

Africa Mission of Mercy Childcare Program (Familia Based CHE Project)
Terry L. Dwelle MD, MPHTM
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I. Background

Scope of the problem

Street children will be a major problem for medical and general evangelical missions in the 21st century. There are currently 100 – 200 million street children worldwide. Geographic distribution includes 40 million from Latin America, 25 million from Asia, 10 million from Africa, 25 million from western cities and 2 million from the United States. Street children parallel urbanization. Whatever causes urban movement augments the number of street children. Major reasons for being on the streets include family disintegration, poverty, population growth, abuse, exploitation, wars, disasters, migration, parental substance abuse, and an inadequate social safety net. With no significant change in AIDS epidemiology, this disease alone will cause 94.2 million AIDS orphans by 2018 in sub-Saharan Africa. Only 30% of street children are truly abandoned with 70% still having significant contact with their dysfunctional families. With continued family disintegration these children eventually spend increasing time on the streets and eventually become truly abandoned and often “street addicted”.

Ministry Strategy

The average age of a street child is 15 years old therefore effective street rescue programs must be geared for adolescents. Significant efforts should be made to identify and intervene in dysfunctional families (70% of street children still have families) early to rehabilitate these families physically and spiritually and by doing so actually prevent street addicted children. Effective intervention of these families must include a combination of relief and development.

An exciting new urban CHE model called the Familia Based CHE program does this. The Familia wing of the program is a Mission of Mercy Childcare sponsorship program that provides needed focused relief. CHE (Community Health Evangelism) is a proven development ministry that when added to the Familia program effectively provides recurrent home visits emphasizing prevention of risky behaviors, family and personal development, along with strong evangelism and discipleship.

Mission of Mercy Childcare program (MMCC) – Familia Program

Mission of Mercy is part of the Bethesda foundation. MMCC is used to provide the best possible services to the world’s neediest children at the most reasonable cost. Another name for the MMCC program is Familia (name of the Romanian program). The MMCC program is a focused sponsorship program and seeks to provide ministry to children from a holistic perspective by addressing their basic survival, economic, emotional, and spiritual needs.

MMCC currently has 32,000 children enrolled in projects from North Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, including 24,000 from India. MMCC sponsors children from dysfunctional families, schools and orphanages.

Assemblies of God

Several Kenya Assemblies of God churches in the Nairobi area are administering limited street child feeding programs. Some program overhead is currently covered by Africa Children’s funds. These programs generally have associated Bible teaching and occasional informal education. Some programs are planning or developing vocational training for older children. Most of the children attending KAG feeding programs have relatively close ties with poor dysfunctional families.

An orphanage to house 120 children is currently under construction at Athi River. It is hoped that many of these children will be placed with extended families after a relatively short institutional stay though this has not historically worked well for other organizations. A conservative estimated cost per child for this facility is \$70 / child / month or \$8400 / month for the proposed 120 children. The national church has agreed to provide the operational costs if the missionary body would build the orphanage. It is likely that the KAG will require supplemental funding of operational costs for the near future. Child support from a Kenya MMCC program could provide from 14 – 19% of operational costs. This facility may not be operational for several months.

Other Potential Kenya Child Sponsorship Needs

Other current projects potentially desiring MMCC sponsorship support include the Agape Children orphanage in Kisumu (35 children), and in Nairobi the New Life AIDS Center (10-30 children), Becky Adams Orphanage (15-25 children), PAOC orphanage (50-60 children), and referred families from Kenyan evangelical churches.

II. Mission of Mercy Childcare Program Description (For details see the Mission of Mercy Childcare Program manual)

Description

MMCC is the major ministry of Mission of Mercy. Each childcare project must assure a child's basic need for food, clothing, and medical care and shelter is met. Additionally MMCC projects emphasize provision of proper education, emotional needs and job training. A foundation principle is a personal relationship with Christ.

Strategy

The strategy is applied through a partnership agreement between the Project Sponsor (Mission of Mercy) and the Project Manager (Christian organization located in or near the project site). Where several project sites with different organizations are possible a central administrative office is desired.

Child sponsors are the lifeblood of the ministry. Contact between sponsors and children include occasional letters, small gifts, annual reports, and rarely sponsor field visits. These contacts are coordinated and monitored by the field and Mission of Mercy home office. Appropriate guidelines are followed regarding these contacts to prevent untoward results. Correspondence is sent via DHL monthly. Translation of letters consumes about 25% of the administrative time in Romania. Translation would generally not be necessary in Kenya.

A child sponsor provides \$20 per month to Mission of Mercy per child. Two dollars per month is used for promotion and an additional \$2 per month is applied to a children's crisis fund. This children's crisis fund provides a buffer for monthly sponsor deficits (usually 33% of what is pledged) and other crises. The remaining \$16 / child / month provides field administrative costs and child support. The average field administrative costs are about 33% with 33% going for food and 33% for education. Mission of Mercy seeks to find all the child sponsors. If needed participating organizations may also be asked to help find sponsors. Entrance and termination guidelines need to be developed by each project site. Sponsorship is generally continued until graduation from high school, usually 16 years old. Sponsors usually accept substitution of children dropped from sponsorship. Sponsorship of school children often consists of school fee support only leaving additional funds to supplement the support of poorer families in the family support wing of the program.

