

## Training News & Updates

—Phyllis Kilbourn, ROH Director  
of Training



### New Year's Greetings!

As workers for the children we are marching into a New Year that promises to provide us with challenges, spiritual growth and new ventures in ministry. I know we are all encouraged when we look back on this past year and realize that the God who has seen us through previous challenges is the same God who will enable us for the challenges that lie ahead. We may, at times, need to be reminded of the Persian proverb, "Trust in God—but tie your camel tight!"

For me, the first six months of 2005 will be set aside as a Sabbatical. During this time I trust to continue with my many writing projects, but no travel. I want to

complete the book focused on children with disabilities, continue with the curriculum and revise *Children in Crisis: A New Commitment*, which is being used as a college text in missions and urban studies.

A blessing of the past year was to co-teach with Andy Sexton at the International Christian College in Glasgow, Scotland. Andy is Oasis' first International Director for Children at Risk. After spending some 18 years working with street children in Zimbabwe, Andy, now based in Sudan, is still involved in outreach to street children. He also is working on the street children's module for the curriculum which Crisis Care is producing. His article,

"Developing a Project," (below) is a sampling of what we can expect. Keep him in prayer as he seeks to complete this work in January.

Henry Bell's "Time Out for Caregivers" is not only encouraging but also challenging. It calls for personal reflection and a heart response. At some point it would be enriching if you could share your reflections on this article together at a team function.

Remember, the lessons of life are found in the love of Jesus.

## Project Development —Andy Sexton

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring refers to the ongoing way you assess what you are doing and generally is done by focusing on activities.

Evaluation is a more focused time of assessment based on the project plan and in line with your strategic objectives.

### Monitoring

Monitoring is an ongoing process whereas evaluation is a one-time event that may last from a day to six months, depending on the size, nature and complexity of the project. Any given project might be evaluated every few years to keep it fresh and in line with meeting its purpose for existence.

In any given project you may choose a variety of areas to monitor. These might include:

- Staff morale
- Health of the target group
- Response to activities organized
- Numbers in attendance at any given time at the center
- Age of children involved in a given activity

- Finances and project cash flow

You have to keep a balance in what you are doing among

- a. Building the staff team
- b. Developing the individual
- c. Achieving the goal

The following tools can be used as part of the monitoring process:

- Statistical tools, gathering information about involvement, etc.
- Personal enquiry (staff, children, stakeholders)
- Tests of progress made
- Gathering environmental information
- Team discussions and reflection

We tend to get "activity" focused and end up trying to run good activities rather than helping to change lives. As changing lives seems such a long-term goal, we need to force ourselves to step back and look at what we are doing from a different perspective, hence, evaluation.

## Evaluation

Evaluation should be linked on paper and in practice with your strategic planning. Against your objectives have columns called "Indicators of Achievement" or "Impact Indicators" and "Constraints." You may also have a column on how to overcome the constraints.

Projects that don't evaluate will never celebrate, because they will never know whether or not they have something to celebrate.

### Timeframe

Begin monitoring soon after the project begins. An initial evaluation should be conducted after a year if not before. You can look at your first year as a kind of trial run to see whether your objectives are at all realistic. They can then be changed or adjusted for Year Two and onward.

It is good to plan your evaluation period before the actual project activities start so time is blocked out in your diary. You also may need that time to invite a quality, external person to help conduct the evaluation. An extensive evaluation should be planned somewhere in the three-to-five-year period.

### Advantages of External Involvement in Evaluation

- When at the heart of a project, it is hard to be objective
- We don't see certain things because we are involved
- An external person will bring new ideas to the project

- Donors will appreciate an external report

### Indicators of Achievement

To measure progress you need to assess where a child is in relation to where he or she was prior to your project intervention. Indicators are measurable tools you can use to assess progress made toward your objectives. Therefore, evaluations have real value only when you have gathered information prior to beginning anything on the ground.

### The Nature of Indicators

- Quantitative—assess the numerical impact
- Qualitative—assess the depth and range of change occurring
- Surrogate—an indirect measurement of change
- Impact—the sum total of change (individual, communal, political, etc.)

### The Role of Self-assessment

The best assessment is often a combination of self-assessment with outsider involvement. After a period of three to five years, staff can work through a basic self-assessment based on their project outline but including a range of other benefits that may not be part of the plan, such as how they have personally developed out of their experience, etc.

