

Encouraging and Inspiring ... **Biblically Based Business;**

a step-by-step guide to nurturing 'good'
businesses as a practical solution to
poverty in the Developing World

Workbook 0
Version 1.1

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reconxile.org

Michael Clargo

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Michael Clargo
www.reconxile.org

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Encouraging & Inspiring Biblically Based Business; a general guide to alleviating poverty through the 'Biblically Based Business' series version 1.1

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in partnership with Colchester TBG www.tbnetwork.org

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Reconxile is a Christian organisation who take 2 Corinthians 5:18 as their inspiration and seek to work out their ministry in practical ways through building reconciliation between: people and their dreams; the dispossessed and the economy; organisations and their potential; in the earnest hope of enabling individuals to reclaim their identity and build steps to their reconciliation with the creator who gave it to them.

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Foreword

Why are you reading this?

- Is it because you understand the plight of the poor and want to help in some way?
- Is it because you feel that you would like to use a bit more of your life to make a difference somewhere?
- Is it because you are already making a difference, but you are looking for a better/proven approach?
- Is it because you are looking for new ways to work out your faith and do God's work?
- Is it because you feel a slight nudging, and a faintly glowing sense of excitement or anticipation inside of you as you read these words?

Perhaps it is a mixture of some or all of these things.

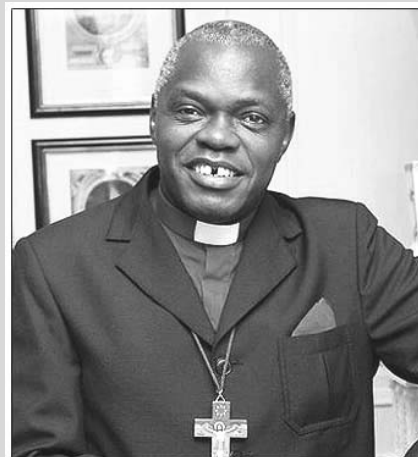
If so, then this book really has been written for you. It has been written to help you think these things through, and to find a way to make a difference; whether that difference is small or big; whether it is individual or part of a team; whether it is in Dalanzadgad or at your desk.

Our hope is that you will find a practical way to help address the issue of global poverty; that you will see the real impact of your efforts; that you will feel blessed through your involvement; and that you will grow through it also. And our hope is that, whatever your faith, you will grow closer to both creation and its creator, however you understand them to be.

The material in this guide has been developed as an outworking of our Christian faith, but it has been written to benefit all those in need, whatever their belief system. We are therefore pleased to work with sincere and caring followers of all faiths or none. We hope that this proven resource will be of some use in your own efforts to push back against the tragic consequences of global poverty, and that, even if you do not share our faith, you will bear with the spiritual reflections within it which, for us as Christians, are an integral part of our insight and understanding.

Yours, in God's love,

Mike Clargo



'Following Jesus means using our abilities as best we can to make 'good news to the poor' a reality in our time. I believe this project reflects that ambition. By using all the Church can bring to bear, alongside Best Business Practice, this initiative offers a way to lift people out of poverty by helping thousands of small businesses in the Developing World. I believe God will call many people to join this initiative, which has the capacity to make an enormous difference in delivering the first of our Millenium Development Goals, the eradication of absolute poverty.'

Giving the poor a practical way to lift themselves, their families and their communities up to self sufficiency and independence must be one of the most powerful manifestations of God's love. The Reconxile business training scheme gives every church the means to help the poorest directly by giving them the basic business skills to start and run good and honest ventures.

This business training initiative is an important opportunity, enabling ordinary Christians to be directly involved in poverty alleviation. The materials are a valuable and proven resource. I would strongly encourage individuals and churches to use them to serve the poor.'

Dr John Sentamu,
Archbishop of York

1 Introduction

“Almost half the world’s population lives on less than two dollars a day, yet even this statistic fails to capture the humiliation, powerlessness and brutal hardship that is the daily lot of the world’s poor.”

So said Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, in a speech to the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, on 17 October 2000. And he could make exactly the same statement today, despite the supposed emphasis of the World’s richer nations on eradicating poverty. And if we leave the solution to Governments and Charities, he will be able to make the same statement in another decade.

The truth is that change is required at a grass roots level. The sheer brutal facts concerning death and misery in the Developing World are monstrous in their proportions, and yet we very rarely hear them reported. Why? Because, as a population, we do not want them reported! I regret to say that, in general, we do not want to be reminded of our responsibilities in an area we feel almost powerless to address and, as a nation, we would rather watch programmes that make us feel good about ourselves, and read newspaper stories which illustrate how bad ‘everybody else’ is, and elect governments which promise to make our lives better. Let’s face it, we live in a market economy, if we wanted anything else – that is what we would get. We prefer to not see our personal role in the suffering of so many people.

It is true that we in the UK do try to salve our consciences a bit; we give to charities (*although any of you who have been involved in counting local envelope collections will realise that ‘give’ is somewhat of a loose term here*) and we sign petitions for others to ‘*do something about it*’. But we maintain this approach even though somewhere at the back of our minds we realise it cannot conceivably be enough. Even though we know that after decades of pouring billions into Africa in the form of charity, it remains largely unaffected.

And let us be frank here, before God who can see into our souls, although I have used ‘we’ in a pejorative sense for the entire populous, it is not just those around us, ... it is ‘you’, and it is ‘me’ – at some level, we are the same. Even in many of our Churches our discussions have lost their perspective; we will set up well-meaning structures and invest resources and time in policies to protect our children and ourselves (*the latter mainly against litigation it seems these days*), with little evidence on the real efficiency and efficacy of the same, and with hardly a thought on what proven impact the same investment could make for God’s children in other countries. Are our own children somehow thousands of times more valuable than theirs? Is that how God sees it? And while we may pray for the needs of the world, and support projects and missionary partners in far flung places, we rarely do so to the point of sacrifice, and we rarely seek channels outside of those that are presented to us. We are the same really. Or perhaps more accurately, we may not be sufficiently different.



Mock-up of SMH with a headline you are unlikely ever to see – courtesy Mark Scott from the site www.smh.com.au

But we are different – because we want to change. Somewhere in the back of our minds is a sense of *'this is not right'*; a real disappointment with the situation and with our part in it. That is why you are reading this, and why, in one respect, I wrote it. And that is why we are going to do something about it.

So how do we want to be different? I guess first and foremost we want to be different in a way which makes a difference! We want our 'stand' we make to mean something. We want our actions to change the status-quo, to do something to right the wrongs which we can see in the World. We want to feel that we really have been part of something which makes an impact. We want to be part of a lasting transformation.

But to make a real difference, to make a sustainable difference at the grass roots level, we need to address this all-pervading apathy which surrounds and insulates us, and insidiously affects us all; we need to challenge the belief that *'we can't do anything about it'* which immobilises us; and we need to address the distance which enables us to conveniently forget the real issues and *'get on with our lives'*. And distance is the big problem. Distance somehow turns the person next door into a statistic; distance somehow takes unbelievably large numbers and makes them just a series of noughts; distance somehow takes tragedy and turns it into a by-line; distance somehow takes you and me and turns us into less than spectators, less than observers, less even than disinterested.

Our challenge, if we really want to make a difference, is to address this problem of distance – to reach across the divide ourselves, and to pull the issues closer. To begin to create a situation where we take personal responsibility for what is happening (*and what is not happening*) and through that to create a vivid picture in which people cannot help but engage. Contrary to the sentiments expressed in Bette Midler's song, God is not watching us *'from a distance'*, He is *'up close and personal'*. And we see the first step in addressing the problem of distance as getting personally involved. Not an envelope to a charity, not a prayer for an anonymous people, not a letter to your MP, but a personal engagement with real people, in a real situation, with real desperation.

"But how can we do that?" is an obvious and reasonable response – and, until recently, we would have joined you in it. But we now realise that for as long as we don't get personally involved, we literally forget the issue. For a huge proportion of our daily/weekly/monthly lives, we frankly cast little of our mind on the issue, and therefore we also cast little of our time, our ideas, or our resources in that direction either.

Jesus told us that we saw him hungry, and did not feed him, when we saw and did not feed 'the least of these' (*Matthew 25:44*). He was unequivocal. And even though there is little coverage of the real issues (*as we fill our screens with 'Big Brother' and 'Match of the Day' etc.*) we have seen the hungry, and we need to do something about them. And *'ticking the box'* with a charitable contribution may well not be enough. The thing is that, in this 'Global World', Lazarus is now very clearly at our gate (*Luke 16:20*) and all the advice we would have given the 'Rich Man' we need to take ourselves. We at least have the benefit of hearing what the Rich Man asked Lazarus to be allowed to do, and that may be the only warning we get.

We need to do something directly and personally, and this guide has been written to help you to work that through.

"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'"

"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'"

Matthew 25:44

Our vision

Reconxile's vision is to work with this desire to change (*your desire to change*) and to empower and support people in their first few steps; to provide a practical pathway to being sufficiently different. Our aim is to inspire, enable and support people at the grass-roots level (*that means us, you and me, and people like us*) to get personally involved in engaging with the problem. We believe that only in this way will the impact in developing countries be sustainable, and only in this way will attitudes in the richer nations begin to change.

But what actually do we mean by 'personally engage'?

Reconxile subscribes to the concept of 'a hand-up, not a hand-out'. We have seen the disabling effect of two decades of simple giving, and recognise the growing focus on building independence rather than dependence as an important development. We want to see people able to support themselves and their families through their own efforts. But, as you might imagine, there is very little employment in areas where poverty is most severe, and so there is little opportunity for people to find paid work.



Business Training
in Mongolia

The more enterprising people in these communities do try to set up businesses of their own, encouraged by the recent growth in microfinance schemes. However, they do not always pick good businesses, and often they do not really know how to run them. Even a very simple business such as buying and selling pineapples can be difficult if you do not know how to calculate your income and your expenditure, and it gets even more difficult for them when they have to consider microfinance loan repayments and cash-flow.

But these small simple businesses are the only real option for these communities. Such small businesses are the only sustainable way:

- to use what skills/labour they do have
- to ensure their independence of the need for charity
- to build dignity and self-determination
- to create future employment for their community

They have the energy, the ambition, and the drive. Our challenge is to help them to correct their misunderstandings, to get alongside them and to ensure that they have a grasp of the basics. It really is that simple. They need a skill set which is almost second-nature to us in the West – so much so that we would call most of it '*common sense*' – and we need to share it with them. That is what we mean by 'personally engage'.

And if we accept this challenge, the impact can be awesome. With just one team we have generated over £2M of benefit in and around the Kampala area (*please see the calculation on the right*) and the number continues to grow at 10% per month – and this benefit was initiated by just one team of three people in two one-week visits. Imagine what we could do with five hundred small teams.

How we estimated the benefit

We know that over the 12 months prior to Feb 2008, the local trainers we trained, had trained a further 400 people (*approximately*).

Our survey in May 08 showed that out of a sample of 33 of these 72% now had 'successful' businesses (*compared to 17% who had a successful business at the start of the training; a growth of 55%*).

'Successful' was defined as having sufficient profit to feed & house the family, and to educate the children – a minimum of about £1000 per year in the area around Kampala.

We assume that having the skills to set up a successful business is something which will not diminish with time and so we have assumed that they will have this income for at least the next ten years.

So even if they are on the bare minimum, and even if we assume each successful business does not employ anyone else, this equates to a benefit of:

$$55\% \times 400\text{people} \times £1000 \times 10\text{yrs} \\ = £2,200,000$$

And they are still training at a rate of a further 40 people per month.

Five hundred teams could create £1Bn (*equivalent*) in sustainable aid to developing countries – at the time of writing, that is currently more than the total Annual Aid provided by the Italian government and about 10% of that provided by the entire G8.

And yet five hundred teams represents less than 1 team per 100 churches in the UK, in other words, even if as many as 99% of all the churches in the UK felt that they are not able to inspire and support a team of their own, we would still probably hit our goal. Makes you realise what could be achieved if the numbers were reversed!!!

Because, despite the figure of £1Bn being a bit of a 'headline grabber', I think God's ambition for this work may be even greater. And you only need to look at the figures concerning poverty in the Developing World to see why. Between 25,000 – 30,000 children die every day due to poverty, and around 2.6 Billion people in the Developing World live on less than £1 per day – our target hardly makes a dent in that – but it will fundamentally affect the lives of at least 100,000 people in the Developing World who would have nothing without it. And, perhaps just as importantly, it will affect the lives of another 100,000 people in the developed world, who will come to realise that they can and must do something more than they are doing at the moment, and through that realisation, begin a journey in fellowship with God's heart which will touch and transform many others.

I hope and pray that our vision is merely the first few ice crystals in a giant snowball of the outpouring of God's grace in and through His people. This book is a basic guide on how to pack snow. And it is snowing!!!

What is a 'small team'?

Clearly, the most prominent part of a small team is the three or four people who go out into the Developing World to deliver the training. But that is only one aspect of the team, and only one way to become directly involved.

There are many other roles to be fulfilled if those people who go out to do the training are to be successful: there is prayer; organisation; publicity; fundraising; research; administration; many different ways to become directly involved in helping a specific group of people in need and get personally engaged in their stories.

This guide covers all of these roles (please see the contents list below) and we hope it will enable you to find your rightful place in God's mission to those in desperate poverty, and also God's plan for mobilising and breaking the heart of His church in this country – whatever that is.

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1.2 Background

How it started

Our personal involvement began through a group called the Transformational Business Network (TBN – see right) who have been seeking to engage business people in the UK in supporting business in the Developing World as a sustainable means of transformation. As part of TBN we visited Uganda, and quickly discovered the pitfalls of simply going out to ‘do good’, and we returned a bit bruised, a bit confused, a little bit despondent, and a little bit wiser. And through that experience we discovered what was needed to make a difference, and to make that difference not only sustainable, but cascable, transferable and extendable. Through that experience was born the programme of workbooks, the training materials, the guidance on how to make it work, the proof that it does work, and the personal commitment to make it work elsewhere.

Through our experiences in Uganda we discovered that in two to three one-week trips, it was possible for a team of three people to successfully generate the equivalent of two million pounds (see the box on page 6), in terms of the sustainable value of new business start-ups. And this figure was achieved in just one year by the people we trained and helped them to train others, and it is a number which continues to grow at about 10% per month currently, and is likely to grow at a bigger rate in the future as more trainers are trained locally. And, perhaps most importantly, it is a figure which is the result of local commitment and self-help, of dignity and perseverance, of the energy borne from success and mutual encouragement by those we were seeking to help. It is a figure and a future potential which is ‘owned’ by those out in the Developing World. It is to their credit, not ours, but we had the honour and the privilege of being there to set things rolling.

About TBN

The Transformational Business Network (TBN) is a network of business people and corporate organisations that uses an enterprise approach to tackle global poverty.

TBN supports commercially sustainable small-medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries that create jobs, empower the poor and transform communities.

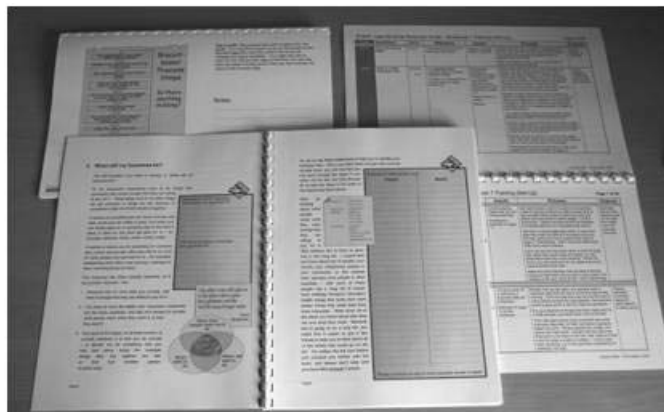
You can find them
at tbnetworkportal.org



The people & the situation we were trying to help – the slum in Katwe, an area of Kampala

How we see it going on from here

Since that initial experience, God has been stretching our vision on what is possible. We originally developed the materials purely for those we were working with in Kampala, to provide them with the means to propagate it independently of us, to make them self-sufficient. Then we realised that we wanted to use it to help those in other places, but our model was still one where it was us (*our small team, based in Colchester*) doing the 'starting'. Then we had people pick up the material and ask to use it on their own projects, and we thought it might have some use in that regard. Only very recently have we realised the possibilities of empowering people who we have never met to simply do exactly what we did, and in parts of the world we have never heard of, but with a head start: The materials which we had to develop from scratch.



Photograph of the training materials: Workbook 1 (bottom left); Training Session Plan (Right); and Materials Guide (top left) – all are available to be down-loaded free of charge from the reconxile.org website.

And so our current strategy is to seek to use the power of the Web and the church network (*in terms of emails and online resources*) to inspire and mobilise small teams from other Churches, initially across the UK and then further afield (*but of course God might have other plans in terms of the order of this*), to engage with sister Churches throughout the Developing World to repeat the Kampala experience.

How you might get involved in that

However, inspiring and mobilising 500 small teams is a much bigger task that might appear from simply saying the words. In an age where we are bombarded by information, simply getting the message out penetratingly, frequently, and compellingly to those who might form part of one of those teams is a mammoth task in itself. Then there is the need for prayer and discernment for them and for the right place to help. There is a need for those who can network to build good links with those who have the need. There may be a need for training the teams, for equipping them, or for supporting their work financially.

In any event, those who do the work of going out to the Developing World to deliver the training are likely to be the minority, and there are a lot of other roles which need to be fulfilled if we are to get anywhere near our vision, some of which may be suited to you personally. To help you think through what you might do to help move this forward, please look at the diagram opposite on how you might want to get involved. The rest of this guide is intended to help you think through those roles and provide some basic guidance on how you might take them forward.

Caveats

But, please be aware that there is an element of risk in this. God calls us to step out in faith, and He promises to protect you, but this is not a promise that can be interpreted from an entirely worldly perspective. In extreme circumstances, this protection may involve God pulling you to His side somewhat earlier than you had originally hoped to arrive there. One look at the recent histories of Kenya and Rwanda illustrate how even

relatively stable and God-fearing communities in the Developing World can turn dangerous, and then of course there are places like Nigeria, Darfur, Congo and many others you could name.

Ignoring for a moment the dangers of litigation against Reconxile, we still feel compelled to warn you that stepping out for God often contains elements of discomfort and risk. We therefore ask you to please: make sure that it is God's heart you are listening to (*not ours*); to understand the risks and to do everything you can to take suitable precautions; and to seek prayer cover from your church and community. However, in the words of the Ian White hymn, while *"a ship that's in the harbour is calm and safe from harm, it was not build to be there, it was built for wind and storm"*.

May God bless you, as you take up your cross and follow Him, whatever the role that He is calling you to.

1.3 Ways that people may want to get involved

Before teams are mobilised, and the training initiated, there are many things that need to be done, any of which you might feel God nudging you toward.

The diagram below illustrates some of the key roles in taking this forward in your church or community, and these are explored in the rest of this section.

At the end of this section, when you understand what needs to be done, you might like to think back over what echoed with you, and then to think and pray through what God may be calling you toward.

And in the following section (1.4) you will find a map of pathways through the book which may help you to think through what to do next.



There are many ways people can choose to get involved. Each of the roles illustrated here are explained in the rest of this chapter, and then expanded on in the rest of the guide.



Proclaim: Sharing the message, inspiring others

The first task is one of helping people to know that this opportunity exists in a practical form. Sadly, this is not as straight-forward as it might at first appear. If your experience is anything like ours, God often has to put things in my path a number of times before I begin to get the message that this might be relevant to me.

Most of us manage to fill our lives quite full with things, many of which are actually very important, and so we often see messages on other things as a bit of a distraction, and we filter them out, usually well before we have the chance to evaluate them properly. It is a bit like the cartoon of the King on the hill, surrounded by his knights in mediaeval battle armour, berating the messenger trying to show him a machine gun with the words *“I don’t have time for this. Can’t you see I have a battle to fight”*. Except in our case, the messenger may be trying to show us a bigger and more strategic battle than the one we are currently engaged in.

This is entirely normal, but what it means is that most of the messages that eventually took root in our minds often had to reach us a number of ways through a number of different channels before *‘some of it fell on good soil’*. Some things impact on your mind many many times before you finally give them enough thought-space to realise that they are important. It is quite saddening to discover just how effective the Devil is at *‘carrying the good seed away’* – particularly when we are busy on other things. (*Matthew 13:19*)

And so a vital part of taking this work forward is finding ways to bring it to people’s attention, and more than once: Talking about it; circulating snippets of information; sharing printed copies of some of the stories; raising questions to people (especially those with the authority to make something happen); giving a talk on it; forwarding emails to your network; encouraging others to talk about it; putting up posters; communicating the progress of other teams; including it in agendas – basically not allowing it to be overlooked or forgotten. Guidance on this role can be found in Chapter 2.



Resources to assist people in publicising this work, such as the leaflet above, can be downloaded from the reconxile.org website.



Connect: Exploring needs with networks in the Developing World

A vital part of our success in Uganda was having a group of people there who we could trust and with whom we could talk things through. It was they who met us at the airport on our first ever visit, who had

arranged a suitable low-cost hotel, who had worked out the people that they wanted us to meet, and who took us round to see those people and businesses. It was them who we asked if they would like us to deliver a training course on business; who organised the translation into the local language; who organised the venue for the training; and who invited the right people to come on the training.

And now it is them who organise new training on a monthly basis; who get the materials printed and the notebooks ready; who deliver the training each Saturday



(Most of) our team on our first (*exploratory and fact-finding*) visit to Uganda, together with our host Paul Kinataama (far right)

morning, and who administer the small fund for covering those expenses. Without their commitment and ownership, we would have achieved precisely zero.

But there are thousands, perhaps millions, of groups like them all around the world. People who can recognise the need for local business training as a sustainable solution to poverty (*either currently, or as soon as the idea is put before them*) and who are willing to be the local agents to make it happen. Our challenge is to find them.

But that might not be as difficult as people think. Most of us who are likely to have an interest in this sort of work already have contacts in the Developing World, either directly, or through people we know, or through our church network. It is very rare these days for an active church in the developed world not to have links with mission partners, or even with sister churches in the Developing World. In fact many churches actually have members of their congregation who have been to a poor area somewhere in the world: perhaps as part of a trip organised by World Vision, or Compassion or Habitat for Humanity; or they have people who have active contact with charities like Tearfund, or Samaritans Purse, or ICR; or with mission agencies such as YWAM and CMS; or with denominational links, like the Anglican Communion.

Most churches would be hard pressed not to have someone in their congregation, who had a close connection with someone else, who had a personal link with somebody, somewhere in the Developing World. And that link will be able to tell you: How appropriate business training might be; who would have the most practical interest in making it happen; and how to get in contact with them.

So this is the second area of need to which people might feel a calling: Understanding and clarifying the specific need in one small area of the Developing World. Guidance on this role can be found in Chapter 3.



Equip: Being part of a project to initiate the training

This is probably the most exciting and rewarding role in everything we are talking about here. To go out and engage personally with those who need help in the Developing World: To see first-hand the situations which your work will help to improve; to build personal and lasting relationships with people who, despite their impoverished situation, have a deep relationship with God; to receive gratitude and appreciation out of all proportion to what you are actually doing; to feel a prominent part of God's plan for these people – well that is just awesome and unforgettable.

Whether people are simply part of the team, or whether they are leading the team, this can contain an unbelievable sense of '*I have come so that they shall have life, and have it to the full*', and the tangible, unchanging reality that this '*having life to the full*' is not through wealth or possessions, or even location, it is through phenomenally deep and productive relationships, and through a real sense of overcoming adversity and transformation under God.

Our newest group of trainers for the Kampala area, including those who are now trained to train trainers, making Kampala self-sufficient.



But the danger is that people feel this role is reserved for those of us with business or training skills. It is not, in fact little could be further from the truth. We are not talking about the skills of running a multinational, we are talking about selling pineapples on the roadside; and we are not talking about pontificating as experts, we are talking about helping those with very little education to grasp basic concepts. Eventually the training will be delivered by people with less grasp of business or training than practically anybody from the western world, and it will be delivered successfully, as it has been in Uganda. And as with Uganda, if people can understand and apply the training themselves, then they can deliver it to others.

That is the direct role of the training team, but it has another very important role as well – because this is the role which is most likely to crystallise other roles around it. Where there is a committed individual or team who is inspired by God's vision of going to help the poor, other people will naturally be drawn into the other roles to support them. Once the training team has begun to be identified, the whole thing somehow becomes more real, and the church or community begins to grow in energy around it. Guidance on this role can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.