A field project office usually consists of a director, educational director, social worker, and clerk. Often an expatriate may initially mentor a national director. In the Bucharesti program this mentoring period was 2 years. The social worker is critical and arranges monthly fellowship meetings, food distribution, maintains family files, does home visits and phone work. Home visits are done 1 / year after the initial evaluation. In the Familia based CHE program CHE workers augment these home visits by visiting at least 1 / month. General yearly office costs are \$500 not including rent and utilities. Major administrative time commitments include translation of letters, letter distribution, completing family profiles, and annual reports. Dr. Batis in Pitesti, Romania emphasized the importance of efficient but adequate administration and felt MMCC administrative costs were very reasonable. Office equipment often includes 1 or 2 vehicles (likely not necessary in Nairobi), communications (email, fax, DHL), computers, professional copier, file cabinets (4 drawers can hold 500 children's files). No volunteers are generally used in Romanian programs feeling that one gets what they pay for. A computer program must be developed for each site to record data. Some families in Romanian programs live 175 kms from the project office, which may require development of satellite offices. The field project office should not contain family members who are recipients of the program.

Developing relationships with the family is key. The program revolves around relationships. The CHE part of a Familia Based CHE Program would significantly augment relationship building due to the recurrent regular personal family contact.

No direct money is given to families.

Educational support consists of providing school fees, school supplies, and tutoring. Tutoring focuses on the major subject areas of need (i.e. math, language, English and computer science in Romania). In Romania tutoring is held in the field office in Bucharesti and a separate building in Pitesti. Failure to show for educational sessions results in a deduction from the monthly disbursement.

Food distribution is provided monthly generally from a central location. The Pitesti program actually distributes directly from a grocery store. They would like to have their own grocery that could also provide some additional income for project support from sales to the public.

Family referrals come from participating evangelical churches and by word of mouth. The field office team evaluates each referred family. Families are then placed on a waiting list in a priority fashion for

sponsorship. Prioritization is generally based on number of children, parents at home, both parents employed, living conditions, income, and the extended family. It usually takes 4-8 weeks from referral to sponsorship. While awaiting sponsorship each child is automatically sponsored at \$6 / child / month. Use of the case management model would be helpful to coordinate family support. This would be essential for the CHE trainer in planning lessons for the CHE workers.

The Preventive Screening Clinic concept being developed in the Bucharesti program identifies significant physical problems and provides early intervention for these already marginalized children.

Project Sponsor

Mission of Mercy's significant role is providing funding assistance not management of field projects. Projects will be regularly reviewed by Mission of Mercy in light of the standards outlined in the letter of agreement and financial records to assure proper use of donor funds.

Project Manager

The project manager must develop facilities, obtain approval from governing authorities, define the local program considering the philosophy of Mission of Mercy, and create a budget. The Project manager must operate the program, provide appropriate financial controls and reports and help Mission of Mercy as needed with promotional materials.

The Project Manager must initially submit to Mission of Mercy an Application For Participation that includes; 1) A written statement of the ministry of the Project Manager, 2) A statement that the Project Manager's Christian beliefs are consistent with the Mission of Mercy Evangelical Statement of Faith, and 3) A project description. The project description consists of a description of the community, and overview of similar services to the children, summary of the proposed program, discussion of the need for the ministry, a projected number of children to be included in the project, a proposed start date, a synopsis of the staffing plan, and an indication of the available resources needed for the project. The Project Manager must also submit a tentative budget including start – up and ongoing expenses. Following Mission of Mercy acceptance of the Application for Participation a Letter of Agreement will be signed by the Project Sponsor and the Project Manager.

After the Letter of Agreement is signed the Project Manager will begin to compile and submit the child profiles as per the procedures in the MMCC program manual.

Upon receipt of the profiles Mission of Mercy will promote the project, seek sponsors and begin funding. Ongoing requirements of the Project Manager include; 1) Manage the project in accordance with the letter of agreement, 2) Comply with procedures in the MMCC program manual, 3) Submit timely reports, 4) Cooperate with the Project Sponsor by providing pictures and stories for promotional purposes, and 5) Maintain a spirit of cooperation with Mission of Mercy staff.

Reporting needs include; 1) Providing updated child photos and profiles, reports and stories for promotional purposes and answer questions that arise during the sponsorship program, 2) Coordinate monthly correspondence, process child substitutions, and update the List of Children, 3) Provide quarterly financial reports and 4) Provide annual progress reports, annual updates on each child, new budgets and a narrative summary of the project.