Once the self-assessment is completed an outside consultant or team can come and evaluate on the basis of the self-evaluation which they have in hand before coming. This method has proved to be one of the most successful ways of conducting evaluations.

### Evaluation tools

- Review of project plans and documentation
- Statistical surveys
- Interviews with beneficiaries, stakeholders, staff, etc.

- Observation of activities
- Community questionnaires

## Building a Team

### Recruitment

It goes without saying that of all the decisions you take in leadership, none is more crucial than the appointment of those who will work with you. People can be your greatest resource or your worst nightmare. People are more than a resource, though; they are individuals made in the image of God. Making good appointments is not easy. It takes time to build credibility, but you have to start without it. The first people you hire will have a far wider impact than those who join later as they will create norms for others. You will need to be patient in the early stages.

You would do well to—

- Right from the beginning create a procedure for staff appointments that everyone must go through, including application forms, taking up references, and interviews
- Seek the advice of respected local Christian leaders in relation to those you may appoint
- Appoint people (even those whom you have gotten to know) on a trial/temporary basis in the initial months

As you begin to build an effective ministry team, remember—

- It is very easy to compromise on what you are really looking for in the initial phases of setting up. Be patient!
- Correct procedures can be overlooked in the initial phases as those who join do so on a more ad hoc basis.
- When working with volunteers, it is easy to lower expectations because we are so keen for any kind of help we can get.
- When interviewing potential candidates, there are no easy

answers to the balance between personal competence and the ability to work as part of a team.

- You must beware of making future promises to attract good people.
- Don't avoid talking about sensitive issues such as salaries; lay all cards on the table from the beginning.
- To keep good records of all employment arrangements. Make sure everyone has a contract so they know where they stand.
- To implement probation or trial periods as per local labor laws, usually three months.
- To beware of hiring people who are much older and have developed fixed ideas of many aspects of ministry. Flexibility is needed in the early phases.
- To ensure a staff handbook that includes a code of conduct, complaint procedures, disciplinary procedures, etc. Make certain it corresponds with local labor laws. Other NGOs may be of assistance here.

### Team Development

When people become part of the team, you want them to form good relationships. They need to respect the authority of the leader—in this case you—but you also want them to feel free to contribute their ideas and skills.

To develop a team—

- Make sure all know their roles.
- Get to know your staff.
- Make sure the team has a good routine.
- Meet together regularly to share what is going on and to pray.
- Make sure people feel their ideas are listened to and acted upon.
- Encourage staff to go directly to another staff member who they feel has done them wrong. Jesus showed the way; check Matthew 18:15-17.
- Train all the team to care for all

the children.

- Have a clear code of conduct for all staff.
- Involve staff in the strategic thinking and planning processes.
- Build effective teams around causes, not structures. Make structures functional to serve the cause. Build commitment to the cause, i.e., the vision, mission and values.
- Make discipleship an important part.
- Train, delegate, entrust.
- Encourage and provide feedback.
- Have fun and celebrate.
- Have six-monthly staff reviews or appraisals.

### Conflict

Conflict is inevitable when humans are involved. Conflict can be channeled and managed so that it happens over only minor and more immediate issues.

Much conflict can be resolved through good communication. If all the points above are implemented, major conflict will be avoided.

If conflict persists get the two team members to sit together and discuss the problem. It is good to talk with each of them separately first so that the matter is clear in your own mind. Though it may be difficult, choose a location where no one will interrupt. It is worth going a little distance to find a suitable location. Then—

- Listen to each side without prejudice.
- Make notes.
- Try to work out the reality and root of the problem.
- Immediately after listening to both sides, get the two members together. Let each one have a turn to speak. Try to focus the discussion on key issues.
- If the problem escalates, beware of calling in higher authorities too soon, which will undermine your authority.

What if none of this works? It is probably good to let both sides think through issues overnight and then come back in the morning to talk again. This time try a different approach: design a solution. This strategy could involve a process called MPI (minus, plus, interesting). Invented by Edward de Bono, this procedure gets both parties working together to evaluate both sides of the argument into the categories of plus, minus and interesting.

So, for example, two team members disagree over whether the street boys at the night shelter should cook their own meals. One argues that the boys should do all the shopping, cooking and cleaning. The other argues that one boy each night should help the staff member cook.

