” (Wells, 2013: 5) was prevalent in showing how children were suffering. Whether it be through the voiceover talking of malnutrition (#1), a sinister and foreboding soundtrack (#2 & 4) or
the inevitability of violence girls will endure that is expressed (#2,4 & 5), there is a clear appeal for solidarity through melodrama. Sympathy for suffering is manifested via visceral identification of the visual. Both verbal and non-verbal signs are exploited to induce audience response (Wells, 2013; Orgad, 2013; Boltanski, 1999) in these videos and this does arouse tensions in the organisational ethos of Plan.

The ploy of evoking grand emotions is expressed by Louise Karlander, the interviewee:

‘Ideally, we would never show a child that is crying for example. We have done it now and then, but if it is really needed then fine, but in general you would always want to show the child as a strong person with strong eyes and not look (like) victims’.

She goes on to explain that the use of evocative imagery and language is very much a case-by-case consideration at Plan Sverige. It as well is a strategic move that bares the potential sponsors in mind:

‘In terms of mobilising people, I don’t think that necessarily the worse pictures are the ones that mobilise the most …if it’s too harsh pictures you might give because you feel bad about it but I don’t think that you want to get involved because of that’.

Data from the documents and videos pillars this statement. Children are often shown as happy and images that are communicated (in the documents) refrain from the shock-tactics that were the ingredients for the pornography of poverty and ‘flies in the eyes’ type marketing (Nathanson, 2013; ) espoused by development practitioners in the 1980s and early 1990s. Identifying with individuals is still present (Documents #2, 7, 8; Videos #1, 3, 8) and success stories alluded to in how the sponsored are differentiated from those not (Documents #2, 3, 4, 7; Videos #1, 3), but there is a notable effort to give voice to the children themselves (Documents #1, 3, 7; Videos #1, 2, 3) instead of relying on Western commentary (Neilson & Mittelman, 2012; Nolan & Mikami, 2012). The language and tone in the texts do vary yet more than half seemingly strive for appeal through depictions which are carefully drawn up to highlight the strengths of the child and their community.

Overall, representations in these communications seem to meander between a new, idealised tone which pertains to an aesthetic that suggests ‘truth’ as fluid and as cause
for reflection rather than reaction, and a continuation to pander to the emotionally moral universal compass that is simply intent on opening wallets. Power and hope are presented but not without lending themselves first to a connection that ‘You’ (the Western audience) have the tools to facilitate it.

5.3 FRAMING: AN AUDIENCE TO PERSUADE

In the interview with Louise Karlander, Plan Sverige’s Head of Marketing, she asks rhetorically, “Who is the real target audience? It’s the children”. As well-intentioned this statement may be, it does not detract from the fact that to acquire sponsors NGOs are reliant on a marketable, relatable and persuasive form of communication to entice their audience. Plan International have a responsibility to represent but equally must present child sponsorship in a way that elicits donations; how something is presented influences the choices people make (Goffman, 1974). This framing differs with objectives but also between regional offices in how sponsorship is framed:

‘In Sweden, the one-to-one aspect is nothing that we really dwell on...In Norway however that’s extremely important, their whole communication platform builds on the one-to-one. In Germany as well.’

‘In my opinion, Germany and Norway are much more traditional and it’s more of...while here in Sweden the child sponsorship has a slightly bad reputation in terms that it feels a bit old fashioned and so on. Even if it’s very old fashioned, but on the other hand it’s sort of, the good thing is that it’s very clear, you understand but in Norway and in Germany that’s very much sort of the selling point that it’s one-to-one.’

Sweden, in line with the general mantra of Plan HQ, bases its child sponsorship communications on the premise that a sponsor’s donation contributes to the wider community of the child (which is actually how the funds are distributed). But other countries seemingly appeal to an audience on the more individual notion that there is a single recipient of the sponsor’s donation.

Communications that resonates with the targeted audience (Snow et al., 1986) defines how an organisation will frame its message. And the target audience is not just the ‘children’:
‘Target is middle-class to upmarket with child and family. The average age for being a sponsor is 38-41.’