Raising finance to support projects

Compared to the financial benefits of £2M+ per project, the costs of initiating the work are relatively small, but they are not insignificant. Some teams may well be able to fund their own flights and accommodation, but many more will struggle to find the cost of three return journeys, particularly if they are in a situation where they might need to take a week or two of unpaid leave in order to undertake the visits. It is not uncommon to place the real passion for making a difference in this way in the hearts of young people, some of whom may still be paying off University loans, or trying to pull together their first mortgage, or coping with the costs of a new family.

Please note: It has been our policy to expect local trainers to cascade the training on a purely voluntary basis, for reasons you can read about on page 76, but it is unfair to expect them to pay for the privilege as well.

Further to the costs of travel, there are also the costs of local support within the developing country. Money needs to be found for translation work, local printing, venue hire, pens and paper for participants, and maybe even a flipchart and stand. And that is even before the first set of training takes place. Afterwards money needs to be found to pay for the expenses of local trainers, and even though local churches may ultimately benefit from increased tithing as a result of the success of the training, and may at some point decide to take on this financial burden as part of their own ministry, this is unlikely to occur within the first year or two.

This provides an excellent opportunity for those in the church and the surrounding community, who may feel limited in their contribution in other ways, to be able to provide vital support to the project's success through helping to fund the team and the local expenses. In practice, for three visits of three people, and for all of the local costs over the first two years of operation, it would be useful to target about £10,000 of fundraising, depending on where in the Developing World the team are operating. This may seem like a lot, but the returns are many hundred-fold, in terms of the financial impact of this investment in the Kingdom (*Matthew 13:23*). Guidance on this role can be found in Chapters 6 and 7.





Pray: Providing spiritual support

We have found that this work is somewhat prone to spiritual warfare. Our trip out to deliver the training in Mongolia had far more than a reasonable number of mishaps, including eight separate and totally unrelated breakdowns in the desert. And yet that perhaps is a good thing, there is something remarkably affirming in the Devil wanting to stop us in our tracks – let's face it he does not waste his time on things that don't matter.

In any event, the need for prayer in this sort of work is clear. During our trips we have always benefitted from somebody praying for us back at base, sometimes individual and ad-hoc, sometimes collective, and once on a carefully organised rota. We have also benefitted from extensive prayer from those who we were going out to help – and boy, can they pray!!!

But prayer is not only necessary during the time of the trip, but also in the time leading up to it, and the time after it, particularly for those left to carry on the work. We would also value people's prayers for the continued propagation of this work, that others will pick up and run with it, and that the target for 500 projects in our vision is not only met, but surpassed.

So the fifth role to which people might feel a calling is the all important one of contributing to that prayer, or even organising it. Either way, their teams will be grateful for it. Guidance on this role can be found in Chapter 7.

Replacing the fan-belt.
The first of many break-downs in the Gobi Desert



Disciple: Engaging youth

While many of our churches have a range of ages within them, each working and worshipping together, many more have a distinctly unbalanced congregation, some with very few active members under 50 years of age (*my own local church is sadly a case in point*). As a result, they have trouble reaching out to the youth in the communities of which they are part, since they not only lack members of that age, they are often missing an entire generation in between as well. Invitations to 'youth groups' run by 'fuddy-duddys' are sadly not that compelling.

In our own youth group, we have been experimenting with the idea of 'Entrepreneurship' as a way of engaging the young in our community who have no relationship with the Church or who it serves. The idea of learning how to set up your own business appeals to teenagers, particularly when they get the chance to do it for real, with real money, and the explicit scriptural wisdom within Workbook 1 will help them to realise that there is more to this 'Jesus' whom they have so readily discounted than meets the eye.

And the counterparts of our youth in the Developing World are crying out for those same skills too. So our model here is to establish a regular evening meeting once or twice a month, inviting all those teenagers who would like to learn how to set up their own business to attend, on the condition that when they are successful, they use their skills and the first fruits of their harvest to teach the same skills to those in their last year of school in the Developing World.

As yet we have no results to share on this, but for those who feel that God is nudging them in this direction, Chapter 8 may offer a useful start point.





Prepare: Setting up a programme in your church/community

As you can see from the above, there are a lot of different roles which together contribute to the success of the project, and because of this it may well benefit from somebody who is willing to pull it all together and oversee that it all takes place in the right order, at the right time.

This may well be a person who already has another role within the group, and may well be the person who will ultimately lead the training group, but it does not need to be, and if someone else is willing to take on this burden it could prove very liberating for the training team. Essentially the role is likely to be a mixture of the following:

- Canvassing interest, and calling an initial meeting to take things forward
- Chairing meetings, inviting people to take on roles which meet their calling and their gifting, and helping them to clarify what their responsibilities will be
- Inviting new people to join the group and ensuring all the key roles are covered
- Working with the team to pull together an overall vision for the work, and a plan to deliver that vision
- Asking the difficult questions and ensuring all the key questions are answered
- Smoothing relationships between all of the team members, and maintaining communication and agreement between the different roles.



Idyllic perhaps. But is it there to look pretty? Or is it there as a power-house of transformation where people meet to seek God's heart and work with each other to do His will?

Guidance on this role can be found in Chapters 4 and 6.

Just do it

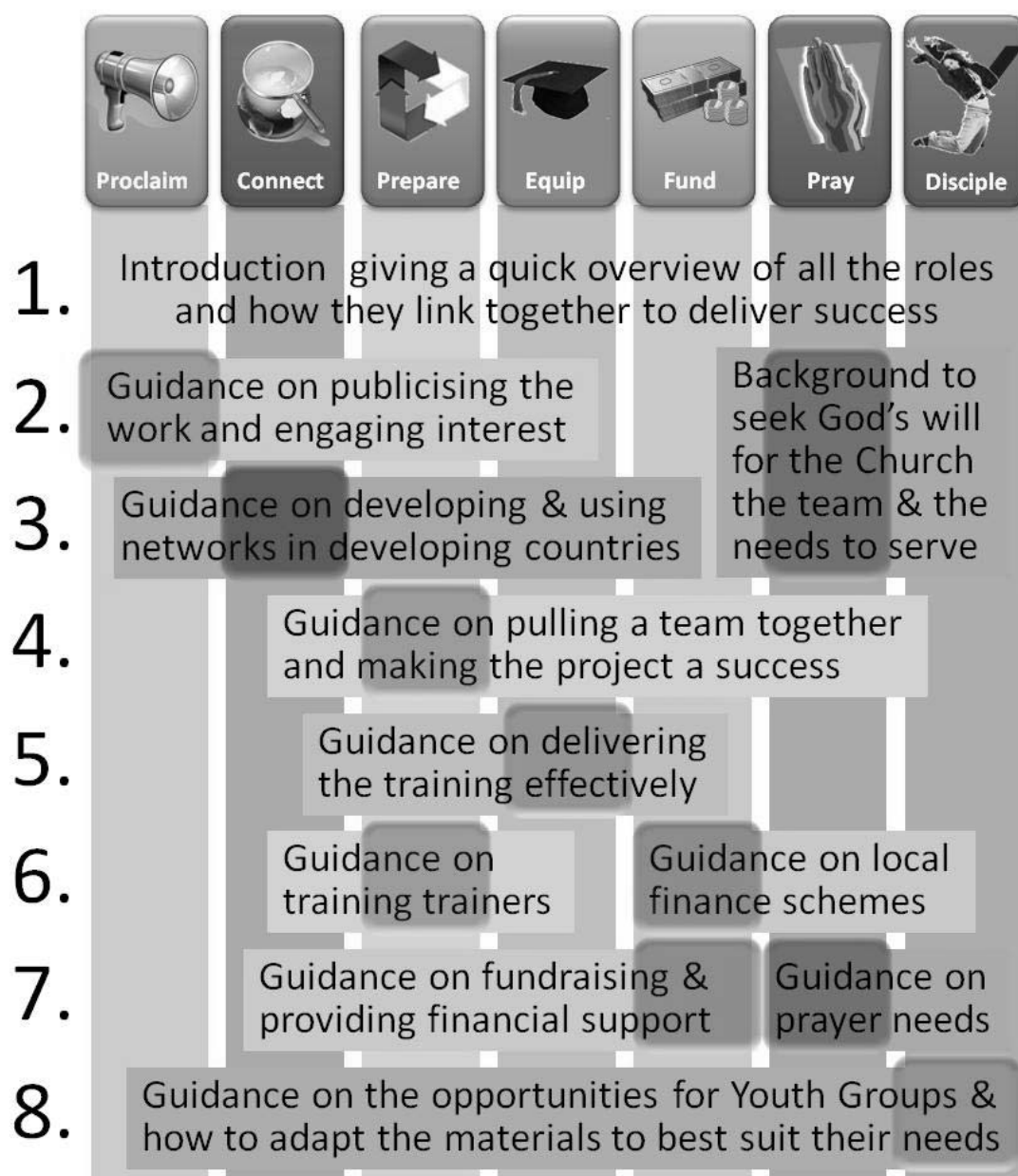
But, for you, this may be all a bit bureaucratic. Let's face it: you may be someone who already has the contacts in the Developing World who are crying out for this stuff; you have your own resources to get there; you really want to get personally involved in delivering the materials; you've done something a bit like this before; and you are part of a really supportive cell-group or triplet who you know will pray their socks off for you. For you it's really just a matter of a few tips and hints from Chapter 5 and then off!

To be frank, most of the people who have approached us to date to use the materials are in precisely that situation. And to you we have tended to say 'Go for it'. But if I could ask you to pause for a moment to reflect on the second part of our vision, and the role of this work in bringing together the Church in the developed world, maybe you can find opportunities to use your project to build responsibility in others in some small way; to create an investment here that may then go on to create further benefits in the Developing World.

Maybe you could use this opportunity, and the strengths and the resources that you clearly have, to engage and knit together more bits of the body, and to take them with you (*mentally and prayerfully, if not physically*).

1.4 How to use the book: Pathways to your chosen involvement

If in reading this section, you felt drawn to any aspect of this work, then this book is intended to help you think through your role, and to point you in the direction of additional resources which may help you in that role. Please use the diagram below to explore the sections of the book that may be of most interest to you (*the numbers down the left hand side are chapter numbers*).



Summary of Chapter 1

- Half the world are desperately poor and, as a result of that poverty, around twenty-five to thirty thousand children die every day
- In the West we generally prefer to ignore these facts, to the extent that they are rarely reported, and 'we' generally seem content to allow the situation to continue while we 'get on with our lives'
- But we cannot fail to be aware that it is happening, and Jesus is quite clear on what our responsibilities are in this area
- For all of these reasons, it is not enough to simply remain at a distance, contribute money, and expect others to fix the problem – we need to get personally involved; to understand the issue as specific people in a specific situation who specifically need your help
- Small simple businesses are the most viable and sustainable solution, but the Developing World needs practical support to help set them up
- Reconxile has developed a set of materials which have been proven to provide this help, and to successfully pull people out of poverty, but it needs people who are willing to go to deliver the materials
- There are a number of roles in making this happen, and everybody is able to play a part in it – there is a role to suit everyone
- By helping each other, we can make a real and sustainable impact which is far in excess of our size, our budget or our investment in time
- The rest of the book is concerned with providing extensive guidance on how the roles might be undertaken

What for you were the main messages of Chapter 1?

[illegible]

And what do you plan to do about it?

[illegible]

Actions ...

Dates

[illegible]

2 Publicising & engaging interest

Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares

Proverbs 1:20

Simply put, the overall impact of this work is proportional to how many projects are initiated, and the number of projects initiated is proportional to the number of people who hear, understand and respond to the message.

And, based on the way that God has worked with us to cascade messages over the past 2000 years, the number of people hearing the message and feeling inspired by it is to some degree proportional to the number who recognise that God is calling them to proclaim and share the message, and who get on and commit themselves to doing it to the best of their ability.



2.1 Personal understanding and calling

In short, if this is what you truly sense God is nudging you to share with others, then the number of people who remain in poverty, or who are helped out of it, is down to what you do with the information you have received. But before you put yourself on a guilt trip, as we Christians are so often prone to do, please consider the following questions:

Is this really the focus God wants you to have at this time?

Our Christian world is full of God's servants who have basically burnt themselves out by overdoing it. Somewhere in their thinking they have become indispensable in some aspect of God's plan, and they are beginning to believe that if they don't do it, it won't happen – that God is in some way dependent on them rather than the other way around. If that is sometimes you, then here is something you already know, but need to hear again: "Our God is a **GREAT BIG GOD!!!**" and if He really wants it to happen, guess what ...?

Our problem, at times, can be that we confuse '*what needs to be done*' with '*what we need to do*', and perhaps we need to gain a new perspective on Paul's comments on the body in Chapter 12 of his first letter to the Corinthians, because sometimes we seem to try to be whatever is needed, rather than what we were called to be.



So the first question for you is "*Lord, is this what You are placing on my heart?*", and, if you are anything like me, it may also be the second question, and the third, and the fifteenth, because I am not always good at separating the still small voice from my own hopes (*in either direction*) the first time around. Some things to place before God and also think about in your own mind as you are waiting on an answer, are ...

Are you gifted or positioned to do it?

"*For such a time as this*" is the most remembered phrase between Esther and her uncle (*Esther 4:14*) and through acting on it, Esther was the agent of God's will in preserving the Jewish nation. So you might reflect on whether you are well positioned to gain the ear of those who have the

authority or influence to further this work, either in your own Church, or in the wider church, or even wider than that.

But please remember also that positioning is not everything in God's will, because David was also well positioned in the cave in 1 Samuel 24, but if he had listened to the scripture quoted by his men, he would have actually acted against the will of God.

Is it consistent with your role?

As David said to his men in the cave *"The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed"*, and as Jesus himself said *"Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar"*. God is not commonly given to asking us to do things against what we have committed or contracted to do, so please reflect on what comprises your real commitments.

And if it is not what God is calling you to do, by all means feel free to include it in your normal run of conversations, for interest only, but please STOP THERE.

If however it is what God is calling you to do, then the second question is "And what are you not (*no longer*) calling me to do?" We are very good at adding new things in, but typically we can be awful at taking the old things out, and (*not surprisingly*) ... they don't all fit! So if this is what God is placing on your heart, please make sure that you make the time and the space to do it properly because, as you will see in the rest of this Chapter, this is a role which needs proper preparation and a disciplined approach.

2.2 Understanding the message

The first thing we need to be is: properly prepared to deliver the message. It is very difficult to be compelling when we ourselves do not feel compelled by the story, and nothing undermines credibility quite as fast as either missing out key pieces of the plot or, worse still, guessing at them and getting them wrong.

Being aware of the relevant facts

How well do you truly understand what you are asking people to consider? You tell people that the materials are simple (*and they are*) but can you witness that from your own understanding of them? And how do you know that the material generated £2M of benefit in Kampala? How was it calculated? What is the evidence? (*page 6?*)

We are called to be credible witnesses, but to be so we need to take responsibility to convince ourselves at our most cynical. So start by being cynical. Pose yourself all the awkward questions & then set about trying to answer them – you will be a lot more tolerant in allowing yourself time to read the workbook and explore the website than other people will be. If you cannot clearly answer the questions people ask you, they will probably conclude that you do not really know what you are talking about.

What is the message???

Start with page 18 (in particular your own notes) and then further illustrate the message as the 'specifics' become known to you

Be cynical, be very cynical ...

What are the main questions and challenges which occur to you?

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Continued ...

But if you can answer them, you will be seen to have a persuasive case, if only by virtue of your own informed commitment to it. But, more than that, you will feel inspired by your understanding, and true passion is a powerful influence in those who observe it.

As a start point we would encourage you to read through Workbook 1 and complete the exercises within it – this can be a surprisingly engaging activity, and you never know you could also end up with a new business as a result. After that, we would suggest you read through the materials highlighted at the end of this chapter. This will help you understand the key messages in terms of engaging people's interest.

What are your answers to these?

(the cynical challenges from the prev. page)

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Maintaining options and flexibility

And your understanding can help you to tailor your message to the needs of your listener. By understanding the whole story, you will know the bits that are most relevant to your listener's current hopes and concerns, and you can emphasise those. For instance: you can angle your responses to the sort of role that they are most likely to consider playing in taking things forward; you can aim their thinking to parts of the world which you know are already on their heart; and you can deal with their concerns by helping them to think through what the options might be, particularly in respect of finding a practical way forward and in inspiring and engaging others.

In fact, there are many options for how people get engaged, where people get engaged, when people get engaged, why people get engaged, and which people get engaged. But the really big question is *"If people get engaged"* and people often look at reasons to reject things before they look at reasons to accept them, particularly where they involve a commitment to change. By fully understanding the options, you can help people navigate past their objections, and to consider the possibilities in a fair light before they come to a decision.

Keeping your focus - what is the core, and what is added on

Key to understanding the flexibility of the approach is knowing what is at the core of it. And that is seeking to honour God's will through mobilising people in churches and communities in the developed world: to equip and inspire the poor in churches and communities in the Developing World; to use business as a sustainable solution to their poverty. Beyond that, virtually everything is flexible. For instance, while we would (*for a number of reasons*) argue that this mobilisation is best done through the materials on the Reconxile site (*cascadability, transferability, proven nature,...*) this is not core to the approach, and if a group feels they are better served by a different model, then that is what they should use.

2.3 Using channels appropriately - let go and let God

In many Churches, publicity is often one of the most amateur of activities. Little thought is put into it, apart from the normal channel of notices and leaflets, and some ad-hoc word-of-mouth exhortations. But if you discover

that this is something God has placed on your heart, then we would recommend that you consider a more systematic and strategic approach.

Understanding all of the channels that are available to you

The first step in this is to understand all of the channels of communication that are open to you, both direct and indirect, in moving understanding and commitment to this work forwards. Many of these channels will probably be within and to your own Church community, but you may also have channels to people outside of your immediate community, some of whom may be quite influential in moving the message forward.

The first thing to understand is what you want to use the channel for. What do you want to publicise? What do you want people to engage with?

I have come to the conclusion that the first and most important thing to do is to seek people's engagement in informed prayer. Early on in thinking these things through I was wondering how I could tell people how important this is and persuade them of their part in making it happen. And then I realised that I was barking up the wrong tree – what I should have been seeking was for God to persuade them of their part (*or not*) in making it happen.

But to achieve this, they need to have an understanding of what to place before God in prayer, and that is where the first element of publicity is key; communicating clearly to people the power of this work, its potential to transform lives, the central principle of personal involvement, and the way God has been blessing it and the people who have engaged in it. Once people understand these things, they can ask the questions to get the answers they most need to know, and they can lay the whole thing out before God in prayer and understand the bits He is pointing out to them personally.

After that, publicity is very much an on demand thing; answering the questions until people feel they are committed to move things forward by engaging directly with the materials and the information.

So what channels are open to you? With whom can you share what God is doing in this area, and raise the need to mobilise prayer to support it and seek His will for how it is taken forward? Perhaps the following list might help you create your own list of the channels which are available to you:

- Your immediate circle of friends; share with them what you have found and what you feel called to do through it
- Your church leadership team; make an appointment to lay out what you have discovered and what you see as the potential for your church, its work and its vision
- The bishops and overseers of your church; contact them by letter to ensure they are aware of this work and are considering its relevance to them and their other churches
- Church media; write an interesting article on the work and why you think it is important and submit it to your local Christian media, or even to national Christian media (*if you have contacts there*), or write a letter to the editor for publication

Who can you share the message with?

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- Groups of which you are a member; ask for the opportunity to present this information, or to give a talk about it, and seek prayer over it
- Groups of which you are not a member; offer the leaders of these groups *(or another contact you may have within them)* to give them a talk on this work
- Neighbouring Churches; contact them, either by letter or through your network of friends in those churches, to ensure they are aware of the work – offer to give them a talk if appropriate
- Your congregation; organise a display or a meeting, and invite people to it through the church notices and through word of mouth – invite people personally; and seek collective prayer for the work and for the right people to come forward and make it happen
- Church attendees and visitors; set up a noticeboard with posters, notes, prayer items, progress, and update it regularly; provide leaflets
- Conferences and events *(when you have some personal experience of the work)*; offer to talk about your experiences and involvement in the work
- Prayer groups; ask for prayer over your work to publicise this information and keep them informed of your progress
- Local Christian traders and business people; encourage them to take a look at the Workbooks and critique them – encourage them to think through what they might have to offer in this area *(perhaps even running a home-group on Workbook 2 – also available through reconxile.org)*

continued...

Selecting those that are most relevant and tailoring the message to them

Having created your own list of channels, you now need to be prayerfully selective about which ones you will use *(and about which ones God would like you to use)*.

What is important here is that we do not use the scattergun approach; the same blunt blundering instrument for every occasion. It is better to use only 20% of the channels with a message carefully chosen and arranged to engage with 80% of the audience, than it is to hit all of the channels with a message which barely reaches 10% & turns half of them off.

But finding the right form of words is a time consuming business, and so we need to make sure that we pick the right places to make that investment. So how do we find the right form of words?

The first thing is to 'meet' people where they 'are', and that means we need to understand where they 'are' *(Please note, the meaning here is more mental and spiritual than physical)*. What are they currently *talking* about? What are they *reading*? What are they *listening* to? What are the *current*

What do I know about those I want to approach?

issues which surround them? What is their *vision*? What seems to *pique their interest*? What are their *values*? If you understand the answers to any of these questions, you understand the sorts of words which get past their filter of *'this isn't relevant to me, I can think about something else'*.

So your start point is to find a form of words which will engage your audience, something in which you are reasonably confident they have an interest and will at least pay attention for the first 20-30 seconds. How you keep their attention after that largely depends on how you use that 20-30 seconds, and for that I am indebted to Barbara Minto who proposed the following excellent approach in her book *'The Pyramid Principle'*.

Start with a **'statement'** in which you introduce a topic which you know is both of interest to them and relevant to the idea you want to promote. Ensure the 'statement' is something they will agree with and, by inference, feel some alliance with you. This is essentially about building engagement through rapport. For instance, with a Church leadership committee you might begin with the words in the box on the right.

Having got their initial attention, we now need to raise their interest up a notch and move closer to the idea we want to present. To do this we introduce a **'complication'**; a thorn in the smooth flow of their thoughts which alerts them to a mutual threat to your (*now jointly owned through the 'statement'*) hopes. For instance, and carrying on the example, see the words on the right.

The 'complication' clearly should raise a **'question'** in their minds: *'How do we deal with this thorn which threatens our hopes?'* And this 'question' may be so obvious that it does not need voicing. But if you feel you need to gather people's thoughts at this point, you can introduce the 'question' explicitly. For instance, see the box on the right.

And this 'question' is the springboard for the rest of what you want to tell them about; the **'answer'** – your idea. At this point you will have their attention because they feel they need to know what you are talking about, because they believe it will have real value in helping them pursue their hopes. And so you might continue with the words to the right.

But as you can see, it does require that you think about: the topics which are engaging your audience (*even at a subconscious level*); the complications which threaten to derail them (*even if just a little bit*); and the link to how this material can help them. And in fact you probably need to think about them in reverse order: What can this material do for your church and its hopes/plans/calling? What are the problems and unanswered questions in the church which it will help to overcome? What currently important and

Example of an approach based on Minto's Pyramid Principle

Statement

"In Matthew 24, Jesus is very clear on our responsibility for engaging with the poor. And, as a Church, we seek to work this out very effectively. Every year we apportion a significant amount of our funds to the work of missionary agencies and charities who enable us to fulfil Jesus' command, not just locally, but globally ..."

Complication

"But, for many within our Church, they have little involvement with this decision in either time, effort, or mental engagement. And I wonder whether, as a body, we are in danger of facilitating them in fulfilling the letter of the law while entirely missing the spirit of what Jesus intended"

Question

"Should we be doing something different? And, if so, what?"

Answer

"I have recently become aware of an approach which might offer us a way forward in this area – something in which the whole Church can become more engaged, and which relies on the strength of the Church as a body of different parts ..."

topical hopes (sometimes implied and unspoken) of our Church do these problems threaten? How do I begin my message (What is the 'statement')?

Having understood the approach that you want to take to sharing the message, you may now be in a better position to think through which channels you want to share it with – possibly because you do not have access to the right information on some of the channels. In any event, this is probably a good time to offer the whole thing up before God and seek His guidance on who to speak/write to and what to say.

