

Notes from Meetings in Cambodia with MOM and NGO Leadership

Meeting with Mission of Mercy Leadership and MoM Project Leaders in Cambodia

11 March, 2002

Opening comments:

Leading people by learning together is a key concept of effective leadership. In Cambodia we need to start talking and learning together more. We need to analyze where we have been and what has been successful, what has not been successful and why. We need to decide how we determined it was or was not effective. What were the evaluative criteria?

We (Christians) should be the most knowledgeable child development workers in Cambodia.

How do we raise nationals to become the educators and leaders?

Can we plant churches through children or is ministry to children an annex to planting churches?

1. It was stated that many of our strongest, disciplined church leaders have come out of the orphanages. These young men and women are some of the strongest assets in our churches. He and others named more than 20 leaders. This belief or perception should be documented or disproved so that we can make informed decisions regarding the results of our work in Cambodia.
2. Since the orphanages have been established the longest, to this point they have had the most impact. However Mark stated that the Christian schools will function as the most powerful benefit to church planting and growth in the future.
3. Questions were raised regarding the longer-term benefits of the MoM ministry in public schools, although it was acknowledged that it was often the public school ministries that provided the opportunity for government leaders to allow for other ministries. It was stated that development projects with families seem to have a greater benefit. A question was raised regarding the direct benefits this type of development brings to children.
4. The growth of the numbers of orphans due to AIDS deaths (possibly 150,000 orphans in the next few years) will need to be a factor considered by Christian ministries to children. How can we help mobilize the church to prepare and provide for these children?
5. The need was raised for a training center to prepare Christian teachers and trainers to address the educational needs of schools and training centers in the future. In addition to the need for general education there is also a need for life skill development training for various age groups. Training is needed for new teachers as well as experienced teachers who were never trained in effective educational practices built upon a Christian world-view. Questions were raised regarding the length of time needed for these courses, from where the students would come, the influences of the family in relation to the career choices of young people, and where the training center should be located?
6. The pros and cons of providing some-type of transitional housing for the protection of teenagers leaving the orphanages or villages, if the post-secondary training they need in cities where they will have difficulty living successfully.

7. Concerns were also raised regarding the fine line of balance between development and dependency and the relationship of this to sustainability.

8. Stress was made regarding the need for clear understanding regarding the theology of the child and development and transformational-holistic theology. If we are guided by a clear and strong understanding of these then we will be able to provide a developmentally-based ministry to children that will integrally function in church planting and development.

9. A discussion regarding the new MOM web site followed. The MOM project people felt it would be helpful for filing child profiles and more quickly communicating with donors. However because the current cost of the Internet connections that research would better be served by having CD's of the literature that could be accessed though a central office.

10. We were presented with 3 points for reflection:

- A. How do we develop leadership for our projects?
- B. How will CHE and MOM interface? Can we work together? Do we need to work together? If yes, where should we work together?
- C. If we develop Christian schools as the future focus of MOM ministry, what the strategic focus of the AoG and MoM? How will we get it all done?

11. We need learning teams to research these and other issues. A critical starting point is where we are and how we are being funded. The next step would be to examine growth and decide how we will fund future projects. Do we continue to pool money and divide it up or directly fund individual projects?

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=====End of Ann's Notes =====

Observations from Bill Prevette:

In speaking with Mark and Kelly in the car coming back from K. Som, Bob asked, what does MOM need to do in Cambodia and what is working?

- 1) Focus on our Criteria for ministry - we need to better define this.
- 2) We need to do a better job with long term tracking of our kids - we should do a retroactive study and use that to look into the future
- 3) What has been the impact of the Sihanoukville Home, our schools and our Christian Schools?
- 4) What has produced the most impact and workers for the church?
- 5) What works best in our projects? Mark: Boundaries and Accountability
- 6) Will we consider at some point a teachers training college?