The demographics of an audience inevitably influences strategy in which issues that will be communicated do not define themselves but are the result of strategic framing processes (Joachim, 2003: 4). Who is (and not) donating and who are the materials aimed at? Plan’s documents provide point us in a certain direction. The ones that are aimed explicitly at the public emphasise ideological and pedological standpoints that are reinforced with persuasive rhetoric. For example, Plan’s ‘One Goal-One Plan’ (Document #6) strategy lays out clear goals that communicate the quality of their Programmes with facts and figures that demonstrate results. The brand identity of Plan is very much at the forefront as “an authoritative global voice” whose vision is to “address those wrongs” (p.7) of child suffering. The newsletter and the ‘Girls Gazette’ (Documents #7 & 8) concentrate on informing the reader about the work that Plan does and why it is needed. Emotive portrayals are more prevalent in the public-facing documents as in many of the videos, whereas the documents which are aimed at trustees or employees use a language that is more cerebral and strategic: 39 of 72 pages concerning detailed financial statements (Document #2) or admissions that child sponsorship fundraising “is under considerable pressure” and the need to diversify operations (Document #5).

What comes across in analysing all three data gathering methods is the desire to frame the effect that sponsorship has. In a scathing blog from April 2017 (Document #4), the CEO of Plan International, Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen, argues that “the rising tide of apathy” towards aid is a result that “people think it makes no difference”. She discusses the long-term benefits of donations that will save lives and “help people to help themselves”. Need is described here – a palpable shift from the overwhelming cry of a rights-based approach – and the rhetoric is urgent and almost desperate. In the interview, Louise Karlander states that Plan try to show the effect of sponsorship in a way “that we have a struggle and you can be a part of it”. The material that Plan Sverige send out is all about reassuring the existing sponsors that what they are doing is helping. Videos #1, 3 and 6 make a point of thanking their sponsors, at times displaying a level of gratitude that merely reaffirms notions of helplessness (Lugo-Ocando & Hernandez-Toro, 2015) on the behalf of the beneficiary. The audience is for the most part being fed
a message that is consumable and framed for their tastes in the way that a text constructs a ‘reality’ for an audience (Frey et al., 1999). Persuasion is linked to a narration by Plan that is carefully constructed to identify, appeal, and activate.

5.4 THE MESSAGE: A WORLD WITH OR WITHOUT PLAN?

It is first pertinent that I define what I mean by ‘message’. To understand the relationship between a text and its context, I chose a number of different analytical frames by which to draw conclusions from my data. One of them is the message from Plan that I interpret from all the three types of data that correspond to one another, i.e. a common meaning that I infer within the communications. I am in this case defining but not limiting ‘message’ as the rhetorical practices that Plan employ primarily to persuade.

One of these practices is the promotion of Plan International as a brand, as one with a distinct identity. This identity is frequently referenced as being the link between the sufferer and spectator; as the intermediary that connects and thus forms a bond of solidarity (Orgad, 2013; Kylander & Stone, 2011). In videos #1, 3 and 5, Plan is revered by the sponsored girls in the videos, either in the form of gratitude or held up as an example: ‘People at Plan see my potential’ (Video #5). The voices of the sponsored verbally acknowledge Plan and in this way Plan confer a message of hope through the work that they do. The strength of the brand is anointed as a way of releasing children from the grips of poverty; Plan parade themselves as conduits of hope. The videos feature screen text, voiceovers and interviews that all praise the organisation and those who give via it. It is a move toward a post-humanitarian approach to campaigning in that the image and the reputation of the NGO is placed at the centre of the appeal (Chouliaraki, 2010: 121). The documents examined confirm this – Plan hails itself for its transparency and innovation (#1), its success stories (#2 & 3), its ‘expert voice’ (#6) and its position as a power (#7). The interviewee, Louise Karlander, states:

‘With what I’m really proud of with Plan is that it is a grassroots organisation. Everything is kind of built up from the village, it’s not top-down it’s basically down-up.’
This self-aggrandisement serves two purposes: it positions Plan in the eyes of its audience as beacons of hope (“saviours” – Document #3) and it reaffirms the credibility of the organisation. This latter one constitutes a strategic aim – by employing the rhetorical style of *ethos*, Plan is engaging in a mode of persuasion that defers from the ‘grand emotions’ of victimhood (Chouliaraki, 2010: 116). It is communicating a message of ‘changing lives through a personal connection (Documents #2, #3 & 8: Videos #1, #3, #4 & #5), a connection provided by Plan.