Avoiding unnecessary conflict

Not all channels will be productive for you however, and you need to be mindful about whether your approach is proving counter-productive. For instance, I joined my local PCC (*Parochial Church Council*) because I wanted to see things change, but all of my attempts to change things through the PCC were beset with conflict and argument (*much of it of my own making*). I stuck with it, but on my tenth anniversary, as I was reflecting on my position, God asked me two questions: “*What has been the fruit of your time on the PCC?*” and “*Do you really think this was my plan for you?*” My answer to the first was “*Very little except some antagonism and smouldering resentment*” and the answer to the second was “*Well, ... maybeeee,... Okay, no, probably not!*”, and I felt God smile His wry sympathetic smile at me, just at the point I was about to say “*But...*”.

Just because something is a ‘*good idea*’ does not mean it is God’s idea, or at least not His timing anyway. God has given everybody free will, and paid an immeasurable price for doing so, and it is not something which He will act against.

This work is both ‘*a good idea*’ and ‘*doing God’s will*’, and so, as we have discovered, the Devil is keen to obstruct it and set up obstacles against it, and these need to be overcome. But we need to be able to discriminate between those conflicts which are the natural spiritual response to pursuing God’s will in areas where the Devil does not want us to venture, and those conflicts which arise from a body which is not yet ready to hear God’s calling in this area (*or, to be fairer, and less likely to create conflict, ‘our interpretation of God’s calling’*). Our hope is that in engaging in this work, Church communities will grow in a number of different ways, but these will prove difficult if we have alienated most of the people in the process. To avoid this we need to push forward sensitively and prayerfully, being true to our calling while honouring God’s priceless gift of free-will.

Trusting God's power in His own plan

Something which will help you in that, and which we are all prone to lose from time to time, is real confidence of God’s power in His own plan. We are called to: act justly; love mercy; and walk humbly with our God (*Micah 6:8*). But humility is not just about obedience, it is about recognising His true power and our true place. If we convey the message accurately, intelligently, appropriately, compellingly, truthfully, wisely, sensitively, consistently, humbly, and prayerfully, and we are sure people have heard it in its best light, then we have done all that we can, and it is time to ‘*Let go, and let God*’. If it is part of His plan, it will happen. If it is part of His *immediate* plan, it will happen NOW! And if it is not part of His plan, then

this would be a good place to stop anyway! We just need to be obedient to the best of our ability, using the gifts He has given us.

2.4 Materials to help you

When you think about how you might present the message, it is important that you present it personally wherever possible, and in that way adjust it to best suit the people you are sharing it with. However, once you have gained people's attention, there are a number of materials on the Reconxile website which can help you fill in some of the gaps and answer some of the more obvious questions. For instance ...

Leaflets and flyers

We have produced a general tri-fold A4 leaflet which can be used as an introduction to this work and a means to begin to get people thinking through how they might participate in it. While the leaflet can be used on its own, it is clearly much more effective as a summary following a personal presentation. We have drafted some posters and fliers, which can be modified easily, and be used to advertise and invite people to an organised presentation on this work. And to help you with the presentation side of things we have developed ...



Presentation packs

These are PowerPoint slide decks which can be used to present the ideas to a group of people, and get them thinking about whether and how to take this further. Each slide deck can be modified so that you can tailor your presentation to what the audience most needs to hear, and so that you can best prepare them to take the information prayerfully before God, and seek their part in it. Of course the biggest resource in helping them think through how to take it further is the ...

Website and materials

Which gives them access to the training materials themselves, to this guide, and to all of the information on trips to date which have been posted on the website.

Finally, there are ...

Activity and talk outlines

These provide basic ideas on things that you can get your Church engaged in to take them a step forward on their thinking.

All of these materials may be freely downloaded from reconxile.org

Summary of Chapter 2

- Publicising and encouraging other people to engage with this work is both an important role and a time-consuming role if it is to be done properly
- Each of us needs to understand if this is really the task that God is calling us at this time. This is key to avoiding the burnout/overload so prevalent in the Christian community
- Those who do feel that God is drawing them to this area of need will need to commit themselves if the work is to be done properly, and this may mean giving up other tasks
- Key to undertaking this role is a personal and compelling understanding of the core message and a readiness to answer challenging questions around it
- There is a wealth of channels by which the message can be communicated, but they will require a strategy if they are to be utilised effectively and efficiently
- The most effective form of communication is one which has been tailored to meet the needs of the 'audience' and this takes time and care
- Minto's Pyramid Principle provides a compelling way of introducing the message to people, providing it is combined with an understanding of their interests and concerns
- Pushing the message can generate resistance and conflict, and it is important that we understand the source of this and respond sympathetically and appropriately
- God is in charge. What will be, will be!
- There is a wealth of materials to support people in undertaking this role, which are available through the reconxile.org website.

What for you were the main messages of Chapter 2?

[illegible]

And what do you plan to do about it?

[illegible]

Actions ...

Dates

[illegible]

3 Clarifying the need

He who answers before listening — that is his folly and his shame

Proverbs 18:13

There are very few things in life that are more difficult and less rewarding than trying to push things where they are not wanted. There is a real danger in ‘good products’ that they become seen as a panacea to every ill – as someone once put it *“It is surprising, when the only tool you have is a hammer, how all of your problems begin to look like nails!”*

The most important thing is not the training model, or even the willingness of your Church or community to engage with it and invest their time and money in supporting those in developing countries. The most important thing is the ‘need’ of those people in the developing countries, and that is where we should begin. When we clearly understand the ‘need’, we can see our part in fulfilling it, and that is where the training model we are talking about in these pages may be of considerable advantage.

But the model is not going to be right for every situation, and so we need to start with ‘their need’, rather than ‘our strengths’, and through this we can sensitively and prayerfully discern where we are really being called to make a difference. This may mean identifying somewhere which can best benefit from these materials, but we also need to be open to the possibility that the ‘need’ God is calling us to is something entirely different, and that this process to date has simply been a step to us identifying what is really on God’s heart.

However, our focus in these materials is situations where we can identify a need which we can fulfil through this model. And we can assure you, there are more than enough of those to go around.



But what happens if the need we find is not addressed by these materials?

- Listen
- Understand
- Pray
- Seek what God is placing on your heart for the situation
- Do what He is calling you to do

Accept that sometimes the path to doing God’s work is not straight.

And being willing to give up the ‘original’ line often leads to us rejoining the path in a much better place.

3.1 Needs in existing networks

The best place to start is those people who you already have contact with in some way shape or form. And the first question is, do you really know who those people are?

Understanding your existing links and relationships

Start by making a list of all of the people and situations in the Developing World where your Church has contacts. Look through the notice boards, past prayer lists, mission donations, and past speakers to gain any clues you can on what contacts the Church may have, and who in the Church is the main link to those contacts. You may even have people in your Church who have personally been involved in mission projects to the Developing World. When you have drafted your list, test it out with others in the Church to see if you have any important contacts missing, and if they are, add them.

Then review the list to see which of those contacts would be a good source of information about both the needs in their area of the Developing World, and about trustworthy organisations

What links do we have in our church?

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Did you know that many UK Dioceses are linked with Dioceses in the Developing World?

and people in the local area who you may be able to partner with in meeting those needs.

At this point, please do not fret if you do not have a list which enables you to realistically move forward, the next section (3.2 “*Expanding your network*”) will help you to address that issue. But for now, we will assume that you do have a list which provides a good basis for gaining more information, and we will look at how you now use that list.

Collating current knowledge on needs

The first step is to use the list to begin to get a true understanding of the needs in the areas of the Developing World where your contacts are located. You can begin by asking your local link person what they know of the situation, and by looking through past communications, and in particular any prayer requests which have been sent through. They may also have a blog, or even a web page. But we would recommend that you do not at this point contact them directly – there is a lot still to do before you trouble them or raise their hopes (see “*engaging in dialogue*” below)

When you have gathered all of the information that you can glean from past communications, you can begin to think through whether you have enough information to place prayerfully before God in terms of seeking guidance on the next steps.

At this point you may feel that there are clearly things which you can begin to get involved with through your existing contacts, maybe even through extending things which are currently already going on. Or you may feel that God is asking you to wait. Or you may feel that God is drawing you elsewhere, in which case you may need to use the next section (3.2) to explore how you can engage with and understand the area to which God is calling you.

Understanding the practical possibilities

Once you have identified probable areas of need and possible calling, the next step is to understand how feasible it may be to run this sort of training programme in that area of the Developing World. What do you know of its language; of its customs; of its political situation? What local infrastructure exists: for hosting a visit; for undertaking local organisation of the training; for providing translations and interpreters; for safe passage; for providing micro-finance? What is the local attitude: to business; to westerners; to the law; to crime; to scripturally based materials? But as you do this please bear in mind that this is not a selection process. These are not criteria to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on, but they are to extend our understanding of the whole picture, so that our prayer can be informed, and we can better understand God’s answers, and the movement of His spirit in our hearts.

The information you have already gathered may provide you with a number of answers and clues to answers on the above questions, but it may also provide you with further questions.

What sources of information do we have about their needs?

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Some of these questions may be addressed through relevant websites and reference material, and this would be a good point to undertake some serious research on-line. One excellent source of base data is, believe it or not, the CIA; they publish an on-line World-Fact-Book:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

And this once again is a good place to lay the project before God, and to ask Him to guide you, and to raise the questions in your heart which you most need answered at this point.

Engaging in Dialogue

Once you are clearer on what you know of the situation, and what questions you need answering, and where God may be nudging you, this is probably a good time to get in touch with your contact to explore things further.

But in doing this you need to be especially careful about the danger of 'raising expectations', particularly if your contact is from a different culture.

For people you know well, who are from our culture, and who understand your Church, there is probably no risk in being entirely straight with them about what you are trying to do. But for people without that background, they may feel slighted if you then 'choose' to support somebody else somewhere else.

For people who may be subject to offense or disappointment in this way, you will need to be a lot more circumspect about how you gain information from them, but since you will probably be praying for them and their situation by this point anyway, this gives you an excellent opportunity to find out more about their situation both for the purposes of that prayer and for background information that you can share with the Church. The box on the right suggests some areas you might like to ask them about.

Possible areas of information to explore with your contact:

- *the poor in their community, and what hope there is for them*
- *how big a problem this is in the area, the number in this situation*
- *how they get money to buy what they need, and the options they have for pulling themselves out of poverty*
- *what has happened to those who have pulled themselves out of poverty and how they did it*
- *where they got the initial money from (if they set up a business or trade)*
- *what businesses there are around which might offer employment, however small*
- *what sources of aid or support currently exist for them*
- *the role of the local church in this*
- *what they most want prayer for in this situation*

3.2 Expanding your network

If your own Church does not have suitable contacts for this work in the Developing World, or if you feel God pulling on your heart to a different area, then you will probably need to consider how to expand your network of contacts, and there are several options for this.

Networks in neighbouring Churches

One is to speak to your neighbouring Churches with regard to their contacts. Find opportunities to go to things that they may be hosting about their own work or concerns in the Developing World, and see whether God moves your heart to any of these needs.

In many parts of the country there are Churches which contain a significant proportion, and in some cases a majority, of their membership who originate from the Developing World, and who still have very strong (*often family*) ties to areas of severe poverty and hardship. They may welcome an approach to hear what you have in mind, but once again you will need to be sensitive to the danger of raising expectations.

It seems wrong to raise the concept of 'poaching' in this context, but it is amazing how a poorly thought out approach and an insensitive initiative can raise that word in the minds of others. Please, if you are using neighbouring churches to extend your own network, approach it from a position of humility, seek to understand fully, and support primarily in prayer, and seek God's will for the right opening to appear – one in which the neighbouring Church will be grateful for your concern.

Considering charities and wider Church networks

If God has placed a specific area of the World on your heart, then it is often best to go straight to the organisations which you know have networks in that area, the most likely ones of these being the overseas church structure of your own denomination (*or indeed of a different denomination*) and the larger charities.

One of the best organisations we have found for this is YWAM, who seem to have energetic, young, faithful people, in a whole range of different areas of the world; people who are sympathetic to the need to resolve poverty through commerce, and who seem very keen to spend time with anybody who can help in this way. But that is just my limited experience, and I am sure that many other charitable organisations have similar 'angels' on their books.

Our recommendation is to set up a meeting to explore the local needs and to think through how you can work with the local partners of the charity in helping to address those needs. Two words of warning on this however: The first is that charities of this type are often heavily overworked and have little time for additional burdens, no matter how admirable; and that leads to the second – tailor your message to their needs (*as on page 24 in the preceding chapter*) so that you not only gain their full attention but also offer them a way of seeing you as an asset to help them achieve their existing goals.

Please also be aware that in dealing with charities, because of the overload point, you may need to firmly but politely be persistent in making contact. Our experience is that they are not always good at returning calls. But then again, neither are we!

Wandering around looking through Jesus' eyes

Where are you going on holiday this year? Why are you going there? To get away from it all? Or perhaps to go toward it all? How about a holiday somewhere in the Developing World? Somewhere nice of course, with a decent hotel, perhaps a pool, because it is a holiday. And if you think I am being cynical or sarcastic here, I am not! As I sit and write this I have three weeks holiday in Australia already booked, and I will be most disappointed not to get some time on a lounge with a nice cold iced drink in my hand.



But while you are there, take some time out to visit the poorer areas of the country. Take a guide/translator (*perhaps from the local church*) to keep you safe and ensure you get to the right places. And when you are at those places, try and look at them with Jesus' eyes (*although I cannot promise that they will not mist up on you at the most inopportune moments*) and listen to the stories with Jesus' ears. If God moves your heart, maybe this is the place where you can help, and since you are already here, maybe you can get some of the important questions answered?

And remember, not all of the Developing World is outside of the borders of the UK. Okay that may not be technically true, but you know what I am getting at. There are needs within our own countries which would benefit from the empowerment and dignity which can be brought through setting up a small business (*and preferably not one involving white powder!*)

Making contact

When you know where God wants you to engage, you are ready to make contact on the real topic at hand: *How you can help them through the basic business training model*. This is the subject of most of the rest of this chapter, but before you launch yourselves into it, consider for a moment – God has spoken to your heart about this, but has He yet spoken to theirs? And who are 'they'; who are you making contact with?

Let us deal with this last point first. And let us be absolutely clear about your role in this. In all probability you will only be there for two or three weeks over a period of one to two years, and whoever '*they*' are '*they*' will be the ones who have to pick up the pieces. In other words '*they*' are the ones who have the real ownership of the problem, the real passion for getting it resolved, the real heart for the people; '*they*' are the real heroes in all of this. So when you make contact, you are really offering to help them in their work to solve the problem, you are not asking them to help you to solve the problem – that will not work!

So the '*they*' that you need to find to make contact with are those people (*that person*) who already has ownership under God, possibly informally, for making a difference in that place. Without that person, you can do nothing. We will call that person the 'Host'.

And with regard to the other point, please be mindful when you make contact that at present the need (*at least as you see it*) and the solution are only clear in your thoughts; they are not necessarily clear in the thoughts of the person you are speaking to (*or at least, not in the same way*).

So the first step is to understand how the Host sees the problem, and what they see as the potential of a training model which created 220 new businesses among the poor in just 12 months. And then you can move onto what God has been saying to your heart, and asking whether they would like you to help by introducing the model to them.

But before you head off too fast down the track of mutual collaboration and backslapping; before you are swept away on a tide of unbridled enthusiasm, please be aware that there are

About seagulls ...

'Seagulls' fly in, squawk a lot, flap about, create a lot of noise and commotion, steal all the attention and half of your chips, and then fly off, maybe never to be seen again, but leaving a "mess" behind for others to clean up.

Please do not be a seagull!

Who is the 'Host'?

The 'Host' is basically the person who will take ownership for the training and its impact in their area.

They are almost certainly a person of standing and respect in the community, who can influence things to happen there, and somebody with a God-given heart for the poor in that community, and a belief in business as a God-given staircase out of it.

They are probably a church or community leader.

still some practical bridges to be crossed, not least a clear scope for exactly what you are undertaking to do.

3.3 Clarifying the needs to be met

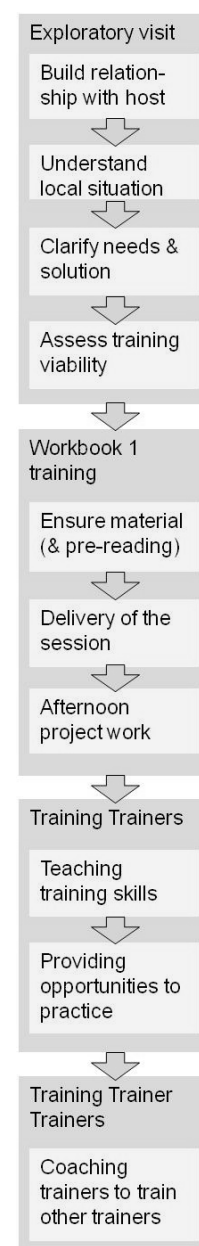
The first of these bridges is to be clear and explicit on exactly what of the needs you are helping to meet, and what is your role (*or rather the role of the training team*) within that, and key to scoping this out is your understanding of what is likely to be a manageable task.

What is a manageable task?

The model we have used to this point consists of the following interventions by a small team of people (*and, on occasion, a team of just one person*):

- Perhaps an initial visit to begin to build a relationship with the Host, and to understand the local situation and to meet some of those you will be training. This is also an opportunity to look at where and how the training will take place, how to get the printing done locally, what other services are available locally, and the most likely candidates for cascading the training on. The initial visit also helps the Host to understand their pivotal role in making it happen, particularly in regard to getting preparation and pre-reading to take place. We have not always made an initial visit, but we have found it very useful that one member of the team has physically met the Host, albeit not as part of this actual process
- A week-long visit to deliver the training in Workbook 1, consisting of four mornings spent going through the material with a group of up to 40 people divided into smaller discussion tables of 5 to 8 people, and three afternoons of project work, but with the training team available to support them on an ad-hoc basis. If interpreters are required for this work, find the best you can, and have one available for each member of the team, because if you have a large group there are some sessions when they will be in almost permanent demand
- A week-long visit to deliver the train-the-trainer course (*which is 3½ days long*). This is usually pitched about one year after the Workbook 1 training so that the new 'trainers' have had time to apply the skills successfully to their own business before they are required to go out and train others. In Uganda, however, we ran it just three months after the Workbook 1 course, because the people who wanted to cascade the training already had successful businesses (*even before the training*), and some had started to train other people anyway.
- Sometimes another week-long visit, perhaps 18 months after the last lot of training. This is to train new trainers who have come up through the cascade process, but more importantly to equip a small group of the existing trainers to train new trainers locally. After this training, the local group is not only self-sufficient, it is equipped to multiply up its impact by training new trainers as required.

From this pattern, the value of conducting the training through a local church structure can be seen more clearly, since people with an active faith often better understand the concept of '*freely you have received, freely give*' and feel a sense of responsibility of using their skills in voluntary



service to their fellow man or woman. Local Church structures also often: have a building suitable for conducting the training; are used to teaching and learning; feel a responsibility for the state of their local community; and are most likely to benefit from a financially healthier community in terms of tithing – which, to the shame of many of us in the West, is a common practice even among the poorest of the poor in many developing countries.

In addition to the training task there may be other responsibilities you choose to undertake. This may concern funding local production of the necessary training materials, and the payment of expenses for the volunteer trainers so that they don't end up paying (*out of their meagre income*) for the privilege.

But one responsibility that we would recommend that you do not undertake is the establishment of a local microfinance scheme – this really is best left to the experts who have the necessary local infrastructure and processes (*for instance, organisations like 'Five Talents'; see the box on page 91*). To understand why, please feel free to read the section of the Reconxile.org website that covers '*The Finance Issue*' (*also covered briefly at the end of section 6.1*), but suffice it to say that, for you, at a distance, it will not work!

This might however pose a problem where there is no other source of microfinance to provide start-up funding for the emergent businesses, and so you might need to consider one of two other options. The first of these is the existing banking infrastructure, who may be willing to support such small loans with limited collateral, as we discovered in the Xacbank in Mongolia. The other is the excellent Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) scheme, details of which can be found at www.vsla.net. You can read more about these in Chapter 6.

You may well find a local partner to deliver the necessary VSLA training, as we did with Care International in Kampala, but if not, you may need to consider how you can introduce this scheme yourselves.

Lay out with your Host, how you plan to help them, and point them in the direction of the Reconxile.org website for further clarification, but before you reach agreement, please ensure that the task you are taking on is manageable for yourself, your training team, and your Church. It is very important that we deliver what we promise and that we do not let them down.



Village Savings & Loan scheme in operation, courtesy of vsla.net

Be careful not to 'create' the need

When you talk through what you can offer to your Host, be careful not to 'create' the need. In some areas of the Developing World, people feel honoured and blessed to attract the attention of a 'Western' sponsor, and are keen to further this all they can, and are very keen not to create any offense, particularly in terms of rejection. So, for this reason, please start very clearly from what they need, before addressing what you can offer in support. And a key part of this is to understand clearly what your Host can do for themselves, and then establish a shared sense of responsibility for the outcomes.

Establishing a sense of shared responsibility for the outcomes

There are two levels to this. For the first batch of Workbook 1 training, your success depends on a shared sense of responsibility – you need them to do everything possible to ensure that all of the local things you will be dependent on are delivered to quality and to time. However, when we progress to cascading the training through the trainer-training, your success becomes fundamentally dependent on their full and complete sense of personal ownership for using what you have given them to make a difference.

For this reason you must do everything you can to maintain and grow their sense of responsibility. From the outset this is ‘their’ programme, not ‘our’ programme. Begin by getting them to think through what the programme might do for them and their community, and by suggesting that one option is for them to use the materials on the website to simply initiate the programme by themselves, and for you to support them in prayer. They will probably not feel entirely comfortable with this, but it does set the baseline before you move on to the more realistic option of: supporting them by piloting the training with them; then training their people to cascade it; and perhaps providing some funding to support the training itself; (and of course supporting them in prayer also).

3.4 Ensuring a practical framework of support

In the last section we glibly used the phrase “*all of the local things you will be dependent on*”, without providing any further clarification. In this section we explore what those things will be, because the final part of ‘Clarifying the Need’ is making sure that your teams needs are met also. Needs are a two way thing in a partnership.

Understanding what the team will need to make things work

Most of the things that the team will need to make things work are listed in section 4.2 of the next chapter “*Preparing the ground*”. In terms of the things they will need from the Host, these typically concern assured arrangements for (*rather than the actual funding of*): local travel and transport; accommodation and food; the training venue including tables and chairs; training equipment such as flipchart stands and pens; food during the training breaks; participant stationery (paper, pens); copies of the training materials (translated if necessary); participants, on-time, having done their preparation; and in some cases, personal security.

This rough list provides a start point, but it is vitally important that you develop your own list, as a checklist, and clarify who will be responsible for what. The background information which you gleaned in section 3.1 will be very useful input to this.

What will the team need to be provided locally?

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Sensitively probing what is possible

The checklist provides a very useful way of clarifying what is needed, and who is responsible for it, and for then managing delivery of those things in a timely manner. But there is a real danger that simply sending the checklist through may embarrass your Host, because they may not be in a position to fulfil all that you expect of them.

Instead, you will need to sensitively probe to find out what they are in a position to provide, carefully indicating your willingness to cover the costs without dishonouring or embarrassing them, and then clarify the responsibilities once you have this understanding.

In some cases, where they are unable to provide something that you are unable to provide for yourselves, you may need to look at alternative channels to provide what is needed, either other partners or suppliers in the area, or through agencies over here who can effect things over there. But through all this, please be careful that none of your decisions or choices undermine your Hosts sense of ownership for the programme.

Nailing things down

Once it is clear how everything will be provided, then is the time to make sure that you have everything nailed down. This is a sensitive but vital stage of the process. Our own approach is just to say very clearly that it is part of the process, without any inference that it is casting aspersions on their diligence. If they have read Workbook 1 by this stage they will understand the need for a direct and straightforward approach to this part of the planning process, and are unlikely to take offence.

The alternative, pussy-footing around the topic, has two major drawbacks: one, because it is not straightforward, it paradoxically has greater potential to cause offence; and two, it runs a far greater risk of leaving something important to chance, and the Devil loves that. In addition, we have found communicating by phone and email across continents and cultures a bit of a hit and miss affair, with the majority of conversations leaving us confused in some way shape or form as to what was actually said and agreed, and so the more direct and straightforward the process, the easier it is to make sure that you have the bases covered.

