

## Child migration programmes



The origins of the scheme go back to 1618 when a hundred children were sent from London to Richmond, Virginia which is now one of the United States of America. The final party arrived in Australia in 1970.

It is estimated that child migration programmes were responsible for the removal of over 130,000 children from the United Kingdom to Canada, New Zealand, Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) and Australia.

In the post-war era, approximately 3,300 children were shipped to Australia while New Zealand, Rhodesia and Canada received a combined total of about 1,000 children.

Governments have not been able to provide precise statistics concerning the numbers of children received from the United Kingdom.

In this context, child migration refers to children generally between the ages of three and fourteen; the majority being between seven and ten. These children were sent away with the expectation that they would never return, to start new lives in a foreign land, always without their families and often in harsh, understaffed institutions.

Many child migrants, British boys and girls, were sent overseas by specialist agencies such as the Fairbridge Society, established specifically for the purpose of migrating young children to populate the empire with "good, white British stock". Well known national charities such as Barnardos, which provided a wider range of child care services, along with the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Salvation Army and the Catholic Church, played major roles.

In New Zealand, children were often placed with foster parents, while those in Canada were entrusted to the care of farmers often without sufficient preparation or supervision. Some Canadian farmers were even charged with manslaughter, such was the extent of their cruelty. Very few children were legally adopted overseas and the vast majority spent their entire childhoods in large, impersonal institutions or farm schools which accommodated up to three hundred and fifty children.

(source : <http://www.childmigrantstrust.com/our-work/child-migration-history>)