A key part of the narrative that Plan brings forth in its materials is that of empowering girls. The ‘Because I am a Girl’ movement is central to the work that Plan does and the inclusion of gender inequality is present throughout. One of the videos (#2) is particularly noteworthy in how this is done. ‘What Girls Really Learn at School’ is a powerful and visceral one-and-a-half-minute video which examines gender-based violence. Three consecutive ‘stories’ are told, each following a similar linear path. A girl narrating talks of the importance and her enthusiasm for education and a future she hopes to get from it. Then, each girl is shown being harassed or intimidated or with the very strong implication of sexually-based violence about to occur. The juxtaposition of these three different encounters evokes a sinister mood but one that connects the girls who all come from different parts of the world. This demonstrates a contextualisation of gender violence as universal rather than cultural. The video engages the audience to reflect upon injustices in one’s own society and it refrains from any notions of ‘othering’ (Dogra, 2012; Smillie, 2000). This socially and structurally critical message is clearly leaning towards Chouliaraki’s (2010) ideal of a post-humanitarian approach from NGOs. It disembodies itself from discourses of cultural morality and instead draws in a relatable audience with the reflexive message of ‘what happens there, happens here’.

This reflexivity is echoed by the overarching message that *you*, as a sponsor, can reduce their suffering. Happiness is equated with being sponsored and thus there is a power within the distant audience to contribute to this. The emphasis in the materials on self-inspection leads the audience to be able to personally identify (Nathanson, 2013) with the sufferer rather than simply sympathise. Whereas some of the materials draw on the political and structural inequities (Document #4, #7; Video #2 & #5), the majority personalise them with a narrative that still leans away from a post-humanitarian approach. Plan is more than the sum of its parts – ‘We at Plan are a part of something...
bigger’ (Video #6) – and this aspect of community is expressed in many of the materials (Document #1, #2, 7; Video #1, 3 & 6). Community is solidarity and there is an invitation delivered to be a part of that. Ultimately, it is about levelling the playing field, about looking outwards, and, as the interviewee states, creating conditions where the development industry becomes something of the past:

‘I mean that the whole goal is that we are not needed. I mean we want a world without Plan, want a world without sponsors. Because when we’re not needed we have an equal world, and we don’t have an equal world so definitely that is a goal.’

5.5 A STRATEGIC PLAN

‘Child sponsorship is in decline all over the world, it has definitely reached its maturity point, and there is a major need to modernise the product. In Sweden it is going extremely well ... but we know we are reaching maturity here in Sweden as well.’

During the interview that I conducted with Louise Karlander, I focused on learning about the communication strategies that Plan Sverige develop. In line with the purposes of this thesis, it is of interest to see how child sponsorship is marketed in 2017. It is after all, as she said, a ‘product’ and products need to be sold. As she as well referred to, it is also a product that is strained, not least by the scrutiny that is placed upon it. There are inherent tensions in the way child sponsorship has been marketed (Lugo-Ocando & Hernandez-Toro, 2015; Nolan & Mikami 2012: 59), not only in a representational sense as we have seen but in also in-house. Departmental dilemmas often arise from clashes between pragmatism and ideology:

‘There are definitely conflicts and different aspects of it if you look at the Programme department and the Fundraising and Communication departments in terms of that, I mean, they feel that the child sponsorship is very old fashioned and why are you going to take a photo of a child, for example, it’s ridiculous in a way.’
To alleviate some of these tensions, there has been a development in how Plan Sverige markets child sponsorship. Not only concerning the abandonment of one-to-one sponsorship but also in how communication between the sponsors and sponsored is managed. Louise says that Plan Sverige “haven't allowed our sponsors to send presents to the children for at least ten years” as it is “not in line with our global strategy, not in line with the time we’re living in”. This is evidence that Plan Sverige, at least, devises a strategy for communicating child sponsorship that does not necessarily sacrifice all their ideals in the pursuit of funding.

The desire to maximise funding whilst holding on to the values of Plan is visible in the strategy within the communication materials. A number of the documents place an emphasis on the measurement of results whilst at the same time discussing strategies that ‘connect sponsors with those their helping’ (Document #1). The Plan Ireland Strategy document (#5) outlines the need for strategic goals to adapt to the changing economic climate and to reduce costs by making better use of online social media marketing. This results-orientated approach drives and is driven by the acquisition of funding; clearly defined measurements demonstrate a logos mode of persuasion. Rhetorically, the strategy encompasses the use of facts and figures to appeal to the logic of its audience. Even the videos make use of this – by having on-screen text and voiceover (Videos #1 & 5) which tells the audience how many children are sponsored and how many schools have been built and so on, Plan rely on a mode of persuasion that is an apparent ‘truth’ of that which works. We, as spectators, are thus (hopefully) drawn in by a style that engages our reason.