Managing the risks

But, sadly, things will still go wrong. So you need to make sure that the most important and risky of these are covered in some other way. Some risks you will have no contingencies for, but others, if you think about them beforehand, you can prepare something which will help you to pull the programme out of the fire at the last moment.

Having paper copies of everything, including their translation, and knowing where you can get some copies made is always a good bet – even if the copies will be at an extortionate price. Carrying your own flipchart pens and masking tape is another. A list of useful services, their telephone numbers, and a mobile phone which works abroad is a third. And on

Things to nail down:

[illegible]

occasion we have been rescued in our attempts to deliver the training on time and effectively by: a phrase book, local currency; a Visa card; GPS (*seriously!*); a multipurpose penknife; sanitary towels (*don't ask!*); a coat hanger (see *picture right*); and, of course, copious lashings of prayer. It is not exactly Orpington out there!



The role of a coat-hanger in keeping a UAZ jeep on the road in Mongolia

On the premise of Murphy's law, that what can go wrong, will go wrong, think through all of the things that could thwart your plans, and especially those that would be most terminal and of highest risk, and then think about how you might either prevent these or find contingencies to work around them. The list you generate will be more than you can reasonably consider allowing for, so you will need to scale it back, and find even simpler work-arounds, but at least you can then be prepared for the most likely issues.

Keeping contact

The final thing you can do to ensure the right level of support is to keep in contact; to establish a regular and frequent pattern of communication with both the Host and your team. Some of this may well be a bit frustrating, but over time it will help you to gain a clearer picture of what is happening, and to plan any necessary corrections at an early stage.

[illegible]

Summary of Chapter 3

- Workbook 1 and the other training materials are not a panacea; they are a specific solution to a specific set of needs
- Success lies in beginning with the need, and truly understanding that need for what it is; the materials can then be configured to provide part of the solution to that need
- We often have more points of contact with the Developing World than we realise; and more information on their areas of need
- There are many factors to consider in ensuring that the training may be delivered safely and effectively
- The Web is an excellent source of information in evaluating what you will need to ensure any training trips are successful
- It is easy to raise false expectations if the research is done without fully considering the subtle messages that might be generated, & these expectations could be counterproductive
- Where a team does not have direct contact with need in the Developing World, their network may be extended through charities and wider church connections
- Finding the right host is pivotal to any future success a team might generate
- Our focus must be to help the host in their work to solve the problem, not for him/her to help us in ours
- Do not be a seagull
- It is often difficult, but always essential, clarify what exactly will be done, when, and by whom
- Ultimate success will be dependent on establishing a shared sense of responsibility for the outcomes
- Things will go wrong. Thinking about them before they happen will put you in the best place to manage them.

What for you were the main messages of Chapter 3?

[illegible]

And what do you plan to do about it?

[illegible]

Actions ...

Dates

[illegible]

4 Preparing and Managing Groups

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty

Proverbs 21:5

There are two types of groups in the Reconxile training model: Training Teams and Support Groups. Training Teams are the small teams of people who go into the Developing World to deliver the training, and Support Groups are the people who organise prayer for them, and who help them with organisation, publicity and funding – in fact most of the rest of this guide.

However, the boundaries are not so clear cut in practice. Often members of the Training Team are undertaking their own Support Group roles, and people switch between groups depending on their circumstances. But it is useful to think of them as two separate groups so that there is some clear organisation & clarity of responsibility; and when you are a Training Team out in the field, it is comforting to know you have a Support Group who have taken the responsibility to think about you and pray for you at home.



4.1 Preparing the training team

In this chapter we are looking at how to set up a Training Team so that it functions effectively in the field, working together as a unit to support each other in delivering the training and advice to those it has chosen to help in the Developing World.

Understanding and self-application of the materials

The first step is to have a group of volunteers who are equipped to train people in the skills of Workbook 1. But this is nowhere near as difficult a task as people might imagine when they first think about those words. They seem to conjure in the mind the idea of a cross between our favourite teacher and an Alan Sugar or Anita Roddick type person, but this could not be further from the truth. The first thing to realise is that just a few months after they have received the training, some of those whom you have gone to help, people with little education and understanding of western business, will be fulfilling exactly the same task as those in the Training Team – they will be training others in their community those same business skills, and they will do it successfully. And the reason they can do this is because Workbook 1 is a simple (*albeit reasonably comprehensive*) guide to basic business – a guide to the skills which are largely inherent in anybody who has grown up and gone to school in a capitalist culture such as ours.

But the best way to understand this, and fully appreciate it, is to read and apply Workbook 1 yourself. Use the exercises in the workbook to dream up your own small business, and then plan it out and see how its finances would work. You will find it surprisingly easy, and because of this you will then be keen to share your understanding with those who most need it. I pray that through this God gives you confidence and turns your heart toward those He wants you to help.

Business stall of one of the trainees from Dalanzadgad



And in any event, even if you already feel skilled and confident, even if you are Alan Sugar (*now wouldn't that be a coup?*) we would still recommend that you read, and understand, and apply through the exercises, the material which you will ultimately be training and supporting other people in.

Through reading Workbook 1 you will also begin to understand that Workbook 1 does not actually need training – it is the training, and the role of the active team is to create a situation where it can do its work through people talking together and sharing their progress through the guide. The majority of the training is simply people working together in small groups, and the only* real reason to have anybody stood up at the front of the room (*who does not necessarily need to be you, it can be someone else in the group*) is to orchestrate people through the workbook exercises and keep things to time. The key role of the members of the active group is to wander round the groups and to help them to work through things. To do this, you only need to be fully conversant with Workbook 1 – you do not need an MBA, or even a GCSE really.

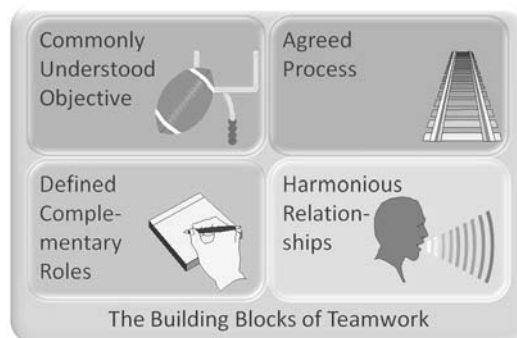
**Okay, 'only' is a bit of an overstatement, there are a couple of sections which do require a little bit of teaching, but as I said: one, it may be someone else in the Training Team who feels more comfortable with this; and two, if the people currently in poverty and without education can do it, you probably can too, particularly with a bit of help and encouragement from God.*

Coming together as a team

In coming together as a Training Team, the first step is to get people to read and feel comfortable with the materials. This can be left to them to do individually, or it may be preferable to come together as a cell group to encourage each other through the materials – meeting one evening a week to discuss people's answers to the exercises, and reading a chapter or two in between. Either way, the expectation is that when you form the team, each member will be conversant with what they will be training and supporting people in.

However a team is more than a group of people with a shared capability; a team is a group of people pursuing a commonly understood objective through an agreed process, working harmoniously in complementary roles. A team is only as effective as: the clarity of its objective; the design of its process; the appropriateness of its roles; and the quality of the relationships between the members.

Because we want our teams to be effective, the next four elements of this section will work through each of these things in turn.



Being clear on your objectives

"What, precisely, is our group trying to achieve?" Even if you have already decided the objective of the group, and even presented it to the group, this is still a good question to ask of the group. It is a source of continuing amazement to me how things that appear to have been stated clearly and even agreed with nods and murmurs of assent still have quite different interpretations in people's minds.



However, by starting with a question, and drawing the different answers onto a flipchart, people can see clearly where they are in agreement and where there are different areas of interpretation. The group can then begin to work through these areas of difference, and reach agreement on them, sensitively, harmoniously and prayerfully, until it has a clear and explicit form of words which it is confident are understood in the same way by the whole team.

Once the objectives are really clear, and owned by the whole group in this way, they provide a valuable reminder to the team of what they are trying to achieve, and they can be used to check new items and ideas which people present to the group. The question “*Can you clarify for us how and where this supports our objectives?*” can be very useful at times, and it serves to remind the group of the need for focus.

The ‘default’ objective is
“We are going to place X to train Y people in Workbook 1 by the end of the year”

If you start with this you can change it and get common agreement with everybody’s expectations clearly understood

Process Design: Using the training support guide

Most of the process has already been designed and tested for you. Of course, in reality, this is putting the cart before the horse, and you will need to review the process that we have prepared for you to check that it does help you to pursue your objectives, and adjust it if required.



That said, we also recognise the need for efficiency here. And we know that the process we have developed is successful, and will save you a lot of time if you simply adopt it largely as is. So we imagine that from a pragmatic perspective you will have taken this into account when you agreed your objectives, and so it is highly likely that you will be able to use large chunks (if not all) of our process to deliver your objectives.

However, that does not absolve you of the responsibility for understanding the process, and adjusting it where required to better suit your team and the objectives you are pursuing.

You can find the process outlined in Chapter 5, which will provide you with a clear understanding of our model for delivering the training and link you to the session plans and support materials which will help you to deliver it. Chapter 5 will also help you to equip those in the area you have been called to help to cascade the training within their community.



Photo of Ugandan version of Workbook 1, with the session plan & support material from Reconxile.org

It is of course possible that you will find that our training model does not suit your objectives, and cannot be made to suit your objectives, in which case you will be back where we started when we originally wrote this training, searching the internet for alternative training or writing your own. Certainly there is more training available now than when we developed this material in 2006, but we would offer the following questions for you to consider before you commit yourselves to this path:

- Is the training proven in its impact?
- Is there a practical model for those who you are training to cascade it to others in their community with the resources at their disposal?
- Is your choice of process for your convenience or theirs?

Often the reason for selecting an alternative process is one of time; people sometimes argue that a training course of 4 days is just too big an investment. If this is true in your case, we would also ask the following supplementary question: How many hours of training would you personally

want, prior to setting up your first business, given that it is likely to place at risk all of your meagre resources, **and** your family depends on it being successful, **and** you have never done anything like this before? Through the training we provide confidence, but we need to take responsibility that it is not a false confidence. They place an unwarranted level of trust in us, our words, and our decisions, and we need to live up to that, for their sakes. Eventually they will learn to be more circumspect and realistic about the quality of our judgement, but please don't cause them learn this the hard way.

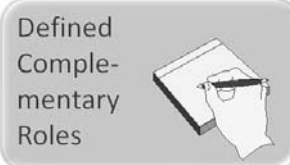
Agreeing roles and responsibilities

Having developed and/or agreed your process, you next need to agree what roles are necessary to ensure the process works efficiently, and who is to take responsibility for each of those roles. Some of these will concern the logistics of getting out there (*outlined in the next section, 4.2*) but some will concern who is leading which part of the training.

In order to agree responsibilities, we suggest that you outline all of the tasks that need to be undertaken by the team (perhaps on sticky notes – one per task) and then to group them together into logical roles. At this point people can volunteer to take responsibility for the different roles, and also to trade tasks between them to ensure they feel comfortable with the role they have taken on.

Having defined the roles in this way, the team can then begin to look at what each role needs to do by when in order to ensure the objective is achieved. This becomes the plan and can be used to manage progress.

Write up the finished conclusion so that everybody has a copy of what has been agreed and can remind themselves of their responsibility and actions within it.



Building relationships and confidence

Of course, you might as well accept from the outset that despite having clear objectives, a well defined process and agreed roles, things will not go according to plan. That is life. Smelly brown lumps happen, as they say (*or rather as they say if they are writing things for the sort of audience that might be reading this!*)

The challenge then is how we work with each other to bring things back on track and adjust the plan and roles to suit, and this is where the quality of relationships within the team is so key. Saying things in the wrong way, with the wrong attitude, can make even the most innocuous of statements set people against each other. Saying things in the right way, with the right attitude, can help people to see where they may have let others down, to build in them a commitment to do better in the future, and to make everyone feel reconciled to, and even enthusiastic for, pushing a little bit harder to ensure that things work together.

The Bible has more to say on this, and more eloquently, than I am capable of, so I just ask you to use this opportunity to practice outworking passages like John 13:34, Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 2:3 and 1 Peter 3:8.

Something you might consider to help move this forward are some teambuilding sessions, like doing some activity challenges together (such as may be offered at a local outdoor centre) or even just going out for a



Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble

1 Peter 3:8

meal or some bowling – something which encourages you to get to know each other as people. You also might like to consider developing some ground rules together, some code of how you aspire to treat each other in all circumstances, such as *“We will not start side-conversations but promise to listen carefully to whoever is speaking at the time”* etcetera.

Getting in practice

Having established the group, and developed it into an effective team, one final piece of preparation you might like to consider is practicing the training delivery, and there are a number of options for this.

You could simply split up the task to whoever was going to lead each section, practice delivering the main bits of each of those sections to each other, and then give each other (*encouraging and helpful*) feedback.

Or you could identify other potential Training Team volunteers within the Church/community – ones who might lead the training somewhere else at a future time – and practice delivering the training to them, both as a way of getting feedback to yourselves, and as a way of familiarising them with the material.

Or you could offer your services to the Youth Leader, to run a short series of session for the Youth community on entrepreneurship – he or she would probably leap at the opportunity, as might a number of youth in the community who are not (yet) involved in the Youth Group. *And maybe those same Youth Group members may be drawn to preparing themselves into a Training Team of their own. See Chapter 8.*

Either way, your team would probably be happier if they have some opportunity to practice their skills and build their confidence before they go live.



With no rehearsals, our Mongolian Translators took to delivering the training like ducks to water – proof that it really is an easy thing to do. But rehearsals do help!

4.2 Preparing the ground

Having prepared the team, the next challenge is to prepare the ‘ground’ (*the place where the training is to be delivered*) to ensure that it is going to be fully receptive to what you have planned to deliver, and to ensure that it will support you in doing that efficiently and effectively. Most of what needs to be done in this area is simply about organising clear arrangements, and it may be possible to get somebody in the Support Group doing that for you.

However, it is worth remembering that if it is not done properly it is you and your team that will be dealing directly with the implications of that, and so it is important to think through exactly what is needed so that you can build confidence that it is actually happening, and to the necessary standards.



The Church in Katwe where the Kampala training was originally planned to take place

Dates and times

The first item is ensuring coordination of dates and times between the Training Team and the Host. It seems an obvious thing, and yet we have found to our cost different assumptions of what will take place when. Ensure you find a time which can not only be met by your own team, but

which is most suitable to the community you are going to support, and also when you are confident that your Host can be present for the whole training. If you pick a time of the year when there is a lot of casual work to be done (*for instance Harvest in some areas of the World*) then it is likely that you will lose some important attendees because they simply cannot afford to miss out on the opportunity of bringing some much needed money into their home. Similarly, if your Host is the sort of active person you need her or him to be, then it is likely that they will already have planned commitments in their diary.

Speak to the Host, and before setting a date, ask them about good times and bad times of the year, and about what they are doing in their own dairy. Move past the social niceties of “*No, we can do any time to suit you*” to really understand what would best suit them – you may not be able to do this because of your own team’s commitments, but you can probably identify a good compromise.

When you have agreed on dates, lay these out into a clear programme, clearly explaining which days and what times the training will run, and get this back to your Host to make sure there are no misunderstandings.

At the same time as arranging dates, you can work with your Host to arrange the other items on this list.

Transport, accommodation and food

We have so far been blessed enough to have Hosts who have had their own transport, and who ferried us to where we needed to be, and then we simply recompensed them so that they were not out of pocket. You may not be so blessed, and so you may need to consider whether you want to hire a car, or to take taxis. To help you make this decision you need some good advice from your Host, or better still from Westerners who have been there before. For instance, I would not recommend anybody hire a car in Kampala! (*see picture right*)

If you are hiring a car you will clearly need to understand the local laws as they relate to driving, and to have clear directions to where you need to go. And in many places you are likely to find yourselves, you need to be aware that road signs (*for instance directions or even place names*) may be in very scarce supply.

Taxis may be a better option, but it is good to have some insight into how they work in that area, and whether you can trust them. You are also likely to need very clear instructions on where the driver is to take you, printed in the local language. And a mobile phone number for your Host for when it all goes wrong. A better option still may be to get your Host to arrange a Taxi to meet you at the airport, and you simply pay the taxi when you arrive.

With regard to accommodation, you may have little choice in this, depending on where you are doing the training. But for the sake of your health, it may be best to stay in a bona fide hotel which is used to Western visitors, and then travel to the training each day by Taxi, than to stay somewhere local to the training which is not so familiar with the frailties of the Western digestive tract. Close fellowship is a good thing, but it is made far more difficult by being permanently affixed to a toilet (*as I was with*



Light traffic in Kampala
– there are no rules!!!

dysentery in Masaka) than it is by being very selective about what and where you eat (*as I clearly was not – but will be next time*).

Which brings us neatly on to food. The Developing World seems to be a place where eating healthily and eating unhealthily are totally transposed. For instance, I would recommend you stay well clear of the salads, and lean toward things which come pre-processed in sealed packages. I am not an expert on health in the Developing World, and you would be well served to get some detailed advice for the place you are visiting (*since this is not it*), probably through the internet, or through Rough Guides. But, what I can offer is that a large lump of mature cheddar (*which keeps surprisingly well even in warm countries*), some dry biscuits, and masses of dried fruit and nuts can be amazingly helpful at seeing you through when the other options around seem fraught with risk.

Training venue, facilities and equipment

Ensuring a suitable training venue is vitally important. The place where you do the training must be able to hold all of the planned attendees, sat around tables of 5-8 people per table, and provide (relatively) clear lines of sight to the presenter. It must have wall space, so that you can hang up some of the flipchart sheets, it must be (largely) free from disturbance, and protected from the weather, and it must allow people to hear without the presenter having to strain his or her voice. Church halls are often ideal.

The venue needs to be easily accessible to the trainees, and located within a reasonable distance of where they may need to conduct their research (*e.g. village centre, market, internet access if appropriate*). It may also need to be able to provide soft drinks and lunchtime meals if that is the cultural expectation (*and it often is*).

And you need to be confident that the venue is going to be available to you, or to have a contingency planned in advance. On two separate occasions we have had a locally reputable hotel let our room to another party at the last minute because they effectively had a better offer. As a result of this we ended up in less suitable venues, needed to move rooms twice, and lost half our participants for the first two hours while they struggled to discover where we had gone, and how they could get there. The Developing World works in different ways than we expect, and sometimes it catches us by surprise – or as they say in the film ‘Blood Diamond’: “T.I.A.” which stands for: This Is Africa! (*If your journey takes you to other continents, the acronym is conveniently valid everywhere bar Europe – There, or anywhere else for that matter, you might prefer to use ‘TINO’: This Is Not Orpington!*)

You also need to ensure that the venue has any equipment you might need, in particular a flipchart stand. And you may need to arrange for participant materials such as paper & pens; and presenter materials such as flipchart paper & flipchart pens.

Although it is possible to use a computer and projector in many places, we do not recommend it for this course, and the reason for this is in order to

Venue Checklist:

Please note, this is not complete and you will need to add your own thoughts at the bottom:

- ☐ Space for all the trainees
- ☐ Location or transport for them to get to it
- ☐ Accommodation and transport for the trainers
- ☐ Seating/tables
- ☐ Wall space
- ☐ Protection from the weather
- ☐ Available refreshments
- ☐ Training books
- ☐ Interpreters
- ☐ Pencils/pens and paper
- ☐ Flipchart stand
- ☐ Flipchart paper & pens
- ☐ Nearby areas of commerce
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

set a practicable example for the cascade. The same equipment is unlikely to be available for all those wanting to cascade the material, and therefore they will miss out on the opportunity to see you model how they can take others through the materials.

Materials, translations and local printing

Ideally, the materials that you will use to do the training, Workbook 1 in particular, will have been translated, printed, and distributed to attendees for pre-reading before you get there. You can cope and adjust for the risk that they might not have been distributed within the first two days of the training (*the four day plan has red sections that indicate how*), but in a location where the attendees do not speak English, it is almost impossible to run the training effectively if there are no translations of the material available. If the translated copies of Workbook 1 do not exist when you arrive, then I am afraid that you will have had a wasted journey (*unless of course God has other plans for you that trip*).

To avoid a wasted journey, ask them to send you an electronic copy of the translation well before your visit. This at least will be evidence that you will be able to rescue something out of the trip, providing you can access copying equipment somewhere there. It will also enable you to verify the quality of the translation (*if you can find somebody local to where you live to translate it back to you*) and it will allow you to link page references back to your English version in the event that they have changed – very useful information when you are trying to get all of your trainees to the same place in their books as you are on in yours.

Identifying local printers for the book enables them to access further copies of the Workbook cheaply, and that will ensure that they can cascade the training within their own means at some point in the future. The goal is to get the workbook printed at a cost which is less than a day's wages for the poorest people attending the course (*although our hope is that the local church will eventually cover the cost, on the basis that they will eventually recover the cost many times over when that person has more income as a result of their business*) and can therefore better bless the church financially. However, cheap local printing is not of particularly good quality, and so you may need to use the 'no grey' version of the Workbook 1 template (*available through reconxile.com*) to ensure that the instructions in the exercise boxes remain legible.

Finally, you will probably need to arrange for the translators who you will be using for the training to translate the flipcharts which will be used, and as you can see from the dictionaries and discussion in the photo on the right, this requires more effort than can comfortably be achieved while expecting people to translate and write up the flipcharts in the middle of the training session.

10.05	What is a business?	30 mins	To develop a clear understanding of what is important in a successful business, and what they therefore need to work toward.	Workbooks and blank A4 paper Pencils and rubbers Diagram of guitar-maker's business	Put up the diagram of the guitar-maker's business on a flipchart, and ask the group to explain bits of what it means. Ask what makes each loop important in turn, and whether we are looking for more or less money in that loop, and what are the main influences on the amount of that money. Each table then takes a business idea of one of their members and together work on creating a similar diagram and noting down what ideas they have to get the money to balance out. Ask people about Exercise 1 on page 5* and whether they can relate reasons for success and failure to this diagram – draw out a few examples Answer any questions and concerns until you are sure that practically everybody has a basic grasp of this concept – in theory and by example NTM: Ask the group to turn to page 5* and to have a go at completing Exercise 1 in pairs, just for 5 minutes – wander round the group to check their progress and prod them about 2 minutes in to tell them that they have had about half of the time and should be around the fourth question. At the end of the five minutes, ask the group in general 'what are the main reasons they listed for success?', and then when they have suggested a few of these, ask 'what are the main reasons they listed for failure?' Ask if they can see where these comments fit in to the loops of the guitar maker's picture. <small>*Please remember, if the workbook has been translated, the page numbers may well have changed in the process!!!</small>	Draft business diagrams for each table on A4 paper Illustrations of the importance of the diagram from people's own experience
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Section of Session Plan for training Workbook 1 showing one of the red sections on how to adjust for people who have not done the pre-reading. Red text is that which appears in the penultimate column after the letters NTM (New to Material)



Translating and preparing the flipcharts in Mongolian

Participants, publicity, and their preparation

It is useful to understand how the Host plans to publicise the course, how they intend to select the participants for the first course, and how they will get the relevant pre-course information to them (*particularly their copy of Workbook 1, and what we grandly tend to refer to as 'joining instructions', and they probably understand better as date, place and time*).

Start by asking the Host these questions, in part so that you can check he or she has thought about them, and then work through their answers with them until you are happy that it is all likely to work.

Preparations for travel, health, security and comfort

Finally, but probably most importantly, you need to be sure that your team can arrive at the training location safely and securely, and that you can function at your best through remaining healthy and appropriately comfortable (*discomfort can make it difficult to concentrate, so don't be too keen on going 'native' – you are there to do a job*).

This means that you will need to organise flights, transfers, visas, local taxis, vaccinations, medications, and all manner of other things. Do some internet searches to find all the items you will need to organise and pull them together into one checklist so that you do not forget anything important. The box on the right may be a useful start-point for this.