On the side of all the boys cooking they might list the following:

**Plus:** The boys would take responsibility for what they are doing, not take provision for granted and learn to work together.

**Minus:** It might be hard to prevent them from fighting over what to buy, and they might be tempted to steal the money. Less time would be available for other activities.

**Interesting:** We might find out which boys know how to cook.

Now list points for the side of the argument that one boy cooks with the staff member each night.

**Plus:** A good time for one-on-one tuition in cooking. A good bond grows up with the staff member. The other boys have more time for literacy lessons or other learning.

**Minus:** The boys who did not cook will take less responsibility for the organization of the night shelter. The boys might be so irregular in

Cont'd on page 4, Col. 3

# Caregiver's Time Out

Henry Bell, WEC International  
Sending Base Director for Canada



## The Blessing of the Poor

Jesus' words in Luke 6:20 "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God" generally spark debate and discussion. Surely, we protest, Jesus means, as He stated in Matthew 5, "Blessed are the poor *in spirit* (italics mine) for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." However, those who quickly "spiritualize" Luke 6: 20 run into problems with Luke 6:24, "Woe to you who are rich." What then is poverty? Why did Jesus say that the poor are blessed?

Poverty is difficult to define because much ends up being based on comparison. A person with a one room house, one chair, and two simple meals a day would in the West be considered poor. However, that same person living in Dafour, Sudan would probably be considered relatively wealthy; and so the debate goes on.

It is now generally agreed that the absence of certain basic rights is a definition of poverty. A simple listing of these basic rights would include: the right to water and food, shelter and clothing, health and education, peace and security. However, the quality and quantity of these rights remains the issue. Jesus' words in John 12:8, "You will always have the poor among you," are not words of despair. Jesus recognizes the fallen world in which we live. He was, of course, quoting from Deuteronomy 15 where plenty was also said about the community's responsibilities to the poor.

Yet, why are the poor "blessed"? One aspect of this blessing is, I believe, that the poor understand what it is to be *interde-*

*pendent*. They know they are dependent on the compassion of God for each day, as well as, the generosity of people. This engenders a humility and even generosity that sets the poor apart from the proud independence of the wealthy. I do not seek to romanticize poverty—I recognize that anger, selfishness and bitterness may dwell in the heart of any unsaved soul. Yet this attitude of interdependence is often hard to understand and accept, especially for those of us who have grown up setting plans and targets to become *independent*—financially and then of family.

One of the heavy burdens caregivers face in ministering to the poor, the outcast, and the orphan, is that of trying to meet the multitude of needs. We want to give—of ourselves and of our experience. We generally want to provide the solution, to have the answer, to deliver people from the state of hopelessness they face. We work, serve and give, and rightly so. We, His children and servants, are to be those "poured out." We are to lay down our lives "for one of the least of these."

Why is this burden sometimes so heavy? Perhaps it is because we are giving of ourselves and not from His indwelling Spirit. People need Him, not us. Susan Sutton clearly elaborated this in the last "Time Out" (*Barnabas Letter*, Volume 1, No 4).

I would like to suggest that the burden may also be heavy because we have made giving a one way street. Not only must we give, and give of that which He has given us, but we also need to receive. Yes, it is

"more blessed to give than to receive" and this blessing of giving should also extend to the poor. We can do that by receiving, by allowing them to give.

The poor have so much to give: time, love, humor, insights into their worldview, a smile, a hug, or some personal expression of their gratitude. Do we take time to receive? Do we allow the children to bless us? Do we allow those who have come to be His children, too, to pray for us? I remember that, at times of great need or danger, we often gathered *everyone* in the orphanage for prayer. The prayers of even the youngest of the children were so precious and faith inspiring. The prayers of the children for us personally when we were sick or in need humbled and moved us. Yes, the poor and orphan have much to give. Could we learn from the poor the blessing of interdependence? We are not the answer but we *can* point to Jesus, and then live as His children in a relationship of giving *and* receiving from one another.

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### Project Development

(Cont'd from page 3)

their attendance that they will not cook often enough to learn anything.

**Interesting:** If boys show aptitude they could be nurtured in this skill.

By the time this PMI process has been completed, the argument is less about personalities and more about designing a way forward. The team members may agree to research which boys are good at and enjoy cooking. If good cooks are found among them, they could mentor other students in cooking. They should then ask the boys what they want.



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