But, as seen through the analysed data, the strategy possesses more layers than the ethos, discussed in the preceding section, and this logos. Again, we must return to the strategy to appeal to the audience’s emotions, the pathos. That pathos as a means of persuasion is rhetorically applied by Plan is not a surprise given that it is a mainstay of the ideologically charged language of NGOs (DeChaine, 2005). In the data, it varies between careful moral refrainment (i.e. the universality of gender-based violence in Video #2) and binary-inducing guilt tactics (i.e. ‘Laura’s Story’ in Document #3). This strategy, despite its variance in form, positions Plan discursively as an actor that holds power upon a moral high ground (DeChaine, 2005: 85). It attempts to activate its audience through appeals of the heart and, by repeatedly engaging with the rhetoric of pathos, assumes a place of moral authority.
This is demonstration once again that not all of Plan’s materials hold up to Chouliaraki’s notions of post-humanitarianism (2010: 124-125) in communication as there are tendencies to re-emotionalise suffering. The data analysed is conclusive in that despite attempts to avoid overt pulling-of-the-heart-strings, there is still a strategy present that is based on emotive pleading. It is questionable if there will ever be a time that child sponsorship can be ‘sold’ without the intent to commodify emotional responses; if sponsorship can even exist without this. Strategies have been modernised but the question remains if this practice can ever be seen not to be antiquated due to the inherent tensions that lies within it.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this thesis was to develop an understanding of how NGOs represent and communicate the issue of child sponsorship within the context of a case study, that of Plan International. The objective that I had in mind was to explore the aims, considerations and methods that Plan have when they produce their vast array of communication materials that are used for the recruitment of child sponsors. In the spectrum of development NGOs, child sponsorship plays a significant role in the acquisition of funding yet it is a topic not without contention. To understand how and why Plan International present and represent rhetoric and imagery to promote sponsorship does, I believe, contribute to the field of Communication for Development by advancing knowledge in the research of the communication practices of NGOs.

A thorough review of the relevant literature was conducted to ascertain previous research on the subject, to inform the discursive elements of the analysis and as a means of conceptualising a theoretical framework. As a lens through which to conduct my analysis, Chouliaraki’s (2010) conception of an emergent post-humanitarianism within humanitarian communication suited the purposes of the study. Using a triangulation of
data collection methods, empirical evidence from Plan was collected, collated and combined to attempt to make evidence-based interpretations within the analytical chapter.

As a tool for the analysis, I developed four analytical frames as a way of examining and structuring the data and these were represented by the sub-section headings in the analytical chapter. Although these frames are at time interlinking, they aided me in inferring what is most important from the study and formulating the discussion. The frames were Representation, Framing, Message and Strategy. All frames are concerned with communication practices and, more specifically, how Plan communicate child sponsorship. I have found that through their communication materials, Plan have most certainly moved away from the dehumanising and ‘pornographic’ depictions of poverty and suffering (Nathanson, 2013; Nolan & Mikami, 2012) that to a large degree characterised child sponsorship up until the 1980s and emphasised fear as a tactic. Representations have become more nuanced, more considered, more contextualised. Plan strongly advocate empowerment and justice in a rights-based approach and this is, to a certain degree, manifested by imagery and rhetoric that reflects the agency and potential of beneficiaries of sponsorship. Communities are shown as able and willing to develop themselves and poverty is seldom displayed as inevitable or unavoidable. Much of the data pointed to a long-term and sustainable outlook that Plan profess with an acknowledgement of the challenges they face. Louise Karlander, the interviewee, spoke of programmatic shifts that Plan Sverige have undergone that emphasise the importance of relaying a message to its audience of ‘being part of the struggle’ rather than a solution to it.

The audience, as spectators, are the receivers of the appeals. They are, in part, credited with being able to make individual judgements (Chouliaraki, 2010) to decide what causes to back and the marketing material reflects this. There is evidently an attempt at encouraging reflexivity through some of the videos and documents which fall in line with a post-humanitarian ideal. Texts, particularly videos, which contextualise problems as being universal contribute to this: rhetoric that is aimed at engaging the head more than the heart is prevalent in many of the texts I studied.