Websites which may provide useful information:

Please feel free to list further sites you find at the bottom:

- ☐ Stick the location, and 'travel' into Google
- ☐ Travel company websites to the area
- ☐ www.lonelyplanet.com
- ☐ www.worldtravelguide.net
- ☐ Local tourist board
- ☐ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
- ☐ <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/>
- ☐ <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk>
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
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- ☐
- ☐

4.3 Understanding cultural expectations and obligations

As stated earlier, T.I.N.O. (see page 45). They do things differently here. And they interpret things differently here. What might create offence in the suburbs of Kent may be perfectly acceptable here, and things which you find perfectly normal back at home could be the cause of upset in certain parts of the Developing World: In Jinja we found that people felt we had committed to things just because we had not said a direct 'no' to them; in Dalanzadgad, I upset Pastors by asking a young woman to pray for them, and that is just the offences I know about. How many more have I committed where they have politely kept me in ignorance of my indiscretion?

You are about to take a wonderful step of fellowship and care across continents, a step to creating blessed relationships under God which you could remember for eternity, and it would be a pity to spoil that through a cultural misunderstanding.

We therefore offer the following pointers to doing your best to keep misunderstandings to a minimum.

Sources of information

The first is to try and find sources of information about the culture you are going to. As before, the internet is an excellent free source of useful information, but there are also travel guides, novels and reference books

that you can find which may help you to better understand the people you will be working with and their customs.

The potential of a pre-training visit

Another helpful mechanism is to undertake a pre-training visit. Although the cultural pitfalls remain the same, you are not so much in the spotlight if and when they occur, and because you are not leading things, you are less likely to be put in a position to make them.

Instead, by taking time to watch what they do, and by asking questions about it, you can see the differences from a more relaxed perspective, and can gain and test out clues which will serve you well when you stand up in front of a large group. It will also enable you to use some local cultural examples to illustrate the training at appropriate points, and these, and perhaps a few simple words in their own language, are likely to help to ingratiate you into any culture (*with the possible exception of Merseyside, where they will probably think you are taking the mick!*).

The pre-training visit can also help you to build a relationship with the Host which will serve you well in subsequent email and telephone conversations, and perhaps enable you to sort out some of the arrangements in advance (*such as venue, hotels, printers, facilities etc.*).



Mealtime in Mongolia
– it is expected that you will lick the bowl. Apparently it is good muscle development for pronouncing the Mongolian language

Understanding how they see you

As we have said earlier, you are almost certainly held in unwarrantedly high regard. In some places, mere association with a white person from the West raises social kudos. They may well see you as ‘very rich’, ‘highly intelligent’, and ‘extremely important’. As a result they are likely to place greater weight on what you say or do than you might intend them to, and this is not always a good thing.

To be fair, most of the time I am right in what I say, and people can benefit from listening to what I say and putting it into practice, but I would hate anybody to treat everything I say as gospel truth and apply it without second thought; without testing it themselves and reaching agreement in their own mind that it is the right thing to do. That would be a huge burden of responsibility. But unfortunately, that can be the place where we find ourselves, and therefore we have to accept that we do carry that huge burden of responsibility, and so we have to be extra careful to double check what we say and say only what we know to be true in those places.

Acting as an Agent of God

But in Church contexts, not only are we seen to be special in our own merit, we are also seen to be sent to them by God. We are often the result of their prayers to our Lord, and He has especially selected us, and prepared us, and sent us to them to answer their prayers. Wow! We are His agent in that place. That is a big ask! And what we do reflects back on Him.

But let us face it, it is true. You have been called there by God. You are His representative to undertake the task He has selected and prepared you

for in that place. It is just that they often seem to understand those facts better, more simply, and more clearly than we do. But we need to understand them clearly too, if we are to do them justice.

Involvement in Church and ministry

Because you are an Agent of God, specially selected and sent by Him, those who attend Church will have every expectation that you will have brought some message for them. As a result you will probably be asked to talk, or even take the sermon, in Church, so you will need to be prepared to do that. But this should not be something to fear; I find that God normally does place something on my heart that I can offer back to them as a help or encouragement.

But you may also be asked your advice on topics outside of the training, and to pray with people over all sorts of things, and you need to reach your own judgement on whether that is appropriate, and respond accordingly. God sent you as part of the body, not as the whole body, and they need to understand and accept this.



Jamie, a team member, preaching at Nsambya Full Gospel Church. (He looks like he might have done this a number of times before)

Following up

Finally there is the expectation of follow-up. Different cultures have different expectations of friendship and of the communication that takes place within it, both frequency and intensity, and so we can sometimes leave people wondering what they have done wrong if we lose all ties with them when we return.

Among my friends, it is common for me to go for years without contact and to pick up the relationship exactly where we left off. Even my dearest friend in Canada can go months without a reply, sometimes despite two or three emails from her in the interim, but she doesn't read anything into that about my care for her – she knows that I would come running at the drop of a hat were she in trouble.

But in Asia, for instance, things are just not like that. Relationships are understood to be closer and more frequent, and we need to be aware of our responsibilities in this regard.



Everybody comes out to say goodbye in Mongolia

Summary of Chapter 4

- The training team will be far more effective and compelling if they have worked through the materials themselves, and applied the exercises to a business idea of their own
- The training team will also benefit from an opportunity to rehearse the delivery of the materials, possibly to a Youth Group
- There are four things to get right if your training team is to be fully effective, as a team:
 - Developing clear and agreed objectives
 - Agreeing on the approach to be taken
 - Clarifying what everybody's role and responsibilities are in that approach
 - And relationship building, particularly when things go wrong in the first three areas
- And there are many more things to get right if they are to be effective in training in the Developing World
 - Dates and times
 - Transport, accommodation and food
 - Training venue, facilities and equipment
 - Materials, translations and local printing
(*Get copies of translations sent back to you*)
 - Participants, publicity and their preparation
 - Travel, health, security and comfort
- It is important that the team understand the cultural expectations of them, particularly in respect of things which might inadvertently cause offence
- It is also important that the team recognise their role as an answer to prayer, if they are working in a Christian community in the Developing World
- The relationship does not end with the completion of the training programme(s)

What for you were the main messages of Chapter 4?

[illegible]

And what do you plan to do about it?

[illegible]

Actions ...

Dates

[illegible]

5 Training

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act

Proverbs 3:27

Transformation = Empowerment + Dignity

Vinay Samuel

The key mechanism for the benefits we are stimulating across the Developing World is training; it is the pivot on which all of the rest of the things we have been talking about in this book swings; it is the goal of all of our preparation and the springboard for transformation; it is the channel for empowerment and the means to dignity; it is a platform for God's wisdom to speak into their economic situation; and it is a forum for deep and meaningful fellowship.

You could be forgiven, then, for thinking that training is somewhat important. But what is more important is that you do not confuse 'important' with 'difficult', that would be a real tragedy. The training may be vitally important, but it can only assume that importance to the extent to which it is delivered, and that depends on people having the confidence to deliver it.

Accordingly, we have made delivery of the training very simple. The training is delivered in Uganda by people without qualifications, it is delivered by people with less understanding of commerce and business than you have (*we can say that because we know the culture you have probably grown up in*), and it is delivered by people who have never done any training or teaching before. It has to be, because that is really all they have available, and because it is specifically written to be capable of being delivered by such people; if it wasn't, then the whole idea of the cascade model would be a non-starter.

And because they can do it, and because they can do it successfully, then you need to accept that you can do it. The decision that you can deliver this training could be the most important decision not only in your own life, but also in the lives of many who are waiting on you to do exactly that. Remember that when God picked 12 people to help Him communicate the most important message in the Universe, he did not pick the best communicators, or those with the most credibility, or those with the highest level of education, he picked those who would choose to 'stay with it' when the others walked away (*John 6:66-68*). The rest was not easy, but it was right. And commitment is as important a qualification here and now as it was there and then.

The best teachers are rarely those with the most developed understanding, but they are often those with the hardest-won understanding, and they are usually the ones with the biggest heart and commitment for those they are serving, in this case both God and His people; our brothers and sisters in poverty.



5.1 Allowing the materials to do what they are good at (Getting to really understand the materials)

But I do not want you to think that this is teaching in a conventional sense of the word. The people who you are helping are not dependent on you as

the source of wisdom and insight. They are only dependent on you as the orchestrator of their engagement with it; they only really need you to pull them together, and to keep them moving through the material themselves – each of them helping the other to understand. Practically everything is done through questions and answers, and mostly you asking the questions and them providing the answers.

Workbook 1, the key piece of training to which we refer, is designed to allow people to work through the material by themselves; to train themselves by working methodically through its pages and engaging with its exercises – try it yourself and you will see what we mean. We are aware that people can, and do, gain all that they need to plan and set-up a successful business through working individually through Workbook 1.

So why the training?

We are equally aware that although you can work through Workbook 1 on an individual basis, people get far more out of it when they work through it together. There is something about working through the material in a group which:

- Helps people to see other perspectives and to develop better quality and more comprehensive answers
- Works to resolve any misunderstandings that may have arisen
- Provides greater emphasis on important points which sometimes get overlooked or forgotten
- Encourages people to work together and use each other's strengths to find the answers that are needed
- Stimulates new levels of creativity and insight
- Builds confidence in the conclusions that have been reached, and a greater willingness to put them into practice



Group discussion during training in Kampala

So the task of the trainer in this case, is less to do with formal training, and far more to do with leading the group to engage in a series of group discussions.

Preparation: reading, understanding and applying the materials

If you have read and worked through Workbook 1 you will be able to see the truth in this, but if you have not done so yet, then this is probably the most important place to start. To understand the rest of this Chapter, you will need to really understand Workbook 1. Our recommendation is that you actually work through the exercises as you read through the book, and this includes the exercises of going out and talking to 'potential customers'.

To work through Workbook 1 properly, you will need to identify a 'business' which you plan to develop – it does not matter if the business is not viable, this is more about using the business as a learning aid, but it would be very helpful if the business was something which you could practically conceive of yourself doing. The early parts of the Workbook may help you to identify a suitable business, but if it does not, then think of something small and easy to test out. Perhaps a business making your favourite ice-cream, or washing cars, or selling healthy snacks to school-children at break time, or

providing a secretarial service – anything which will enable you to fully engage with the exercises in the workbook.

Working through Workbook 1 will do two things for you: firstly it will build your confidence in the materials and your ability to help others through them; and secondly it will provide you with new insights and deeper levels of understanding – understanding which will help you to better equip those you will be training.

Allowing the materials to work - ensuring the approach supports and enables, not replaces

As you work through Workbook 1 you are likely to develop your own ideas on how this material could be used, and how to take a group through it – which is good. However, you do not have to do this – in fact, if you take it too far, it could become counter-productive.

Part of 'how' you take people through the training is about creating a model which others can follow when they use the material to train. When your trainees have set up successful small businesses, and some of them have decided to take the next step and become trainers, they will think back to how they were trained as a basis for how they will train others. It is therefore vitally important that we keep things as simple and straightforward as possible in the training, and keep our flashes of brilliance to a minimum.

Think of it this way, John Cleese is a brilliant trainer, and can probably get you to understand things clearly which others would struggle to get you to see first base – but there is a real danger that he would not be as effective as you in transforming a community through Workbook 1 – seriously!

Why? Well think about it for a moment, he may do a far better job than you in getting the first group to understand, but what happens then? Who is going to 'follow' John Cleese? How many are going to feel confident about doing what he did? 'His' training is very likely to stop where he stops – while yours will cascade on, and on, and on. *(Sorry Mr Cleese, if you are reading this, I know that you would make adjustments, but I just want them to see that their fears exist for precisely the wrong reason!)*

The key thing in training Workbook 1 is to let Workbook 1 do the training. By taking a simple and straightforward approach, you will help the people you are training to see how this works, and build their confidence in delivering the training themselves. But fully understanding Workbook 1 by using it yourself is key to having the confidence and the deep insight that this is so.

And to help you in delivering Workbook 1 simply, consistently, and in a way which others can follow, we have more good news – most of the work is done for you! On the website you will find two key documents for you in delivering the training, and for them in cascading the training. These are the 'Session Plan' and the 'Support Materials', and they can be found on the materials page.



A trainee-trainer in Kampala practices on his co-trainers

The Session Plan is a tabulated document (see *right*), which spells out the training session by session – outlining each period of 10 to 30 minutes in terms of what exactly you are trying to achieve in that session, and the questions to ask, and the instructions to give, to achieve it. It consists of seven columns as follows:

- **Time:** The time at which the session should start if you are to keep the overall programme punctual
- **Description:** The title for the session
- **Duration:** How long the session should take to achieve the objective, if you are not to overrun
- **Objective:** What exactly you are trying to achieve by means of the session
- **Inputs:** What props or supporting materials you will need for the session
- **Process:** The steps you will need to take to achieve the objective, often in the form of “Ask the group ...”
- **Outputs:** Anything practical/tangible that is intended to be delivered by the session

The Session Plan, and particularly the ‘inputs’ column, is linked to the ‘Support Materials’, these are a collection of visual aids designed to be easily replicated on flipcharts and blackboards (see *the image on the right*), and these are used to help support each session (*as their title suggests*). While these could easily be projected from a computer and a data projector, this is a route we have deliberately avoided, and encourage you to avoid also. If you are lucky, some of your cascade trainers are likely to be training (*and making a difference*) in places where conditions are harsh and there is no electricity or equipment. At this point, your cascade trainer will be very glad that you modelled a way of delivering the training which he or she can use in that place.

09.40	Business Planning	10 mins	To ensure people understand the use of the business plan pages in the back of the guide	Business plan in the appendix of the workbook	Ask people to turn to the business plan pages and ask if they know how to fill them in. Answer questions, and draw out the relationships between the numbers and the exercises we have been doing over the last three days. Ask people about why it is important to fill in the business plan and flipchart their answers – ensure that they include something along the lines of ‘demonstrating they are in control’, ‘ensuring they know the key points’, and ‘looking professional to investors’ in their answers. Then referring back to ‘investors’ ask who they might be.	
09.50	Micro Finance and Loans	55 mins	To provide people with an overview of Microfinance Initiatives, and Loans, and how they can practically engage with them.	Representatives from a number of different Microfinance businesses	Representatives from a number of different Microfinance businesses each present briefly what they do, what they are looking for, how to approach them, and what they require. The group asks questions until they fully understand what they need to know about getting their business ideas financed. Then ask the microfinance people about what is important in how the business is run after it is set up, and lead on to the next section....	Knowledge of how to approach microfinance organisations
10.45	Coffee	15 mins				
11.00	Running your own small business 1	15 mins	To ensure that people understand the principles of running a business after it has been set up	Diagram of guitar maker's business. Flipchart of principles of running a business.	Explain that even if you now have a viable business plan, that is just theory. Ask how in practice a viable business plan can turn into a failing business, and draw out the need for disciplines in what is spent and how money is collected (direct them to the picture of the guitar-maker to help them arrive at this if required). Put up the flipchart of principles of running a business and direct them to pages 46 and 47 of their workbooks.	

Excerpt from the training session plan for Workbook 1

Don't try too hard - Uganda trainer training experience

The session plan is deliberately simple. The degree of sophistication is deliberately low. The emphasis is deliberately on drawing inputs from them rather than providing them yourself – not because we think you are lazy, or because we think you are incapable of training any other way, but because we know it is the most effective way to train and, in this case, it is definitely the most successful way to train trainers.

That said, we are consistently baffled during our work to train trainers that a twenty minute session, which has the simply stated process of ‘Ask the group to share their answers to Exercise 9’ leads to 19 minutes of presentation and talking by the trainee trainer! I mean, how difficult can it be? The process is ask: “*What have you written down in your workbooks for Exercise 9?*” and then ... SHUT UP!

Cashflow					
Week	1	2	3	4	5
Opening Balance	80	45	13	-7	12
Income	0	5	25	30	90
Expenditure	30	32	40	66	66
Loan Repay't	5	5	5	5	5
Closing Balance	45	13	-7	12	31

Day 3, 12.10: Fill in the rest of the figures in each column by adding the income to the opening balance, and then subtracting the expenditure and the repayment, and writing the answer as the closing balance, and then copying the closing balance to be the opening balance of the following week, and continuing the process for the next column. Get the group to help you by shouting out the answers as you go through it. Point out that it wasn't so difficult to do a cash-flow table – it just looks complicated. But then circle the minus figure in the bottom row, and ask what this means. Point out that without money you can't buy more supplies (arrow and circle around the 66) and without supplies you can't make and sell product (arrow up to the 90 and cross it out). Then scribble out columns 4 and 5 for effect, and explain that as soon as your cash flow goes negative, everything else is just a dream – all that lovely profit in the future will never happen!

Notes

Reconxile

Now I know somebody reading this is burning to ask *"But what happens if they don't say anything?"* The answer to that question is simply: *"You have 19 minutes and 54 seconds of silence, sat down with your arms crossed and looking curiously at people"* – but frankly it never works, because they can only stand about 30 seconds of it before someone caves in!

The point of this exposition is to illustrate that we sometimes find it hard to accept that it really is as simple as it appears to be, and so we complicate matters by adding bits in, and by this actually stop the process from doing what it does well.

In truth, what we are doing is not really *'teaching'* it is *'facilitating learning'*, and this is a very important distinction.

5.2 What do we mean by 'facilitating the learning'?

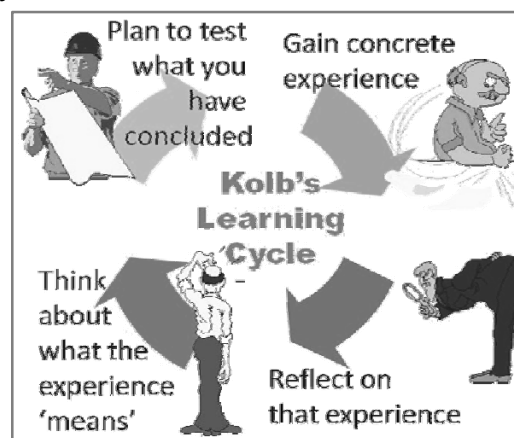
There is a wonderful cartoon that covers this distinction well. It shows two small boys talking and a little dog sitting by the side. One boy says, *"I taught Spot how to whistle."* And the other challenges, *"I don't hear him whistling."* The first boy responds, *"I said I taught him. I didn't say he learned."*

The point is the difference between *transmission* and *reception* – in 'teaching' we all too often focus on *transmission*; what leaves our mouths. But far more important is *reception*; what enters their brain – and this can be something entirely different, and something which we can remain entirely unaware of for as long as we remain in 'transmission' mode. *(Please note, to those who I may otherwise unintentionally offend out there, I mean the verb 'teaching' as opposed to the profession, whose skills in facilitation are to be envied).*

Modern thinking on how we *'learn'* shows that there are a number of steps which we cycle through to assimilate the learning which is available. We may start in different places (*at different steps*) and we may have different preferences in how long we spend in each step, but all of the steps are necessary for effective learning. This cycle, named after psychologist David Kolb, consists of four steps (*as shown on the right*):

- concrete experience; for instance, smiling at somebody and seeing them smile back at you
- observation of and reflection on that experience; for instance, actually recognising that someone smiled back at you when you smiled at them
- formation of abstract concepts based upon the reflection; for instance, developing a 'hypothesis' that if you send out 'friendly' signals to people, they tend to return them
- testing the new concepts; for instance smiling at someone else (*and starting back at step 1*)

Where we start in the cycle is not important. For example: the training tends to promote concepts; and then asks people to test them out; from which they will gain experience; which they can reflect on. And how long we spend in each step is not important. For example: some will want to think long and hard about what is written in the book; while others want to rush out and do something with it. But what is important (& key to our



Can you see the learning cycle in yourself?

Think back to the last new task you tried: how did it start? Then what? Then ...? Can you relate these things to Kolb's cycle?

eventual success) is that that we provide opportunities to complete the cycle.

But, you may ask, don't we have to '*transmit*', for them to '*receive*'? Well actually not in this case, no! The transmission has already taken place in the materials, or more precisely Workbook 1. Our job is simply to check and correct the '*reception*'. That is what we mean by '*facilitating the learning*' – we are basically running a series of engaging activities which allow people to check and correct each other's reception, and through this to engage with the learning more completely.

Providing the book as pre-reading

An important factor in the effectiveness of this process then, is that they have received the book as pre-reading, and that they have read it and done the exercises. This is always a bit of a challenge, and never yet have we managed to achieve this before any training session we have run – there has always been some form of problem or another. However, it is the ideal, so it is worth us considering how to achieve this, and then we will need to consider our options for when it does not quite happen that way.

The ideal is to ensure that there is a clear plan to translate the materials (*primarily Workbook 1, but also the 'Support Materials' – the flipchart sheets and blackboard examples*) and to have Workbook 1 printed in their own language, and circulated to participants, some time before you arrive. Where reading skills are an issue, and they sometimes are, even among those who want to set up a business, it may be necessary to have the Host organise reading sessions in the local Church – but please be aware, an inability to read or write in their own language is likely to prove a major handicap not only to the training but to the business of record keeping and business communication as well (*please see the note in the box on the right*). However, it is possible that they may be able to get someone to work beside them who can read and write, and who is willing to help them through the materials, and even to help them set up their business.

More commonly however, you will find that Workbook 1 has not been circulated, or if it has been circulated it has not been read, or if it has been circulated and read and even the exercises have been completed, then this is only by a minority of the participants. No matter, all of these things can be addressed – the only thing we cannot cope with is if the materials are not even translated (*as was covered in section 4.2*).

Where some of the participants have completed the exercises, you can at least ensure that these virtuous souls are distributed among the groups, and then each group has something to debate and discuss as the training progresses, and the virtuous soul reaps the rewards of their efforts in having an unusual amount of attention focused on their ideas. However, it is important that you gain a commitment from the others in the training to read the material and do the exercises before the next session. Getting them to work up to page 29 by the end of the first

Please note:

We recognise that the literacy level required to benefit directly from the training potentially leaves a large proportion of the population of the Developing World relatively unsupported through Workbook 1. We do appreciate that there are many who cannot read and write who also need to be helped out of poverty.

We have written Workbook 2 to try and address this issue, not by undertaking the immensely difficult task of training the illiterate in business, but by encouraging their employment through making existing businesses more successful and exploring their responsibility for helping others through employment.

If you would like to know more about Workbook 2, it may be found on the Reconxile.org website and downloaded, as usual, free of charge

evening, and then getting them to read and work on pages 30 to 45 by the end of the second evening, is often the most manageable and realistic way of achieving this. You can see this strategy reflected in the red text on the four day session plan – text which has been added precisely to cope with this eventuality (see page 46). We have even used it to cope with a situation where nobody had read the material before the training – far from ideal, but somehow (*read: with God's help*) it worked.

One approach which we have not yet tried, but which I am increasingly drawn to, and would encourage you to seriously consider, is the addition of a fifth day at the front of the training which is purely intended to meet the participants, to circulate the books, to provide a reading for them, and to give them time to work on the exercises (perhaps in pairs). I believe that it would have been a significant improvement over what we have done so far. However, just to bring your fears back into perspective, we achieved 72% overall success and 220 new businesses in Uganda despite these problems – it is important that we do not get too anxious about them, just think about what we can do to prevent them, and then calmly deal with the situation if it should arise.

Use of questions

Questions are the most powerful way of facilitating learning. One good question can be worth hours of statement – it opens up people to the fact that there is something to engage with; it alerts them to a gap in their own understanding which calls for learning; it encourages people to draw on their own experience and to build on it; and it increases commitment and acceptance of the answer which they finally arrive at. That is why there are so many of them in the training materials and the session plan.

And yet so often we are afraid to use them, particularly if we feel we need to prove ourselves. There is a fear that by asking a question we expose ourselves to the criticism that we do not know the answer, and where we already lack credibility that may well be so. But where you are going, you will not lack credibility. In their minds (*and quite correctly so*) you have been selected and sent by God, from a land where business thinking is largely common-place, to help them in their time of need. What better credentials do you need? When you ask them a question, there is no doubt in their mind that you might not know the answer, only a slight fear that they aren't sure whether they know the same answer!

If you are worried about how you will deliver the training, look through the session plan, and practice the questions you will ask – it will do wonders for your morale.

Examples of questions you can use to open debate:

Does anybody have a story about ...?

What answers do you have for Exercise ...?

What do you look for when you go to buy ...?

...there are many more listed in the sections of the session plan

Focus on group work and discussions/relationships

But bear in mind that when you ask a question from the front, only one person can answer it correctly. And in a large group of say 30-40 people, that is a very small proportion, even if you get one or two offering subtle variations. It is far more effective for their learning and confidence for a larger number of them to answer it correctly, but that is difficult to do when you are talking to the whole group.