III. MMCC Program for Kenya

- A. The MMCC Program (Familia) married with the CHE program when possible would give several evangelical organizations and programs dealing with dysfunctional family's significant relief and development resources together with strong evangelism and discipleship.
- B. This program could potentially significantly impact the number of street addicted children if applied broadly in Nairobi and other areas of Kenya.
- C. This program could significantly help financially support schools and orphanages (particularly needed in the Athi River project).
- D. Seeing that several institutions and organizations will likely be involved in Kenya MMCC projects it would be desirable to have the administration of the central MMCC Kenya office under either cooperative or non-denominational evangelical control (neutral ground). Agape Children is such an organization, already registered in Kenya, actively and effectively running an orphanage and allied street child ministries in Kenya, and willing to assume this role. Agape is a division of Medical Ambassador's International that already helps administer the Nairobi CHE Support and Development office. The Assemblies of God should continue to provide the office space and basic office support. Mission of Mercy and MAI would provide salaries for office personnel and major operational funding. This would avoid placing additional heavy administrative burdens on already stretched national church

organizations (i.e. KAG in light of the Athi River situation) and avoid the potentially difficult situation of denominational bias.

- E. The MMCC Kenya office should be run in conjunction with the already operational Nairobi CHE S&D office to conserve administrative resources. CHE will be an integral part of many MMCC local projects. The CHE S&D will likely need to add an additional computer and printer, 2 additional desks, 2 additional bookshelves, 4 file cabinets, copier, and tutoring and general office supplies. The current CHE S&D office will be available for only an additional few months. The East Africa Area and Kenya Field Directors will need to find acceptable alternatives for the future.
- F. Composition of the MMCC office would include a Director - Mentor (expatriate), Assistant Director (national), Social Worker (national), Education Director (national), and possibly a Clerk (national). Significant assistance in developing this program could come from Sharon Moree' who established the Bucharesti program and has expressed interest in helping in Nairobi after June 2000. She is an independently supported missionary but affiliated and working under the Assemblies of God mission as an MA. Additional expatriate assistance could come from John and Anne Martin and CJ Szabo (after September 2000). Nationals would need to be identified and hired.
- G. Educational tutoring and food distribution could be done in existing strategically located evangelical churches.
- H. Referrals would come from a variety of orphanages, schools and churches. It would be desirable to start with projects in Nairobi and Kisumu and expand from there.

IV. Time Line

December 1999 – Submit a report to Don Corbin, Jerry Spain, and Ron Hanson and receive an approval to proceed.

December 1999 - January 2000 – Draft an Agape Children Application for Participation

February 2000 – Present the concept to the field fellowship and national church leadership and receive approval to proceed.

February - March 2000 – Submit the Application for Participation to Mission of Mercy and receive approval and sign the Letter of Agreement.

March - July 2000 – Establish the MMCC office, interview and hire personnel; develop program mechanics (i.e. tutoring and food distribution, etc.).

July – August 2000 – Program initiation.

V. Resources

A. Current

Office – Existing CHE S&D office at EAST. Current office equipment includes 2 computers and printers, 3 desk sets, 3 office rooms, phone with email access, DHL access, and basic office supplies.

Personnel – Missionaries – Terry and Diana Dwelle, John and Anne Martin, and potentially Sharon Moree' in June 2000 and CJ Szabo in September 2000. Nationals – Alice Nderitu (Chief Trainer of the CHE S&D) could provide some basic administrative oversight to the MMCC program.

Finances – AOG – provides the funding for the rent and utilities of the CHE S&D through the work account of Terry Dwelle, STEER (Covenant Children) – provides computers and large equipment purchases on a grant basis, MAI – provides salary for Alice Nderitu as the Chief CHE trainer of the CHE S&D center.

B. Needed

Office – A new office site will be needed in the near future as the current CHE S&D office is returned to EAST. Need an additional computer, 4 file cabinets, 2 additional desk sets, 2 book - shelves and supportive office supplies.

Personnel – Nationals - Director, Educational Director, Social Worker, and Clerk.

Financial – Sponsorship funds for ongoing MMCC programs and upstart funds.

VI. Summary

The MMCC program could have a significant impact on dysfunctional Kenyan families and their children and provide supplemental financial support for Christian schools and orphanages like the Athi River.

By adding the administration of this program to the existing Nairobi CHE S&D office under the administrative cover of MAI and Agape Children of Kenya would simplify access of several programs and evangelical denominations to MMCC services and would also eliminate excessive administrative demands on national churches like the KAG while they develop the Athi River complex.

The Mission of Mercy and Agape Children has approved this concept and are ready to proceed. It is anticipated that a functional Childcare program could be operational by August 2000.

VII. Immediate Actions

1. Terry Dwelle – Send a copy of this report to Don Corbin, Jerry Spain, Darla Calhoun, Stan Rowland, and Ron Hanson.
2. Terry and Diana Dwelle and Darla Calhoun – Meet in Bismarck, December 6-8th to write a draft of an Application for Participation.
3. Jerry Spain, Ron Hanson, and Don Corbin – Make a decision on whether this project should proceed as proposed or with revisions. The missionary leadership must then determine how and when this should be presented to the field fellowship and national church leadership.
4. Jerry Spain and Ron Hanson – Provide an adequate CHE S&D office and living space when the current CHE S&D revert to EAST. Establish when that transfer is to take place. The new CHE S&D office should be centrally located and accessible to nationals. EAST is an ideal location.