Yet the rhetorical practices of Plan are not all aligned in the same direction. Applying the three classical modes of persuasion – ethos, pathos and logos – I found that all are,
unsurprisingly, employed by Plan in their communication materials. They at times converge and from this a sense of the strategy and message of Plan becomes visible. Dual realities are communicated throughout the data – ones that, as said, show agency and power, and ones that rely on ‘grand emotions’ by representing victimhood and dependency. There is no clear, firm path that Plan take in the data I analysed but there is, at different times, evidence of the communication of hope and hopelessness, personal and political, and symptom and cause – in short, a lack of a consistent message. Rhetoric is distinguished by a focus on persuasion, and implicit in any definition of rhetoric is the notion of power and my findings show that Plan at times attribute power to themselves, rather than the recipients of aid, through their style of persuasion.

It must be noted that humanitarian communication is a form of public relations (Lugo-Ocando & Hernandez-Toro, 2015) and this is evident through the communication strategies of Plan International. This is not to say that this is a negative thing, more that it is a reality that child sponsorship is something that requires marketing in order to be effective. NGOs such as Plan need to engage and mobilise an audience and thus their communications are vital; it is the way that this is carried out that is of interest here. The findings that I have made through this study suggest that Plan, particularly with their ‘Because I am a Girl’ campaign, are working towards a post-humanitarian approach that accentuates the rights of the beneficiaries of their aid. There is a stark move away from ‘shock imagery’ and Othering and a slow shift to conveying knowledge of context, justice and potential.

Although it is not always present throughout the data that I have analysed and interpreted, there is a legitimate ideal that is apparent that favours reflexive particularism (Chouliaraki, 2010: 124) by rhetorically employing “not a language of charity and paternalism, but in a nomenclature of rights” (Nathanson, 2013: 117). In terms of employing communication methods that disavow old-fashioned pleas surrounding ‘grand emotions’ and a victim-dependency correlation, Plan are heading in a post-humanitarianism direction. But the journey to market child sponsorship is noticeably fraught with contradictory representations, messages and strategies. There is a divergence that I think is not unexpected for an organisation of the size of Plan where a global strategy (https://plan-international.org/organisation/strategy) becomes implemented through the work of its country offices, but this must not be used as an
excuse if Plan are to modernise their child sponsorship practices whilst maintaining their organisational ideals. There is work to be done.

6.2 LIMITATIONS, REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

After discussing what has emerged from this study, it is important to make mention of the limitations that I have encountered. Due to the scope of the thesis concerning time and resources, it was felt that empirical data on Plan International would best be gathered through existing texts (documents and videos) as well as interviewing. The process of interviewing employees from Plan International was in theory not limited to location, however response from several country offices was not forthcoming for a variety of reasons. In the end, one interview was conducted in-person with the Head of Marketing for Plan Sverige. I feel that although further interviews would not have been detrimental to the thesis, it did not hinder its aims as the other types of data collected contributed to a broad and significant insight for the analysis.

However, it must be noted that there are of course differences between how country offices of Plan International do their work regarding communicating child sponsorship. Due to the limits already mentioned, it was pragmatic to mainly examine Plan Sverige and Plan UK & Ireland through the data collection methods employed, as well of course the central body of Plan International itself. Whilst other regional offices were examined, it was felt appropriate to limit the areas of exploration in the accumulation of data. I fully understand and acknowledge that this means there is not full scope for generalising my conclusions, but that there is room for the tentative inferences that I have made. Finally, although the interview that was conducted with Louise Karlander, the Head of Marketing at Plan Sverige, was very fulfilling and insightful, I am aware that her answers and comments are not concretely factual in an objective sense but that they do most certainly provide an interesting and informative perspective of the work of the Swedish office. In conjunction with the other data, I am confident that the interpretations I make within the analysis are solidified by the presence of the interview.

Overall, I have personally gained very much from producing this study. My own interest in how NGOs navigate the difficult terrain of communicating their work has
been increased by further engagement with the topic. When it comes to the issue of child sponsorship, I think it is clear that Plan International, like many other sponsorship NGOs, are working towards addressing criticisms that still surround the practice. It is my impression that the contentious issues that feature in the critique of many scholars is only of benefit to how child sponsorship is conducted; it helps in progressing and contextualising the representations of the ‘distant sufferer‘ in ways that maintain an ideological and ethical approach and that can contribute to the agency and transformation of lives less fortunate than our own.