Far better to throw open the question but then to get them to discuss their answers in smaller groups. While it makes it more difficult for you to assess the quality of the answers, it does have a number of advantages:

- it engages more people mentally because they realise that they not only have a chance to speak, the others around them have an expectation that they will;
- it draws out a range of contributions, but gives the group the responsibility of thinking through how they assess the quality of them;
- it gets people to commit themselves, because they are more committed to a statement they have made than a statement you have made;
- and it means that they will retain the conclusions longer, because people tend to retain more of what they say themselves than of what they hear others around them say.

Furthermore, the group based discussions help to build deeper relationships between the people in the group; relationships which may well extend beyond the training and provide mutual support at a time when their businesses most need it.

Using the exercises and projects

The exercises in Workbook 1, provide a good basis for group work and discussion/debate. Even where people have not completed the exercises before the training, setting the exercise for group work can help everybody to gain new insights which will help them with their own answers when they go through the workbooks properly themselves.

It is probably worth highlighting here, that the idea is for people to work through Workbook 1 a number of times, refining their answers, and repeating the whole sequence with new ideas, until they have one that works for them. The advantage is, that when they alight on their final business idea, they will be very skilled in thinking it through. And that is the goal of our training – to have people skilled in thinking businesses through, rather than to have people with a business – because with the achievement of the former, the latter becomes a sustainable and replicable certainty.

The afternoon projects provide the first real opportunity for people to take the learning which they have further developed in the morning session, and to apply it for real on their own personal business idea. The idea is for people to work individually, or in pairs, but not in larger groups. Here the goal is to get the individual to push themselves into doing the work for real – only in this way will they gain the confidence to make the decisions for their real business.

And there is a key psychological barrier to be overcome here, and you will probably notice it in a reluctance to write in their own Workbooks. They are worried about making a mistake. It is very important that you help them overcome this fear, not by convincing them that they won't make a mistake, but by convincing them that they will, and that this is a good thing – making mistakes on paper is the best way to learn, and it is the best way to make sure that you have used up all of

The effect of the exercises in the training material on group working in Dalandzadgad



Exercise 7: What do I buy?

.....
Who do I buy it from?
.....
Why do I buy it from them?
.....
What would cause me to buy it elsewhere?
.....
What do I mean by 'better' in this case?
.....

An example exercise from Workbook 1 explores the concept of 'better' as raised in the text

your mistakes when you go to do it for real, with a real business, and real money. With one group, I went so far as to get them all to turn to one page together, and to get their pens, and scribble over it, just to break through the reluctance – a bit extreme perhaps, but it did seem to work.

5.3 How do we know if it is working? (Tips in observation which will help you to be successful)

Facilitation is largely about two things: process (*the sequence of interrelated tasks which people are working through*) and intervention (*what the facilitator says and does over and above what the process asks them to do*). Strangely though, if you get the design of the process right, intervention is largely unnecessary – it is almost as if the process anticipates where the group will go and is there to support

them when they get there. Unfortunately, it is unusual (*almost unheard of*) to find a process which is that well designed, and so intervention is required to keep people on track, and even to adjust the process where required.

In the case of Workbook 1 training, the process has been designed for you. It is a good and proven process, but it is not perfect, and so you will need to intervene when people go off track. The key thing in good facilitation (*apart from having a good process*) is being able to spot when people are going off track early, before they have wandered too far, so that you can nudge them back on track quickly and easily. That is what this section is about.

Body language

You will know from your own experience of groups, either leading them or being a part of them, that you can wait a long time, and be a long way off track, if you wait for somebody to actually voice that there is a problem. There is a strange dynamic here, in that those in a group who are most prone to speak out are often so engaged in the detail of the debate that they do not always notice that things aren't working, and those of a more reflective disposition, who can see that things aren't working, tend to be the least prone to speak out.

But people don't only communicate with their mouths, and while they may be reluctant to be as overt as to raise an issue verbally, you will find that they have been communicating the problem very clearly in 'other' ways for some time before they get as far as speaking about it. And knowing what they are 'saying' in this way is what gives the facilitator the opportunity to respond early and sensitively, almost without disrupting the flow.

This 'other' level of communication is known as 'body language' because it is communicated largely through our bodies: Our facial expressions; the angle of our head; our stance or posture; the position of our hands and arms – all provide clues as to what the person might say if they were about to speak out, long before they actually do speak out. The whole subject is a fascinating one, and if you ever get the chance to see Allan Pease, an Australian expert on the subject, talk about it, you will be both amazed and amused in equal proportions – he has a few clips on www.YouTube.com



Examples of Body Language

There is a lot that can be read into all sorts of details about how you touch your face, and the angle of your head, and how you need to read clusters of gestures together, that it can be quite confusing for anybody new to body language who is trying to do it at that level. But just as we generate body language messages subconsciously, we also ‘read’ them subconsciously. To illustrate what I mean, look at the pictures on the previous page, and tell me what you feel that the person in the picture is thinking or feeling. Do you feel that they are: Bored? Interested? Annoyed? Arrogant? Enthusiastic? Happy? Or may be one of each? And if so which relates to which?

Interesting, you reached your conclusions without the pictures saying a word, and you probably feel pretty confident with most of your choices and would be willing to argue them if required. Now these pictures are of a white British male, but basic forms body language, like the ones above, seem to be consistent across colour, nation, sex and culture. You see we pick up cues naturally, and we are already reasonably skilled in their interpretation.

But what we are often not so good at is being aware of the cues, and taking notice. In many cases we either filter them out, or we allow them to affect us subconsciously. The challenge we face as facilitators is simply to make that last piece of the process more conscious – to ask ourselves regularly: “What do I feel they are feeling?” and “What do I think this means?”

Checking it out

But we could of course be wrong. It is only what *I* feel, and what *I* think, and let’s face it we have all got the wrong message before now (*and some people have still got the four red finger marks on their cheek to prove it*).

So the first thing is to ‘be aware’, and think about it. But the second thing is to ‘check it out’. We need to verify that the things we feel they are feeling, and the things we think are causing it, really are happening, and we need to do this before we act. This is not a matter of frequently interrupting them to check, especially when the information we appear to be getting is “*I am happy and interested in this*”, but we do interrupt them to check when we would otherwise be intervening, for instance when they appear to be sending out signals of “*I am bored*” or “*I am annoyed*”.

Which leads us on to the question of “How do we check?” For instance, saying “*You look bored, are you?*” could be a bit confrontational, and is either likely to push the information further down and suppress it, or to create an over-reaction to justify the information: “*Yeah well, who wouldn’t? I mean this is really tedious stuff!*” Both of these responses are difficult for the facilitator to handle by simply ‘adjusting the flow’. Far better to ask a more general question of the sort we are more used to in those who take a concerned approach to us; questions like: “*Is everybody okay (with this)?*” or “*Would it be helpful to spend a bit more time on this?*” or “*Is this at the right pace for people; would you like us to speed up; or to slow down?*” or “*Do we want to pause for a moment and take a little break?*”.

This last option gives the option of checking things out with people privately and individually, either by you approaching them or them approaching you. In any event, what you have done by asking the question is to lower the

Practicing Observation:

Take some time to look around you and practice your skills in observing body language in the following situations:

- Watching television soaps with the sound turned off
- Looking around the room at other participants in a conference
- Checking yourself and how you are sat and how you feel from time to time

threshold for those who might otherwise be reluctant to voice their concerns; you have invited them to speak, rather than left them to interrupt.

All of this is actually common sense, and wonderfully captured in *“Do to others, as you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12)*. If you can think about how you would respond if you were in their shoes, you are a long way forward to asking precisely the right question at precisely the right time, and it is this, and practically this alone, which makes facilitation look so easy in those who are good at it.

A useful piece of advice:

I have long valued the following advice:

Before you criticise someone, walk a mile in their shoes.

To which, somebody wittily added:

That way, when they get angry, you'll be a fair distance away and they'll have to chase you barefoot.

Eye contact, standing up, sending out your own non-verbals

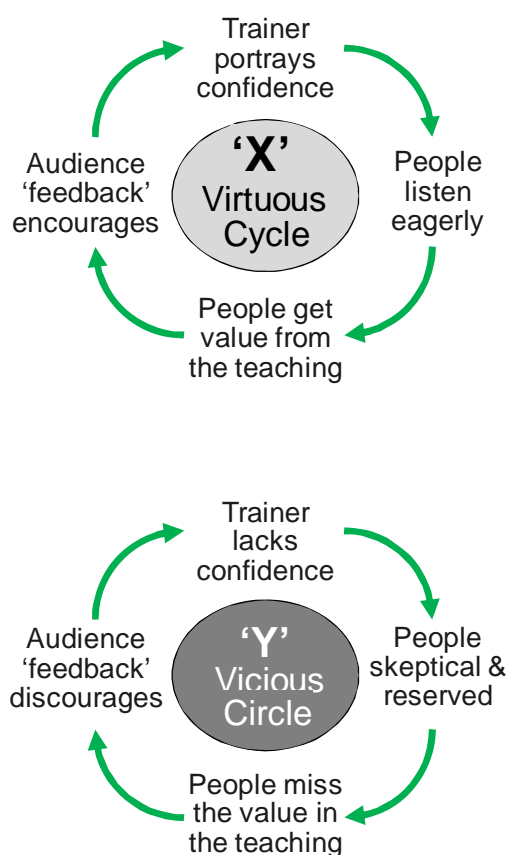
Of course, body language works both ways. Not only can you respond to their body language, but they will respond (*consciously or subconsciously*) to yours. People often under-rate that simple fact, and therefore handicap their work at the front of the room from the outset.

People will tend to see you as you see yourself, and they will take their cue for this from your body language. For instance, if you walk into a room in a manner which speaks of self-confidence (*upright, expansive, smiling, strong voice, good eye contact*), people will automatically assume that you have good reason to be confident. Equally if you walk into a room in a style which exudes a lack of self-confidence (*creeping, reserved, worried, weak voice, shifty eyes*), people will sadly assume that you have good reason to lack confidence.

And because of the way they will treat you (either in the case of ‘*self-confidence*’ or in the case of ‘*nervous timidity*’) your attitude quickly becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. Think about it, who would you rather listen to, given all other things are equal: Person X who clearly has something to say which he or she is confident is of value; or Person Y who would quite clearly rather not be saying anything?

In the case of Person X, people tend to listen carefully, openly and enthusiastically, seeking not to miss anything of value (*and thus become an encouraging and supportive audience to talk to*). But in the case of Person Y, people tend to listen critically, reservedly, or distractedly, trying to find the flaw that is ‘*obviously*’ there – why else would Person Y so lack confidence? (*and thus become an unsupportive and sceptical audience with whom it is almost impossible to gain rapport*). The truth is that both people will be saying things which include value and flaws, but the filters in the audience have only been set for *value* in the first and *flaws* in the second. They could both say exactly the same words, but they would leave totally different messages.

What you will be saying to people in the Developing World is of immense value to them. (*It could literally mean the difference between life and death*). Please do not create in them the impression that it could be anything less than this. To be blunt, please don't let



your own means of cosseting any small insecurity you might have about standing up there be a contributing factor in their future misery; please do all that you can in word and deed to provide them the compelling confidence in taking you and what you are talking about seriously.

Your demeanour when you stand at the front of the room is not ‘you’, but it is a choice which ‘you’ make, and given that it really is a choice, we would like to ask you to think seriously about what you are going to choose, and why. Initially it may seem like a bit of an act, but that is only because you are not used to it. The other way is an act as well, but one that perhaps you have rehearsed so often, in reality or in your imagination, that it seemed real to you. You are God’s agent in that place; accord the Jesus that is in you, the Jesus that wants to speak and act through you, His rightful honour in your frame. Make a choice which honours Him.

And I know this is the opposite of the culture in Judaea at the time, but please stand up whenever you have something to say, not just because of the reasons above, but also for four other very important reasons:

- The first is that it gives people an easy focus for their attention.
- The second is that it naturally raises the energy of the group; people tend to feel better when they are looking slightly upwards.
- The third is it is easier for you to see the body language of the group when you are stood up.
- And the fourth is that it is easier to use your body to convey ‘intentional’ body language when you are standing up, and easier for others to register it.

What do we mean by ‘*intentional*’ body language? To this point we have really been talking about body language as an almost subconscious flag, but you can also use body language explicitly to convey a more direct message when you do not want to interrupt with words. You can use nods and smiles to encourage a speaker, and a look of anticipation to draw more out of them; you can raise your hand slightly and drop your gaze for a moment to draw people to a close (*the sort of gesture we use naturally before saying “But...”*); you can look quizzical to encourage clarification, or look confused to encourage them to backtrack and reconsider what they have said; you can walk into the group to encourage attention back toward you, or back gently out from the group to encourage their attention toward each other; you can raise your hand to bring people to a stop; or make an open-handed gesture to encourage them to start; you can glance sharply at someone to register displeasure (*normally for a misdemeanour like starting a side-conversation*); or you can smile broadly to do the opposite; you can look sympathetic to give support; or you can look unsympathetic to sow seeds of doubt. The list is almost endless, but this is not intended to be a menu to pick items from, it is meant to be a trigger to you saying: “Yes, I’ve seen that ...” or “You know, I’ve done that...”. All of these gestures, are in us somewhere, and they normally happen naturally. The trick here is to let them out, and let them out at a time you choose. And perhaps the trick to that is to practice.

Do you want some fun? Practice being more expansive and expressive; use your hands and arms and face more to accompany your words; pretend you are on stage. And when you have got more used to being expansive and expressive in the gestures around your speech, try

Practicing Intentional Body Language:

Practice getting people to respond to you by only using body language and not your voice:

- Getting someone to expand on an answer
- Getting someone to come to the point
- Generating a sense of disapproval
- Generating a sense of encouragement

doing it without speaking. Play a game with yourself in your next church meeting, and see what you can get people to do without speaking to them, just by gestures and murmurs alone. Try it with people you meet, try different gestures and expressions and see what happens, but try and make it as natural as you can (*albeit not natural for you*). They may think you have gone a bit strange, but it will be a real education to you exactly how much can be achieved without speaking a word.

Responding to problems

Body language can be a way of identifying problems and it can also be a way of avoiding them, or of dealing with them quickly and sensitively. But sometimes the situation needs more direct intervention to keep things moving forward. The most common things which require this are:

- Somebody who keeps interrupting you and dominating proceedings with their questions and concerns
- Somebody who dominates their table-group, and effectively discourages other people from participating
- Side conversations or a general hubbub of background noise from the group as people natter to each other
- Late arrivals, who then want you to go back over things which you have already covered with the rest of the group

The first thing to do is to remain totally calm. You can only do your best in your given set of circumstances, and nobody can expect more of you than that, so there is no point in getting upset about it – this is simply a problem which needs to be addressed, and it is best addressed by clear calm and confident thinking.

The first thing to do is to understand what the problem is, and whether it is with an individual, with a group, or with everybody. The second is to reach a decision as to whether it needs to be addressed in front of the whole group, or whether it is best addressed privately, and if privately, whether it needs to be addressed by you or whether someone else can handle it. And the third is to develop a strategy to tackle it:

If it needs to be addressed to the whole group, for instance in the case of numerous side-conversations or other unhelpful behaviours, then the best thing to do is to stop the training, and get everybody's attention, and then:

- Explain to the group that you are having a problem at the moment, what the problem is, and why it is a problem
- Flag up any relevant information, such as the groundrules, but be careful not to isolate any individual
- Where possible, empathise with them, and explain that you realise that it is difficult at times, but then re-emphasise why it is a problem and the consequences as you see them
- If it is the first or second time of addressing this problem, re-assert what it is you expect of them, and ask if they are willing to endeavour to do this in order to help you to help them

Groundrules of the Training

We will, at all times,...

- Be courteous and helpful to our trainer and fellow trainees
- Listen carefully to what is being said - by anyone - and avoid distractions like side-conversations, phones or other things not to do with training
- Attend each session, and do our project work as planned
- Be punctual and return at agreed times ready to start work immediately
- Enjoy ourselves

7

Copy of the ground rules
from Support Materials
pack for Workbook 1

- If it is the third time, explain that things are obviously not working out on this, and ask them what they want to do about it – then see what you can work out together. If it is a real problem which threatens the training, speak to the Host for their advice, and then let the local group handle it. Be open-minded about the outcomes, and how they can be made into a workable solution *(even if not the ideal)*

If it needs to be addressed to one or two individuals, then it is probably best addressed in private, and you need to decide whether this needs to happen immediately, or whether it can wait until the next organised break in the training:

- If it needs to happen immediately, then call a break in the training anyway – you are allowed to do that, and you do not have to give a reason for it
- If it can wait for a natural break in the training then endeavour to wait for this. Or alternatively, if you are not leading the training at this point *(for instance in the case of group work)* you may be able to do the following steps without disrupting the timetable.
- Decide whether you can address the issue directly, or whether you need the support of your Host. If it does need the support of the Host *(or if the situation would benefit from the courtesy of raising it with them)* then speak to the Host first, and agree a course of action with them
- If you are to handle the issue personally, gather those who are causing a problem to one side, as inconspicuously as possible. Politely but firmly dismiss any hangers-on. And raise the issue of their behaviour and its consequences for the training with them directly, and ask them what they want to do about it
- Ideally they will see the problem, and seek to do something practical about it, but if their proposals are insufficient (or even non-existent) then you will need to explain clearly what you expect them to do, and the consequences (for their continued part in the training) if they are unable to meet these expectations
- Suggest you meet with them at the end of the session in order to address any remaining concerns that they may have *(on a one-to-one basis)* and to review their participation in the training from now on *(see the example dialogue in the box on the right)*.

Do not be afraid to confront problems. Your responsibility is to create an environment in which people can learn from Workbook 1, and the rest of the group are looking to you to do that. But be careful to monitor yourself and manage your reactions so that they remain on the right side of objective and dispassionate. You are simply the facilitator of whatever is needed to ensure an effective programme, and people can live with that. But if you allow any sense of superiority or standing-in-judgement to creep into your demeanour, then you will be calling-down all sorts of problems upon yourself and your training programme. This is explained in a bit more detail in the next section on *'positioning'*.

Example Dialogue:

- *I am a little bit concerned that you are having some trouble fitting in with the groundrules on side conversations ... is this anything I can help you with?*
- *What actually is the problem?*
- *My issue is that side conversations distract the people around you, and for their own success I need their attention to be on the course. So we need to find a way for you to be able to avoid side conversations from now on*
- *Yes, that's fine, but if you find the groundrules prove to be beyond you then we may need to rethink your attendance here, and what alternatives there may be to meet your training needs.*

5.4 The three Ps of success: Preparation, positioning, prayer! (Being ready for the questions)

Most of your success in delivering the training will have been decided some-time before you first stand in front of a group in some far-flung corner of the globe. In fact, '*standing up there*' is simply the implementation and realisation of all of your (*and our*) plans to this point.

In the previous section we talked about the importance of self-confidence when you walk into the training room, but that self-confidence needs to be based on something – it needs to be based on:

- A confident belief that you know what you are talking about; you know the materials you are about to train them in; and that they have chosen to come there to receive that
- A fundamental belief in your ability to add value to these people through your understanding of the materials, and that you are able to meet their (*reasonable and realistic*) expectations of you
- A prayer-fed belief that you are doing God's work in that place; that you are part of His plan, and that He has the complete power to prosper His plans, and that whatever you do, it was part of His plan for that place, and it will be to the good of those who love Him (*Romans 8:28*)

Let us look at each of these in turn.

Preparation: Knowing what you are talking about

As has been explained, on a number of occasions, the materials are effectively the training, and your role as the trainer is largely to facilitate a series of opportunities for them to share their knowledge and learning.

But, there will be questions about the material which arise from the group, and there will be things which need to be explained from the front of the room. Many of the people who will be receiving the training have little hope, and they will be staking what hope they do have on what you will be telling them. For you, this is a couple of weeks out of your year to embark on the adventure of doing God's will in a different part of the world. For them, it may be the one chance that they have to secure a future for their family.

Please pause and think about that for a moment. *“For them, it may be the one chance that they have to secure a future for their family”*. Please put yourself in their position for a moment and think about what that feels like. Put your children in the position of their children, and try and make it real.

You do offer them real hope, possibly their only hope, a real chance to secure a future for their family. The training materials work. Real businesses have been set up as a result of them. People have pulled their families out of starvation. But they do need someone at the front of the room who really believes that.

They need someone who can answer their questions accurately and confidently. All of the answers they need are in the materials somewhere, but they need someone who can direct them quickly to it and help them to make sense of it. They need someone who really has read and understood the materials

[illegible]

(*they are not difficult*) and who has built their own confidence in the value of those materials.

A weak or inaccurate explanation to you may simply be a matter of *"I must remember to do that better next time"*. A weak or inaccurate explanation to them may well be a matter of: a business which you are fighting to save with huge emotional and physical effort against the odds; the shame of going back and telling your family that their hopes are confounded and that what little they did have has now gone; the misery of watching your family suffer further hardship which you had so hoped to avoid.

Please do all that you can to ensure that you do understand the materials, and that you can answer questions on them. For their sake.

But also for your sake. Because when you feel that you know what you are talking about, your whole confidence level changes, and it becomes so much easier to lead the training and build rapport with the group. Your confidence will become that self-fulfilling prophecy which we talked about in the last section, and your joy at being God's agent in that place at that time will become real to you.

Positioning: A helpful guide rather than an expert

The second level of confidence comes from having a correct positioning between yourself and the group. If you have prepared diligently, then you definitely have value which you can offer the group, and it is important that they recognise that.

You have value as someone who simply understands the materials and who is willing to take time in explaining them – nothing more and nothing less – and that is what the group needs to understand about you. And if they do understand this about you, they will relate to you, treat you with respect, appreciate the effort you are putting in on their behalf and be very forgiving of any pauses you might need to check on things and confirm what you are saying to them.

But if for some reason they see you as a business expert, or worse, as someone who sees themselves as a business expert, then your relationship is in danger of being founded on a falsehood (*which God has no part of*) and a number of things may begin to happen.

- The first may be that they become less tolerant and more confused by pauses as you check and confirm things
- The second may be that you become less inclined to check and confirm things because you fear it might undermine your standing in their eyes
- The third may be that you then become more likely to make mistakes, and more likely to become flustered and stressed when you do (*and therefore less relaxed and likely to make even more mistakes*)
- The fourth may be that you will begin to try to reclaim your credibility by embellishing points, and digressing rather than allowing the materials to do their work
- The fifth may be that they will begin to notice the mistakes before you do. And when they do, you may begin to find excuses to justify your position in the vain hope of maintaining your standing in their eyes

"He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts"

Luke 1:51b

- The sixth may be that the rapport begins to break down, the training all becomes a lot more difficult and less enjoyable, and you also begin to lose your link with God because you are finding it more difficult to *'look Him in the eyes'*

Or is that just me? Yes perhaps I have overstated it a bit, although it has felt that way on occasion when I have looked back on things. And you may have observed hints of this in yourself in the past.

Instead, if you can get the group to understand that they are responsible for their own learning and that we are all going to work together as a team to support each other in that; and that you are simply another member of that team; and that you will try to play your part in keeping things simply moving forward; then it is likely that they will be keen to see you succeed and do all that is in their power to help you to do so.

The point is that with correct positioning with the group, and indeed with yourself (*a total and open honesty as to who you are and what you are doing*), all of the above snares have no claim on you whatsoever, and you can be confident in who you are and the simple value which you bring.

Prayer: Seeking help for people and for situations

And you can be confident in your calling by God to that place, to be part of His plans there. And that is a real joy.

Sometimes before a training session, I get into the room about an hour before-hand, and I wander round the room, and I stand behind each seat, and I pray for the person who will be sitting in it that day, and that God will use me for His purposes with that person. It is easier on the second and subsequent days, because I know who will be sitting in that seat, but even on the first day it helps me get a true perspective of what I am doing there.

To be frank I do not do it enough. But when I do, it has the effect of making me feel like a conduit of His grace and favour. And sometimes He brings to mind insights or things which I have forgotten.

There are suggestions for prayer in section 7.1, and you might take relevant bits of that as a basis for prayer before the training session and in the time leading up to it.

And the session plan has a period of time at the start of the meeting for prayer, which can be a time of blessing for all concerned. In Uganda, we were blessed by some beautiful a capella voices which led us in worship, and in Dalanzadgad by a tumultuous fever of prayer in tongues which gladdened the heart. When Jesus said *"Come unto me you ... who are heavy laden ... because my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30) perhaps he also had in mind the feeling you get when a group of Christians gather for worship before the training – it makes you feel that the task of learning and the task of training is shared between you, and that between you and with God's help, it not only feels possible, but joyously so.