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Notes from larger meeting with NGOs at Sunway after Dinner:

Looking at Best Practices and Strategic Alliances

Participants:

Joel Copple now working with Partners international: 9 Projects in Vietnam, 9 in Laos

Tim Azmuth - Country director for World Relief, 9 months, Maternal and Child Health, Micro-Credit

Joke van Ostepal - Children of Hope (WR project) 20,000 children, Church based, home care with Churches and AIDS Education

Craig and Nay Huey Greenfield - Servants - Community Health Development, Youth and Micro-Credit HALO project - 300 orphans in program and working with building community coping mechanisms

Dareth Ly and Kelly Robinette - MOM project leaders in Battambang

Mark Bouman - since 1996 director of K. Som children's home and School. K-7 in Christian School

Trevor Sworn - HIS (Harvest Institute) Street children, bus ministry, Primary health education, transition house for trafficked kids. Vocational training - IT department

Andy Leigh - WVI senior operations. WVI has several areas of work:

- 1) 40 ADP projects - 50% of this is child focused with emphasis on food security and health
- 2) Land Mine Project - Intervention is Vocational training for victims
- 3) Child Survival project - USAID health sector interventions
- 4) AIDS Program - behavior change and counseling
- 5) AIDS orphans - foster care program (probably the best in Cambodia)
- 6) Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances - interventions are foster care programs (What does foster care mean in a Cambodian context). Street children, Urban Poverty project. Working with children on the rubbish dumps, community response to fires and floods. Child sex tourism (Laurence Grey) - police training to get better interventions, Justice Project with LACADO.

What are some of the critical issues this group has identified to address in Cambodia?

- Holistic development with Children - what does this mean in a Cambodian context?
- AIDS and children - long-term impact to Cambodian Society.
- Residential vs. alternative forms of care
- Using Vocational training to build self-reliance and create value (IT training)
- Getting the church and the community to respond to the needs of children
- Theology of the child - we need a biblically centered response
- Glen Miles: crucial for the church in Cambodia to take greater responsibility and ownership for Children at risk. How can this be accomplished?
- ✓ Workshops for churches - how to help traumatized children, Christian response to Sexually exploited children
- ✓ Networking and better research (Glen doctorate: Hearing what children say to prevent abuse a participatory learning exercise with children.
- ✓ How to empower and equip the church (Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia) bringing senior church leaders together to focus on youth and children at risk. Offering the Celebrating Children course - working towards a Biblical Response to CAR. This is a 10 month/ 3 day per month course, which is using the textbook of the same name.
- How can a church begin by helping children (Kelly asked this)
- What about income generation and children - where does this fit? Neal talked about the Hagar program that has 2 separate businesses that bring income to mothers and children.

Question: What is having the greatest long-term impact - What is making a Kingdom impact?

1. The MOM group said this was Christian Schools
2. Trevor Sworn: Relationships with the community are vital for success in Cambodia also Child based NGOs need great humility with other agencies and the local people.
3. Child participation, how do you listen to children in a community, how do you serve with children? Where this is happening the community takes greater ownership earlier in the process. Tearfund/Viva, Steve Gooley, Laurence Grey all working with this model.
4. Increasing our understanding of the worldview of Children helps us to listen more effectively.

5. The Hope Curriculum - in this case each team is given a basic curriculum to guide their work, but each team must work with the children and the topics to contextualize the material. Adaptable and flexible models of program training and intervention are very important to make significant impact with the child in context.
6. If we were to take the issues that have been highlighted above - the following could be a check list for action:
 - ✓ Chose a sector intervention and focus on the root cause
 - ✓ Where does your agencies expertise lie?
 - ✓ What is the area that no one else has seen or working on?
 - ✓ Who are your potential partners in the community?
 - ✓ Are there government entities that need your intervention?

Where is the work of CAR going in Cambodia now?

Work needs to be done on gaining a greater understanding of the Cambodian family? CAMA, WV and Hagar have produced a manual on Foster care, Valerie Perez has done some of this. It is crucial that Christian childcare agencies understand how to build greater resiliency in the Cambodian family.

AIDS will make a huge impact on the family unit - estimates are that there will be 150,000 to 200,000 orphans in the next 5-7 years.

Just as worrying in the cultural matrix are the risk factors that are undermining Cambodian society i.e. violence, abandonment, poverty.

WVI is beginning to work with several community-based approaches that are holistic development models that seek to bring biblical reflection to the task of child development. (I have seen this at the international level with Tom McAlpine and Bryant Myers - it is encouraging to see it happening at the local level). Somehow the church community is slow in adapting participation with the community our traditional ecclesiology tends to focus on 'bringing them out' vs. working from within.

Everyone in this group agrees that the long-term impact must be in planting the church. We know that children at risk (CAR) includes youth and teenagers, which are such a large part of Cambodian society. But how does the church measure its impact, is it a transformational model of discipleship? Do we think of empowering the poor, the family, the community with dignity and meaning? The question needs to be asked, "What would the Kingdom look like if it came to Cambodia?"