There is certainly room for further research on this topic. Even with the case study that I have chosen, there is possibility to extend the scope of research by increasing the collection of data to be able to provide more conclusive generalisations. One possibility would be to extend the number of frames, for example by studying the audience in terms of their reception to the communicated materials. There is in addition the opportunity to widen the parameters of analysis by specifically focusing on particular elements within this broad research area. For example, to conduct comparative research into the communication practices of two or more country offices of an NGO could provide valuable insights into how the long-term aspirations of NGOs can be fulfilled whilst they undertake the continuous pursuit of funding.

Word Count: 14262
REFERENCES


Accessed via:


Young, E., 1996. *Strategies of Public Engagement*. Address presented at Aga Khan Foundation Canada Round Table Support for Canadian International Cooperation, Toronto, ON.
APPENDIX A – LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A list of semi-structured questions was prepared to ask the interviewee(s) such that would be relevant and appropriate for the aims of this study. The following standardised questions were included in the interview that took place:

1) How are the communication and marketing strategies drawn up, particularly in terms of the cooperation between departments?
2) Could you explain the differences between the marketing and communication departments?
3) Is there a long-term message that has been drawn up to be included in the communication strategies?
4) [Follow-up question to answer] What would be the difference between them (child sponsorship and product sponsorship)?
5) Is there transparency to the potential sponsors that the money they are donating is not going directly to the child?
6) Is it more that the child is the ambassador or ‘representative’ of their community in the communication materials that are sent out?
7) Are there disagreements within the different departments in terms of the material that is going to be used? For example, with choice of images or videos?
8) What is the percentage of funding that Plan Sverige obtain from sponsorship?
9) What is the most important method of recruitment would you say?
10) What is thought about in terms of the audience that is going to be receiving these communication materials? With regarding a Swedish audience for example?
11) What is the level of cooperation with the communities themselves that are featured in the marketing material? Are they aware of the imagery that is going to be used?
12) What are the constraints within the departments in terms of what can be shown?
13) How do the demands of the donors play an impact in the materials?
14) How often are letters sent between the sponsor and the child? [Follow-up] Has this gone down (in terms of the percentage who exchange letters)?
15) What influence does the Child Centred Community Development approach and the overall rights-based approach that Plan use have on the marketing materials?

16) What considerations are made in terms of how children are represented in the videos and photographs? Do Plan, as an organisation, contextualise them?

17) Regarding the images themselves, what are Plan trying to show? Is it about only showing the child or in showing them with their family or community?

18) Is what is depicted in the imagery deliberately used in order to evoke an emotional response from the potential donors?

19) Is it just the child (being shown) or what is around the child? What works better?

20) Do Plan try and avoid the big emotions and pity in the images that are used?

21) Do you want to show the sponsor that their influence can help in terms of the rights-based approach?

22) Is it important to Plan that the materials that are used make clear that there is an equality between the child that is represented and the sponsor themselves? To show that the money will be used to the agency and self-sufficiency of the sponsored?
APPENDIX B – LIST AND LINKS OF ALL DOCUMENTS AND VIDEOS ANALYSED

Documents:

1) Plan International UK Strategy 2017-2020
3) ‘Sponsorship Changed my Life’
4) ‘Fighting a Rising Tide of Apathy Towards Aid’
5) Plan Ireland Strategy 2012-2016
6) One Plan One Goal – Plan’s Strategy to 2015
7) ‘Girls Rights Gazette’
8) ‘Meet the Community Rising Up Against FGM’

Videos:

1) ‘Meet Marisol - A Day in the life of a sponsored child’ - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaBl_fbH1P4
2) ‘What do girls really learn at school. Learn Without Fear’ - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5TrHh1AQOg
3) ‘Meet Micah, 14 – Sponsored Girl from the Philippines’ - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dd4HwaK1zAs
4) ‘Sponsor a Girl with Plan UK – sponsoragirl.org’ - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4f1QYY8Ass
5) ‘Because I am a Girl – I’ll take it from here’ - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-ZZeE7C7uM
6) ‘We are Plan’ - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zj9FPxsljAQ