5.5 What do you need to get started?

So how do you actually get started?

Most of what you actually need to do is explained in detail in the Training Session Plan which is available for download from the Reconxile.org

website. Together with the explanation that is in this Chapter, you really have all you need to set up your first training session.

Beyond that, what you do, and how you do it, will largely depend on who you are and where you are. As such, it is difficult to provide much further guidance to you.

But what we can offer is a quick run through of the way that we have set up our first training sessions. We offer this not as instructions, but more as a model which you may use as you see fit based on the situation you find yourself in.

How we set-up our first training session

Our first training session was in Kampala. We originally thought that it was going to be in the church in Katwe (*a desperately poor slum area in the South of the city*) but our Host was concerned about us training in the heat, and so arranged facilities at a nearby hotel.

Unfortunately, for a number of very good reasons, nobody else from the team was able to go with me to the first session.

What I planned to do was:

- Get there the evening before and gather all of the materials together and set up the training room.
- Review the session plan and re-familiarise myself with the structure of the training and how it works
- Think through some local examples to help illustrate some of the points in the training
- Put certain key flipchart sheets on the wall, such as objectives, groundrules, picture of the guitar maker, what this training is and is not; and write up the other flipchart sheets in order on the stand
- Set out the room into groups of 6 or 7 around six tables, and check each seat had line of sight to the front of the room
- Lay out pens, pencils, maths workbooks and any other materials on each of the desks
- Lay out my space at the front of the room with the session plan & my Workbook annotated with the notes I need, and with sticky notes inserted into the pages I needed to find while I was talking
- Ensure that I had post-it notes, blu-tack and flipchart pens to hand
- Ensure I had a clock in view that I could glance at easily without drawing attention to the fact
- Set up a register to get people's names for their certificates
- Make sure that the room was properly signed so that people could find their way there
- Ensure I understood the fire-drill & toilet locations so that I could explain them; and understand the arrangements for refreshments
- Ensure that we had a wastepaper bin handy (*for some reason – some unwritten law about training rooms – there rarely is*)
- Pray for the room, the participants, and the training itself

Does any of this apply
as a checklist for you?

[illegible]

- Get a good night's sleep
- Awake, and welcome people with a big encouraging smile on my face, knowing that everything was in place behind me
- Begin the training punctually at 9am with everyone present, having done all of their preparation

However, things rarely turn out as planned.

I arrived on the Monday, the day before the training was due to start, with the intention (as outlined above) of setting up the room that evening. But when I asked about this I was told that we could not have the room until the Wednesday, but they had arranged another room for us for the Tuesday at a hotel down the road.

The hotel they sent me to claimed no knowledge of this, but they did have a room we could use – a sort of store room, but I could not get in there until the Tuesday morning. Also they had no flipcharts, they were all in the other hotel. So I used the evening, back in my bedroom in the other hotel, going over the session plan to ensure I had a feel of what was to happen when, rebuilding my confidence in the process, praying, and writing out the Support Materials full-size on pages of flipchart paper.

Tuesday came with a rush, lugging furniture up and down the street in stifling heat, setting-up as people were trying to be introduced to me (*I am truly hopeless at multi-tasking*), forgetting things, finding people weren't being told to where the training had moved, only having about 5 people present at the time we were due to start. I stuck up a number of the flipchart sheets around the walls and tried to put the rest of the pad on the stand, only to find the pegs were at a different pitch to the holes.

I prayed ..., ..., ..., and drew myself back together again. Reminded myself that I was an adventurer on God's plan and waited to see what transpired next.

We were due to be 40 people, but only about 30 of them made it that first day. They were supposed to have read the workbooks, but admitted that they had not. T.I.A. (*'This is Africa'* – see page 45) It was not the start I had either hoped for or prayed for.

I apologised for the level of disorganisation**, and we began in worship, enthusiastic worship with beautiful harmonies woven in and out of the words, and then in prayer. And I looked at the group, and I realised that although I was way off-plan, I had four days with people who needed what I had to offer, and I had God, and it would work, and it would be interesting to watch and see how.

Because so few had read the Workbook, I read through pages 3-29 to them, with one of the Host's people (*called Livingstone*) translating into Lugandan (*their local language*) for me. And I then followed the session plan, as near as I could manage, exactly as it had been written – after all, if it worked out, they would be trying to replicate this at some point in the near future, so best not to confuse them with two different versions of events.

At lunchtime, we had to go back to the first hotel to get our food, and then go back down the road for the afternoon. Livingstone and I read the remainder of Workbook 1 to them, and then stayed around to offer help and advice while they worked on their projects. That evening

****Why do you suppose I apologised for the level of disorganisation, since it was not really my 'fault'?**

If you are not sure, think about the situation as a 'trainee' for a while ...

... and think about the difference between 'fault' and 'responsibility'

And if you are still not sure, perhaps start a discussion with some trainers you know.

we took everything back up the road to the first hotel, and I set up, and then went round and prayed for a while.

The next day about 40 people turned up, some who had missed the first day entirely. They did not all turn up at once, most were there for the start (*further wonderful worship*) but the rest came in ones and twos over the first hour and a half. These were assigned to groups, and were sadly disruptive as they tried to catch up with where we were. I took the opportunity to talk about punctuality in business, and its impact on customers, and most got the message and were there by 9 the next morning.

However I did discover how big the sacrifices were that some of them were making to be there, and the fact that, for some, their lateness was a result of them struggling to get through an almost impossible combination of responsibilities under very difficult circumstances. There was no rancour in this information – they really appreciated that I was there, they appreciated that punctuality is important in business, and they were sorry. And despite being late, they struggled hard to catch up with the work. And I learned that lateness can sometimes be an indicator of commitment rather than the lack of it. Particularly when you discover what some people have to get through to get there at all (*see the box on the right*).

On the second day, we took a register of everyone who was there so that we could print certificates for them and have them ready for handing out on day 4. This worked well, and we had a named certificate for everybody.

What did not work quite so well, and became a distinct problem by day 3, was that while we had more than enough Workbooks for everybody, they were not named, and so people started picking up other people's workbooks (*probably by accident*) and we had to keep finding spares. And we discovered that some people had started bringing their friends along because they had got so much out of it – and so we were losing some Workbooks that way. By day 3 we ran out. Not only that, but those who had lost their workbooks had also lost their answers to the exercises, and so each morning seemed to have a flurry of commotion as people tried to sort things out.

The arithmetic on day 3 was a bit taxing for many of them, and I was there on my own from the UK with no team to share the burden of going round the tables to help people out. I was at serious risk at this point of simply being snowed under by the avalanche of queries. But three people from a local charity had joined in the training, because they wanted to use it with street children, and they were a God-send. They were well educated, understood maths, were spirit filled and caring. Very quickly they recognised my predicament, and came and helped out, first of all on their own tables and then by wandering round and helping others.

Geoffrey (pictured right) was one of the attendees who was late for the course. He has a small business making biscuits.



After the course was finished we were invited to his home, a two room shack, which he shares with his wife & children. One room was literally half full of bags of biscuits – we asked him about these.

It transpired that in order to attend the course, he had to build up a stock of biscuits to meet his customers' needs and he was having to work on making the biscuits late at night so that he could deliver them to the shops first thing in the morning, and still get to the training, for which he was sometimes a bit late.

In the end it all went fine, as witnessed by the survey scores at the end of the course (see below). I was pretty laid back (*if a bit tired*) by this point – I have a friend whose favourite saying is “*Let go and let God!*” And that seemed pretty good advice to me at the time. I train senior teams in big multinationals at an eye-watering fee-rate for a living, and what I did in Kampala was so far below my standard as to be off the scale – it was frankly appalling. And yet the change that resulted was far greater than anything I have achieved in four days with my clients: 6 brand new businesses, and 17 more turned around from failure to success, plus a group of people who went on to become trainers and have generated ten times this impact. That surely has to be God, doesn't it?

Course Feedback						
How much have you learnt about setting up your own business?	Everything I need	10%	A large amount	62%	Some useful points	28%*
How good was the trainer at helping you to understand ?	Excellent	77%	Good	23%	Average	0%
How effective were the training materials and workbook for you?	Excellent	62%	Good	38%	Average	0%
How useful did you find the afternoon projects?	Vitally important	44%	Very useful	56%	Somewhat useful	0%
How useful did you find your group/ partners in helping you think?	Vitally important	46%	Very useful	44%	Somewhat useful	10%
					Waste of time	0%

Survey scores from
the pilot training
conducted in
Kampala

Summary of Chapter 5

- Delivering the training is very simple; simple enough for people in the Developing World, with very little education, to be able to train each other successfully
- The materials provide for people to teach themselves, so training is predominantly about providing a forum in which people work together through the exercises of Workbook 1
- But to be an effective trainer requires that you work through Workbook 1 yourself & familiarise yourself with the exercises
- The Reconxile.org website provides important materials to support the training, including workbooks, training plans, handouts, examples of flipchart & blackboard content, etc.
- 'Teaching' is less productive than simply asking the questions and encouraging discussion of the answers – the exercises in the Workbooks help you to do this
- For learning to be effective it requires that people have the opportunity to: reflect; think; plan; and act on what they have learned – this is called Kolb's learning cycle
- Pre-reading by the participants is important, but does not often happen, so trainers need to be prepared for this
- There are many (*unintentional*) visual cues which can be used to assess the effectiveness of your training and what issues people might have with it; this is called body language
- You can use the same visual cues (*intentionally*) to control the group you are working with in subtle ways
- Overall success requires that the trainer is assertive over issues which might distract or confuse other trainees
- The 3 P's of success are preparation, positioning & prayer
- Develop your own checklist to help you get started

What for you were the main messages of Chapter 5?

And what do you plan to do about it?

Actions ...

Dates

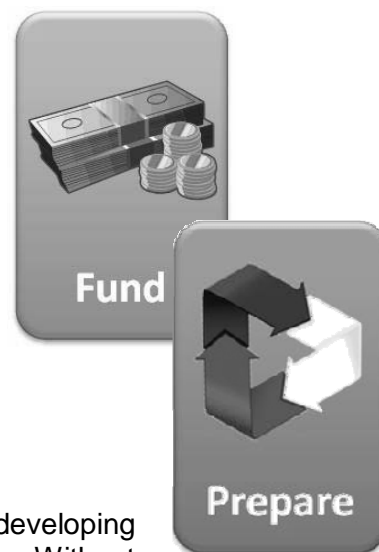
6 Nurturing development

One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty

Proverbs 11:24

Having delivered the training, what else can we do to help the development of local businesses? Once we have planted the seed of development how do we carefully nurture it until it is strong enough to grow by itself?

This chapter looks at three vital areas for assisting, sustaining and reinforcing the efforts of the local trainers.



6.1 Start-up Finance

Delivering the training is a crucial part of helping those in developing countries to become self-sufficient, but sadly it is not enough. Without some form of intervention, the lack of financial resources in the areas where we want to make a difference would strangle any attempts to put the training into practice, and delivering the training without resolving this issue is likely to simply create frustration.

Essentially there are two main forms of ensuring sufficient resource for starting the businesses which arise out of the training:

- rearranging what little existing finance there is to concentrate it in a place where it can do some good (*this is the principle behind the Village Savings and Loans model*);
- or seeking external finance on a temporary basis.

And of the latter, there are two further forms: individual loans set against some form of collateral (*for example a bank loan*); or collective loans across several businesses which mutually guarantee repayment (*the underlying principle of the microfinance model*).

Understanding the local sources of finance

Understanding which option is best for the community in which you are working is firstly about understanding which of these forms is currently available in that area.

For instance, in our work in Mongolia we discovered Xacbank (*pronounced Hasbank, providing you have been doing your Mongolian tongue exercises*), who saw the initial support of small businesses as part of their role in the community, and who had specially developed a banking product which was not only very amenable to very small start-up businesses and correspondingly small loans, but actually offered them at terms and rates which were very sympathetic to their situation; rates far better than I had seen in any other scheme of any type. The existence of such an 'angel' organisation made the idea of setting up a microfinance or VSLA scheme not only unnecessary, but impractical – who would use it?



The lady from Xacbank in Dalandzadgad who kindly gave up time to support our training

However, organisations like Xacbank are a very rare blessing in our experience, and most commercial banking institutions appear very loath to do anything on the (*small*) scale or (*unsecured*) terms which the poor need. They are reluctant to accept the overhead which it would entail (*the relative costs of paperwork and administration for a £100 loan – see box lower right*) and require collateral to guarantee the loan which the poor simply do not have (*usually title to land in Uganda*).

But the existence of Xacbank (*which was a real surprise to us*) illustrates the importance of understanding what sources of finance exist for the poor locally. The first place to start is to ask your Host; he or she will probably be aware of what schemes are most prevalent in their community or in neighbouring communities, and if they do not know, they are still well placed to find out.

There is also the internet as a source of information, typing in the words 'VSLA' (*for the Village Savings and Loans Association*) or 'microfinance' and the name of the area you are to be training in will help you to identify what schemes are already working there – and there are also a number of large microfinance websites such as microfinancegateway.org

Linking with Microfinance partners

Microfinance organisations are often NGOs and charities who offer the facility as a service to the poor as part of a social strategy to alleviate poverty. The most famous organisation is the Grameen Bank, but there are others such as Five Talents, which was established by the Anglican Church out of the 1998 Lambeth Conference. There are also some shady organisations in this field, but the majority are doing it from a heart of social responsibility.



The most common form of microfinance arrangement seems to be where a number of businesses group together to cross guarantee each other's repayments. They take out the loan together (*thereby reducing the overhead*) and take responsibility for ensuring the repayments are made, effectively sharing the burden of a defaulting member between them. But overheads are still high, and it is not uncommon to find that interest rates on the loan are 40% or higher. Collateral is in the form of whatever possessions the individual has, and on occasion can even be their shoes – which are taken in the event of a default.

To us in the West this can seem both exploitative and harsh, but when you look more deeply into the cost of administering the loans you soon discover that it is necessary to charge such rates if only to make the service sustainable. And with regard to collateral, the one scheme that I know of which was soft on this not only ended up losing two thirds of its capital in two years, but more seriously only spawned a handful of successful businesses – the rest failing to learn some of the harsh realities before they were overtaken by them.

Our advice is to use microfinance partners that are already operating in your area, providing they really are in it for goal of alleviating poverty, and not under any circumstances to consider setting up a microfinance (or any other sort of loan) arrangement yourself – especially not at a distance. If microfinance arrangements do not already exist (*and sometimes even if they do*) we would recommend that you rather consider the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) model.

Is 40%apr exploitative?

£100 loan over 4 months

Actual interest is about £6

Out of this, the MFI pays for admin, 16 collections, support, its own overheads and its defaulters – & has to stay in business itself

Understanding VSLA

As explained earlier, the VSLA model is about rearranging what little existing finance there is to concentrate it in a place where it can do some good. The best source of information on it is their website www.vsla.net which contains masses of freely available information on how to set up a VSLA scheme. What follows here is simply a summary of the basics as we understand them.

The power of the VSLA scheme lies in the way that it empowers community responsibility, encourages savings as well as loans, and repays interest which would otherwise be consumed in overheads back into the community. It particularly lends itself to faith based communities, where the behaviours which would otherwise threaten it are naturally addressed through the teaching and sanctions of the church itself.

Essentially, VSLA communities meet around a small steel money box (*secured with three separate padlocks*), and consist of between 15 and 35 members, including 9 elected officers. Each of the members invests what they can afford, but the person investing the most can only invest 5 times the amount of the person investing least, so that control and influence remains distributed. People therefore join schemes which match their financial situation. The 9 elected officers consist of three key-holders (*for the padlocks*), three money-counters (*who triple-check things*), a chairman (*who manages proceedings*), a secretary (*who keeps the records*), and a treasurer (*who looks after the box*). The group agrees its rules and processes democratically when it is formed (*including interest rates and the elected officers*) and can agree a loan to any of its members (*usually the agreed interest rate is either 5% or 10% per month in order to keep the accounting simple*). Quorate weekly meetings take place to enable further savings, loans, repayments, and subscriptions to the hardship fund.



The all important steel box with 3 padlocks is a key part of each VSLA

The scheme lasts for 12 months, at which time the loans are repaid in full, the money shared out and the records reconciled. A new scheme can start immediately if sufficient of the group so wish, with new elections and a chance to review the rules and processes.

Sources of VSLA training

Altogether, the VSLA is a very well thought out scheme, and a real blessing to many poor communities, but it does require a small amount of training to initiate it. During this training, the group can reach their first decisions on officials and processes.

For the scheme we used in Katwe (*in Uganda*), to replace the UK initiated microfinance scheme which had proven so ineffective (*hence the hard earned lessons referred to above*), Care International were kind enough to offer us the initial training. To date the scheme is progressing very well, and it is a joy to see new groups forming, and existing groups working well together to support each other out of poverty.

Care International operate in many parts of the world, but there are other suppliers of VSLA training which can be found through a simple web search, and the VSLA.net site is sufficiently comprehensive that it would be



The amazingly comprehensive VSLA manual

www.vsla.net

possible for someone to pick up the guidance and principles over the internet, and initiate training themselves.

Funding loans yourself

In some areas of the World, you may find that there are no sources of microfinance, that the banks will not deal with the poor, and that there is simply not enough resources to even begin to think about a VSLA scheme (*although it is frankly very surprising how such schemes do start even in places where they do not appear to have two beans to rub together*).

At this point you may be tempted to fund loans yourself, or even set up your own microfinance arrangement. We strongly urge you not to do so.

Awarding loans without the infrastructure to reclaim the money is counter-productive on two counts: one, the money will almost certainly not be repaid (*and although this may not be an issue for you, it leads on to...*); two, the businesses you initiate in this way will most likely fail.

Developing the necessary repayment infrastructure will draw you into a significant undertaking, and may still cause you to fail for both of the reasons in the previous paragraph. Our own brief experience in trying to support a microfinance scheme through the local church resulted in a loss of some £6000 (*out of an original capital of £9000*) and in only five businesses succeeding out of the original 45 supported through the scheme. The scheme has now been converted into a Village Savings and Loans arrangement and is working very well. For more information on this, please read '*the Finance Issue*' on the Reconxile.org website.

If no other options really exist for you, you might consider 'priming' a VSLA scheme. By giving each member of the VSLA community a small sum of money (*which is required to be part of the VSLA scheme for a year, and which they can reclaim at the end*) you may be able to generate just enough local ownership for them to properly steward the result, and for them to want to continue the scheme beyond the first year. But, we do have to say at this point, that we are not currently aware of any such scheme in practice.

6.2 Funds to support local trainer expenses

The previous section covers funding local businesses, which can all be done locally through proven channels, and we would heartily recommend that that is the way which is maintained. Most effective charities use local partners in the areas of the world where they operate, since it is almost impossible to do what is needed and to make properly informed decisions from a distance – the data really is not in a form which enables it.

Providing finance for business from the UK, either as a loan or as a gift, is fraught with pitfalls, creates mixed messages and motivations for attendance at the training, and sets precedents that you would rather do without. If you think Jesus might as well have used a megaphone when He healed someone and told them to keep quiet about it (*Mark 1:44*) just try making a 'secret' loan or financial gift in Africa.

However, there is one aspect which almost certainly will require external funding to support it, and that is the ongoing cost of cascading the training, at least in the early months.

Our philosophy on local funding

Early on in our work, in fact immediately at the end of the first trainer training session, we were asked about paying trainers for their work in training others. The fact is that they are giving up their time to prepare, to travel, and to conduct the training; time that they could otherwise spend in doing more business themselves. The arguments for paying trainers for their time were quite compelling and enthusiastically put forward, not least that it would encourage trainers to train and enable them to do more training sessions, and frankly it would not have been that much money.

But to the palpable disappointment of those assembled, we decided against it. We felt that the training would be better delivered by those who were sufficiently organised in their own businesses that they could afford the time, who were confident enough in the material to enjoy delivering it, and who were sufficiently engrossed in the Lord to feel this as their calling and an act of service to Him. We also felt that providing payment would attract people who were none of those things, and at a distance of 4000 miles we would struggle to tell the good ones and the poor ones apart (*statistics are great here in the UK, but just try getting them reliably in the Developing World*).

But we did conclude that, while we wanted our trainers to undertake the training out of a sense of calling, enjoyment and commitment, we did not want to make them pay for the privilege as well, and there are practical costs associated with delivering the training. So we decided that in the short term, at least, we would cover the expenses concerned with training: materials; stationery; trainer travel; lunches; soft drinks. We did not include venues in this because we envisaged that most of the training would take place through (and in) local churches, and this has been borne out in practice.

In the longer term we are hoping that the local churches will decide that such funding is part of their role in the local community; that they will see they have a calling to use their resources to pull people sustainably out of poverty rather than provide handouts, and that they will recognise this as an investment which will generate an eventual harvest for them, both spiritually and materially. At that point, it may even prove appropriate to pay trainers for training time, since the church would then have not only the proximity, but also the incentive, to ensure the quality of the training is maintained. Our only reservation on this score would be if they then started to charge attendees for the training and thereby create a barrier to the poorest in the community gaining access to it.

Setting up and supporting a local fund

Providing a fund to cover training expenses required that we set up a local bank account jointly with our Host to hold and manage the funds to support training expenses. This transpired to be quite a hassle, and given the high degree of trust we have in our Host, we sometimes wonder whether it was worth it.

However, it is good practice, and it is amazing how quickly the Devil can seed slight, initially innocuous, doubts in our minds where we don't ensure the accountability and transparency that we should, especially when cultural differences stimulate unasked questions. The Devil operates in the dark, so keep the lights on wherever possible, and allow your Host the honour of remaining above your 'unchecked' suspicion.

Establishing schemes of accountability

Which leads onto other schemes of accountability: We receive records each quarter on what has been spent from the account, and what it was spent on.

This is good practice not only for your confidence, but also for their management of the fund. It also allows you to gauge how many training sessions you have the remaining funds to support, to estimate if further funds will be required, and if so how much, and to propose economies if necessary. It has to be said that, in respect of Katwe, the manner of record keeping is somewhat eclectic (see right) but the essentials are all there and it works.

Income			
Money from UK at CIB a/c July 5th			8,317,500
Expenditure			
Meeting at hotel		36,000	
Printing the books		300,000	
Packet of pens		8,500	
Pins & settings		22,000	
Posters printed		40,000	
Name Badge		20,000	
Note books		28,000	
Seminar expenses		2,336,600	
Loan to Geoffrey		3,000,000	
Sponsorship to the computer man		50,000	
opening Training account		1,000,000	
Total from CIB account			-5841100
balance for training on CIB account			1,476,400
withdrawn and used for the seminar	1476400		
Deposit from CIB opening account	1,000,000		
Transfer from U.K. 10th Oct	6,829,000		
Bank charge for transfer		68980	
WITHDRAWAL from training		1,000,000	-1,000,000
sittings		35,000	
communication		30,000	
transport		10,000	
BOOKING 13th Jan		39,000	
budgets / math books pencils/ pens		400,000	
Hall at 100000 per day x 4		50,000	
drinks and eats		987,000	
Eats and drinks			
photocopy the teaching material	25x30 x50	37,500	
	35 x30 x50	54,000	
printing from the internet			
35 x 400 lesson plan		14,000	
25 copies at 400 Teaching Aid		10,000	
20 video course		24,000	
deposit on printing the guides books		60,000	
deposit on books		700,000	
Balance		1,400,000	
Fuel Entebbe		50,000	
photos for the closing day		12,000	
		8305400	3,981,480
		-3,981,480	
Bala. Training account		4323920	
Plus Payment from Geoffrey	to be sent by Friday		
pending issues			
storeAGE A DRAWER FOR SAFETY OF THE MATERIALS			250,000

Record keeping
Katwe style

6.3 Encouraging growth and quality

So, the previous two sections have covered supporting the businesses, and supporting the existing training, and as a result the community you have worked with will continue to pull its members out of poverty, and at a hopefully increasing rate, until there are no more poor in the community. And maybe that is enough. But it does mean that any training initiated in a totally new area is likely to be driven from the West, and that seems a pity, perhaps even a bit colonialistic.

Perhaps it would be better if the people who initiated the whole programme of training in Mbale came from Masaka, rather than from Manchester. But then they too would need the skills not only of training, but of training trainers.

