



University
of Victoria

ANTHROPOLOGY COLLOQUIUM SERIES



The Orphan Industrial Complex: charitable commodification and its consequences for child protection

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Monday, January 23rd, 2023

11:30 am – 12:50 pm

Cornett A129 & Online via [Zoom](#)

I am an anthropologist whose research deals with children's survival strategies amidst difficult circumstances and the politics of international development and humanitarian intervention for such children, primarily in Eastern and Southern Africa. In this talk, I will discuss my research examining the impact of what I call the global 'Orphan Industrial Complex': activities including orphanage volunteering and tourism, establishing and supporting childcare institutions abroad, and intercountry adoption that problematically commoditize children as targets for charitable intervention. I argue that the discourse and practice of "orphan rescue" drives the "production" of orphans as objects of charity in ways that seriously undermine established international standards of child protection. Using a case study of Uganda, where I have been working with children for 25 years, I will explain how the Orphan Industrial Complex works and what its consequences are for children, families, and child protection systems.

EVERYONE WELCOME