Training trainer trainers

In other words they would need to be trained to train trainers. Now there is a concept. So how did we learn to be trainers? And how did we learn to train trainers?

The original model, and the one used in Katwe, was that the person who developed the materials (*me*), would:

- 1) train people in them, and then;
- 2) train some of those to train others in them, and then;
- 3) train more people to become trainers, but this time involve some of the original trainers in the process of training new trainers (*or as we used to call it, 'learning by Nellie', although I never did get to meet Nellie*).

And so the model grows, but like a tree, and always with a traceable connection back to the root.

But we found that in many cases people were actually capable of simply picking up the materials and training others in them. We have seen this happen in the UK; and we have observed it in Uganda where one of the original group who came to be trained as a trainer 'confessed' that she had already trained two groups of ten people in the meantime. Paradoxically, this self-help approach has now become the preferred model for rapidly multiplying the impact of this work through mobilising churches across the

developed world (*hence this manual*). The current model has many roots and many seeds, some of which we have no idea where they have scattered – it is a totally distributed set of independent systems.

However, this means that people are currently teaching themselves by necessity, because they are in a hurry to make an impact and rapidly responding to the continuously mounting death toll due to poverty. But while self-teaching may be fast and reasonably effective, there is still some case for providing a person-to-person transfer of skills and experience where it is practical and economic to do so, and where doing so does not unduly slow down the process.

So we would like to encourage those who have some experience of training to consider training others to train, and then training others to train trainers, not just in the Developing World, but here in the churches at home. Chapter 5 of this manual is all very well, and it will enable far faster deployment of the business training in Workbook 1 than would otherwise have been possible, but it is not as good as a good personal face-to-face training. And it would be nice to recapture some of that.

If you are interested in helping in this area, you will find a session plan and a PowerPoint slide deck to support you on the Reconxile.org website under 'Training Trainers'.



Trainer Training
Kampala 2008

Using certification

Some parts of the Developing World are very keen on certificates, and are disappointed by situations where they attend training and do not receive one. To this point we have not been good at systematically meeting this need, and have been somewhat ambivalent about the whole certification approach.

On the one hand we can see the value of certificates when they consistently represent a level of quality and competence, and we appreciate that they can be useful in approaching financial organisations for loans where that quality has not been compromised. On the other hand, maintaining that level of quality assurance is a bureaucratic task at the best of times, and that bureaucracy becomes either overwhelming or totally ineffective in the type of distributed and free system we hope to achieve through this training programme.

However, where the certification is important to the effectiveness of, and the commitment to, the training, we have provided some sample certificates on the website. At present, as we write this, these are free to download by any group who have registered on the site, they therefore contain the warning that this is possible, and the accompanying recommendation that any person who wishes to place any credibility on the certificate, assures themselves of the holder's competence by means of some carefully chosen questions.

Over time we aspire to providing a better regulated system, sadly with the necessary degree of bureaucracy – watch this space – but if you are of a more pragmatic bent, like we are, please do not feel that this is likely to be a significant step forward. The skills are infinitely preferable to the certificates, and the certificates will only ever really be a way to encourage



Trainer Certificate
Kampala 2008

and celebrate the skills. Caveat whatever the Latin may be for those who put their store in paper.

Using surveys

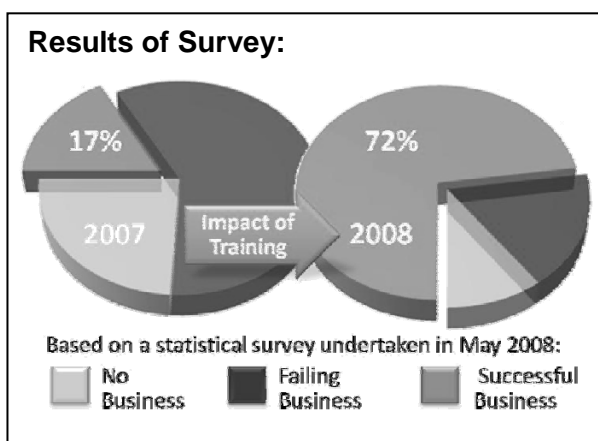
One form of quality assurance which we are fully supportive of, however, is the quantitative survey, both of the initial reaction to the training, and of its ultimate impact on people and their part in the economy. We encourage any group engaging in delivering this training to the Developing World to use both.

The first survey can be found at the end of the trainer support materials, and can be seen (*as an outcome*) at the end of Chapter 5 (*page 71*). This form of survey is used to gain feedback on the quality of the training that has been delivered. This will give your team some real feedback on how their interventions have been received, and hopefully provide some practical suggestions for improvement (*not that your team won't have been excellent of course, but we can all find some area of improvement*). It will also set an example to those on your training who will ultimately train others, and give you some way to assess the quality of their training, and to suggest ways that they might improve (even at a distance). You can ask those who you train as trainers to submit their scores on line, and to copy them to you.

The second survey can also be found on-line, at the Reconxile.org website. This is a survey to use about 12 months after training, to assess the impact of the training on the trainee's situation. It is highly unlikely that the team cascading the training will be able to access everybody they trained, but providing they can access a reasonably random sample, this will give you some real indication of the impact of your work, and while it may not be perfect, it is a lot better than many charities manage to achieve currently.

The box on the right shows the outcome of using this survey in Kampala.

Unfortunately most of the metrics currently being developed to assess economic impact are too general and often too involved for our purposes (*or to be frank, for many charities' purposes*) – in our case, we just want to know how many people feel that they have pulled themselves and their families out of poverty through a business which arose largely as a result of the training. The rest is all just a bit too complex for us, and while we recognise that some of the benefits we create may be missed, double-counted or be partially discounted downstream, we don't want to let analysis lead to paralysis, as it would otherwise be in danger of doing.



Summary of Chapter 6

- It is important to understand what sources of low-value loans and other finance exist locally
- Many countries already have microfinance schemes in place
- Even though microfinance interest rates are high, they are usually a realistic reflection of the costs of administration for small value loans
- The Village Savings & Loans scheme offers an excellent self-help alternative to banks and microfinance schemes
- In some areas of the World, government support and/or philanthropic banks/agencies provide small start-up loans without requiring collateral, and at levels of interest which make them a better option than any of the above – it is very rare but worth checking out locally
- Providing loans from the West is fraught with difficulty and almost certainly doomed to failure. If all else fails, find a way to set up (*and perhaps prime*) a VSLA scheme
- It may be necessary to fund trainer expenses to support the cascade of the training when it is being managed locally, but there are significant pitfalls to paying trainers for their time
- Setting up a scheme of accountability for any local fund helps to avoid misunderstandings
- Resources do exist to train trainers in training Workbook 1
- There is often an expectation in the developing World that training will be associated with a certificate
- Two forms of survey exist to assess the effectiveness of the training, one at the completion of training, and one for about a year after the training has been completed

What for you were the main messages of Chapter 6?

And what do you plan to do about it?

Actions ...

Dates

7 Supporting the work spiritually & materially

A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

Proverbs 22:9

I regret to say that I am not a prayer warrior, and intercession is not in any way my gifting. That said, I do recognise the importance of intercession, of prayer cover, and of the vast multitude who petition God through our Lord to influence support and sustain change. I also understand that this is what we are called to do, and that success in this programme will be as a result of those who faithfully and loyally pray for us, our work, and its impact.

Also, while God has been generous enough to provide me with enough resources to be self-sufficient in piloting this work, and for support of the website and some of the materials on it, I do recognise that others who wish to go out and effect change as part of a team in the Developing World may not be so fortunate, and they will be dependent on the generosity of others in the church for the funds to enable them to do so.

And so, our work, and our progress, will be dependent on those of you who feel your calling is in prayer support or in financial support of this work. For those of you who feel this is your calling, and who have confirmed this through prayer, this chapter is intended to provide some basic guidance in these areas.



7.1 Establishing prayer support for the work

As I have said, I am not a prayer warrior, and I fully expect that in terms of how to pray, I ought to be taking lessons from you (*were that my walk with Jesus at this time*). So this section offers no suggestions on method. Whether you chose to pray individually or in groups, regularly or occasionally, systematically or ad-hoc, I leave entirely up to you – I only ask that you think seriously about your commitment in this area, and through prayer identify an appropriate strategy to take this forward at the level which God is asking of you.

However, I also understand that you prayer warriors and intercessors do like pointers on areas for prayer, and so the remainder of this section does provide an outline list of areas we are likely to continue to struggle with without God's help and blessing; a list which we hope will be useful to you.

Praying for guidance and engagement

The first area concerns God's guidance and inspiration of people concerned with the programme: those who are seeking to direct it faithfully; those who are engaged in using it; those who are seeking to support it; those who might benefit from it; and those who God may be calling toward involvement in it.

We ask in particular that you consider praying for:

- Those of us who are shaping the overall structure and strategy of the programme: That God blesses us with wisdom and with a clear sense of His heart in this area; that He continues to encourage and inspire us in this work; that He makes the open doors plain to us and the way forward clear; that He strengthens us through times of trial so we do not weaken or become distracted; & that we remain faithful to His will
- Those who God is calling to spread the message of this work and to awaken the hearts and minds of others to it: That God will cause their hearts to leap inside them when they first hear about this work themselves; that He will bless them with an infectious enthusiasm for this work; that they will sense His joy as they share what He wants them to share; that He will place on their hearts those He most wants to hear about the work and that He will give them open channels to those people
- Those who through authority and influence can either accelerate or slow this work: That God speaks His heart to them; that they will use their power according to God's will; that they find ways to increase the effectiveness and impact of the work; that they have a true sense of God's priorities and have His peace that they are doing their best within that
- Those who God is calling to make a practical contribution within the programme: That their decision is supported by wisdom and a true sense of God's heart for them; that God gives them a vision for where and how they are to make a difference; that He gives them the courage and perspective to pursue this vision; that they are given a sense both of peace and of passion over their commitment; that God places others in their path whom He has called, so that they feel fellowship and support; that they are encouraged through times of trial and disappointment; that they are blessed with a sense of God's joy in their success
- The churches from where the people are called: That they too feel God's heart for their part in supporting and encouraging those who have been called to this work; that the members of those churches are encouraged and are resistant to the Devil's barbs of cynicism, jealousy, lethargy and parochialism; that God gives them wisdom over the potential of this work for their own fellowship; & that they collectively feel inspired and energised by their part in its success
- Those in the developing countries who God wishes to bless with this work: That God alerts them to this and provides them with the channels to engage in the work; that He gives them wisdom and strength to organise themselves in the best way to make full use of it; that He clearly anoints those whom He is selecting to continue and cascade the work in that area
- Those in existing programmes in the Developing World: That God gives them guidance in selecting businesses which bless both Him and His people; that He helps them to use the materials wisely and effectively; that He gives a clear sense of His calling to those who are to propagate the work, and the wisdom and insight to do this effectively; that those who most need this training are led to receive it

What or who is God placing
on your heart for prayer?

[illegible]

- Those engaged in youthwork, both participants and leaders: That God gives them wisdom over whether the programme is appropriate to them and, if it is appropriate, how to use the programme safely to engage and inspire both themselves and the youth in the Developing World
- Those praying for this work: That God brings to their minds and their hearts all the things in the programme that need prayer; and that He encourages and inspires them with a real sense of His presence as they pray these things through
- Those who wrongly sense their part in this: That God graciously and gracefully distracts them back from these things to the things that He does want them to focus on; and that they feel a sense of peace when they return to their true calling

Prayer support for local teams

What we mean by 'local' in this sub-section is '*local to you*'. We believe that teams who are seeking to send members out to engage in the Developing World and initiate this training need local prayer support; prayer from people who know them and their situation, and can raise specifics to God and seek His will, grace and mercy over them.

Of course, you may not yet have a local team, but we see this as the start point for prayer: That God will identify those He wants to engage in and around your community; and help them to find each other; and then encourage each other; and draw them together to seek His will for them in this work.

If you already have a local team, then we ask you to seek your guidance on what to pray for from them, and of course from God. But if you do not yet have a specific team to pray for, then we humbly suggest the following prayer areas to you:

- That God will firstly bring together those He wants to pray for this work in your community and that they can find time to pray together, and be blessed through this
- That people in and around your community will come to learn of this work and feel inspired by it, and that they will both share their enthusiasm with others and earnestly seek God's will for their own part in it
- That God will not let the idea be forgotten in your community, but will find ways to bring it back on to the agenda. Or that God will make it clear to you that this is not His will for your community, and lovingly direct your prayers either to this work in another community, or to other work in your own.
- That enthusiasm for the work will grow to the point where people become actively involved in some way and begin to form teams to support each other, share their experiences, and find things that they can do together in fellowship
- That out of this comes a group who is willing to physically go to the Developing World to initiate the training, and who have the full support of those around them

What or who is God placing
on your heart for prayer?

[illegible]

The above list is only intended as an outline, since your own understanding of the local community and God's part in it will far better inform your prayers, especially if the last bullet point above is answered.

Praying for the work in developing countries

Similarly, if you do have an active team, you will know exactly what to pray for in this category for the area of the Developing World which your team feels called to address.

Alternatively, you may have contacts in an area of the Developing World, either as a church or individually, and feel that this work could offer real hope and opportunity to them. In which case you will almost certainly feel led to pray for that, and feel informed and guided in those prayers.

But you may have no current link with those in the Developing World, and yet still feel called to pray for the work in those countries. What can you best do in those circumstances? We would like to suggest three possibilities.

The first is to ask God to place an area of the Developing World on your heart for prayer in this regard, and for you to pray as He guides your thoughts in this. Some things that may be appropriate in this regard is to pray that God will bring a team to that area, and that the people in the area will find a way to use the training to pull themselves out of poverty through business.

The second is to pray generally for this work in the Developing World, and some areas for prayer that we know of include:

- That people can be found to cascade the training; that they develop the skills & the passion to do so effectively; and that their own situation is sufficiently blessed that they can afford time to do it without adversely affecting their own situations and businesses
- That the training sessions are well-run & well-attended; that there is training available for all who need it; that there are no barriers to their attendance; and that they are able to learn what they need
- That there are good, ethical sources of finance available for people to develop their businesses; and that the people learn the disciplines of stewardship and repayment quickly before they incur serious damage to their businesses
- That the businesses they establish bless not only God, themselves and their families, but also others in the community through appropriate services and employment
- That the potential of wealth and materialism will be kept in perspective; that those who are helped through the training will not be seduced into a 'love of money' and away from a love of God, as we sadly have been here in the West

The third is to use the Reconxile.org website to look at specific projects which are currently underway and to pray some of the above for those projects, as you feel led.

What or who is God placing
on your heart for prayer?

[illegible]

Praying for the overall Reconxile programme

The Reconxile programme is a big vision, with tremendous potential, and the fact that we have not suffered too many setbacks to date is clearly either because we have been under God's protection, or because we have gone so far off track that the Devil is actually perfectly happy with what we are doing.

In either case, the prayer that we seek from you is the same: That God keeps us to His vision of the work, and protects us from that that would undermine, derail or disillusion us.

Apart from that, we ask that you consider praying the following for us:

- That our relationships remain strong and founded on God
- That God brings us into productive contact with those who can help further His plans
- That the skills and resources we need are available to us
- That God gives us wisdom about where we need help and the best way to get it
- That God keeps a true humility in our hearts, and yet also the drive, fire and passion we need to make things happen
- That we are not distracted by other crises around us (*here if we could ask you to focus on the lack of crises rather than the lack of distraction, that would be good!*)
- That we do not become complacent, but always open to the next step in God's unfolding vision for us

What or who is God placing on your heart for prayer?

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Selecting an appropriate form of prayer support

There are many ways to offer prayers for this work: private prayer; triplets; organised prayer sessions; intercessions within a service; homegroups; prayer walks; labyrinths; prayer boards; collages; prayer cards; 24/7s; and that is just the ones we know of. We just ask that you seek God's will for an appropriate strategy for your prayers, and that you pursue this in a disciplined way.

7.2 Supporting the work financially

While prayers are an essential part of our success, we must not forget the 'Parable of the Talents' (*Matthew 25:14-28*), and our own responsibility to contribute those things with which God has already furnished us. As we write this, we can happily report that God has blessed us with the means to support our own work at the core of Reconxile, and so we are not in any way looking for donations (*especially since we are not set up to administer them anyway*). In addition, the limited nature of our funds has both encouraged us to be creative and to identify strategies which we now believe were God's plan for us from the beginning, and it has also kept us small so that we do not need to be distracted by administration and fundraising (*or the associated committees thereof ☺*).

However, we recognise that many who want to engage in this work will not be so fortunate, and we also recognise that there are people who God has

called to this work who see their role as providing a degree of financial support, and so the purpose of this section is to provide some basic guidance to you as to how you might generate financial resources and direct them so that they can do the most good.

Fundraising

Let us start with the act of *'generation'*.

We fully imagine that some who are reading this are a) fully capable of financing their projects, without the need of any fundraising activities, and b) feel God's calling to do so. To you, we would suggest you skip this sub-section, unless you feel that the act of fundraising is key to developing a sense of ownership within your church.

But for many of you, fundraising will be an important part of your project. Sadly however, many churches in the UK are somewhat *'financially challenged'*, and as a result the members of their congregations largely inured to the calls upon their purses and wallets. The annual round of gift-days, festivals, church stalls, sponsored activities, and bazaars are pretty much 'maxxed-out', and any project is likely to end-up vying for resource against the bell-fund, the results of the last 'quinquennial inspection' and tackling woodworm in the pews.



A typical source of church funds

It would be very tempting here to abandon this rump of middle England, and focus instead on the livelier, thriving, thrusting, trusting, communities which make up the more vibrant end of the church spectrum. After all, it is they which typically engage in such ambitious projects as a matter of course, they who contain a sizeable population of active Christians with liquid assets, and they who will probably find it easy to gather the funds they need.

But part of the heart that we have for this work is its potential to pull together and invigorate church communities which may have simply grown tired, and worn, and distracted by the routine of fabric management. (*And if you are reading this as a member of one of those communities, then my heart goes out to you; you will not believe how much my heart goes out to you.*) So what can we do about it?

Well the first challenge is to address the heart – in this case, the heart of your Church community for the heart of God. The funds are simply a tool, and a consequence of this heart – after all, compared to the Developing World, church communities in the UK have lots of money, it is just that a sizeable proportion of it is tied up in securing the status-quo, both in the church itself and in the lives of its members.

The question here is whether God would feel more blessed by: a well maintained building populated by the *'stagnant fragment'* – a slowly declining group who seek to conserve their lifestyles and traditions, but who let communities in the Developing World starve; or a dilapidated shell, wearing, along with its faithful, the scars of cultural oppression (*physically and psychologically*) as it seeks to do all it can to support those in desperate straits?

And the paradox is, that the more we try to conserve, the less we seem able to do so, and the more we focus on sacrificing what we have to God's heart, the more that seems to come back to us. Yes, people are drawn to beautiful buildings and immaculately executed ceremonies, and they can

get a sense of the peace of God there, but the peace of God *“which passes all understanding”* is found in the turmoil and trauma of doing His work beyond our own strength and resources to cope. He is not an exhibit to be calmly and collectedly admired from the aloofness of our own self-satisfaction. He is a relationship to be desperately sought and frantically depended upon, on His terms.

To be fair, the *‘stagnant fragment’* often don’t see themselves as such, and in terms of depending on God, they will cite a number of crises which they are having to deal with. But in many cases these crises have sought them out rather than vice versa, and the truth is *“We either go to the battle, or the battle will come to us!”* – the Church was born for adversity, and it will have it; either in the slow lingering decline of constantly retrenching and facing ever more inwardly, or in striking out and making a difference despite the odds. And I ask you to consider, which is the power and glory of God more evident in?

A church which abandons the idea of conservation for the hope of transformation (*initially the transformation of others*) is a far more powerful witness to God’s glory; a more congruent reflection of the story we try to tell; and a place in which God appears more vibrant and exposed to those who come to see what is going on. It is a place people join rather than drift away from.

So the question to your church community is essentially the question of four paragraphs earlier: *“What would God be more blessed by?”*

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well

Matthew 6:33

And while I have targeted this section at those church communities which have *“grown tired, and worn, and distracted by the routine of fabric management”*, it is perhaps a question we should all address. Even those Churches which are currently vibrant are in danger of drifting into patterns of complacency (*and if they cannot see this, then they are in more danger than they realise*), and need to revisit God’s heart for their role as part of a Global community on a regular basis. You may be confident that your Church is doing a lot, but reflect for a moment on the story of the widow’s mite (Mark 12:44) and ask: *“Are we actually just doing what is easy for us?”*

If we get the answer to the question *“What would God be more blessed by?”* right, and we get it truly fixed into people’s hearts, then fund-raising will not really be an issue for us. So that is our recommendation for raising money – Matthew 6:33 (*see the box above right*). After all, the mechanics of fund-raising is something that the church is really good at – we just need to get our passion to match it.

Supporting a team from a local church

Probably the best place to look if you wish to contribute financially to this work, is a project in your local (*or a neighbouring*) Church. Sometimes those of us with a bit of money to spare think very little about the costs of flying across continents and booking a hotel at the other end, or indeed of taking a week out of our work if we are our own boss. But to those who feel a tug on their hearts to go out to help the street children in Rio, or the *‘people of the pipes’* in Ulaan Baatar, or the AIDS devastated communities in Soweto, the cost of the airfare and the accommodation could be an insurmountable barrier; even the cost of injections could be a discouragement, especially if it was all on top of a week of lost earnings because they are self-employed.

It is strange that God often seems to place the biggest heart for mission in those who are least able to resource it – the young. But perhaps that is His strategy for pulling His church together; different people with different strengths working in fellowship as one body which grows together in relationship and in spiritual maturity (*and I seem to recall quite a few verses on this same topic*). The challenge is to see seemingly unattainable possibilities as stimuli for drawing together and drawing the best out of each other, rather than simply letting them pass by. And while it is true that ‘young’ men (and women) see vision, the stimulus, the nutrients, and the reinforcement of vision often lies in dreams; dreamable dreams; dreams that we construct in our wakefulness or catch in our sleep. And, remind me, who is it that Joel and Peter said would dream dreams?

Perhaps the dream that you offer is the very practical reality of *them* realising *their* visions. And perhaps they need to know that. Perhaps you need to tell them; perhaps you need to match your dream to their vision before they abandon it, because otherwise you may never know they saw that vision, and they may never know you dreamt that dream.

So, if you have the resources (*or have the heart and the means to gather them*) and you look in your heart and see that God has begun that dream in you, make it known. Share that you have a dream of helping others to realise their visions; share it in prayer; share it in cell groups; share it in the service; and if you are part of a reasonably healthy balanced church you will probably find that others, when they look into their hearts, will find the beginnings of the vision you dream of making a reality.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ

2 Peter 1:5-9

Supporting the cascade of training

The second area to consider for financial support is the cascade training in the Developing World. The churches in the communities we are trying to help are unlikely to have the necessary funds to pay for the materials (*at least in the early years*) or to support those who have volunteered as cascade trainers with expenses – they have probably committed most of their resources to doing God’s work with the poor and sick in their community. Therefore a lack of funds for printing the books, paying for transport, paying for materials, and even for hiring a venue (*if the church is not suitable*) could be a real blocker to extending the benefit of the training to the wider community (*please see section 5.2*).

If you find that God has placed on your heart the desire to financially support a specific project through its cascade, and the community which is hosting the cascade is one you know and trust, then you might consider providing the funds to them directly for them to administer and report upon.

Even if you do not know them particularly well, the sums of money we are talking about are not particularly large (*albeit out of the reach of the hosting community to support sustainably at this stage*) and you may be able to supply the funds on a staged basis: gaining a reasonably detailed estimate of the costs for training each cascade group; providing enough resources to support three cycles of training; funding subsequent cycles

Costs incurred in cascade training

- Trainer transport
- Trainer accommodation
- Workbooks
- Pads, pens, pencils
- Maths exercise book
- Certificates
- Venue hire
- Refreshments
- Flipcharts & pens
- Blackboard and flipchart stand hire
- Hardship allowance for trainees who find it difficult to attend

on the evidence that the earlier cycles have been delivered and the accounts reconciled.

But if you are not so confident in the local infrastructure in the hosting community, or if you simply want to give generally to support this phase of the work, then we would recommend that you tie this up through an appropriate charity.

Supporting through existing charities

There are many excellent charities working with the poor all around the world. As such they have local infrastructures to administer their work; either their own teams in place or, more commonly, local partners who they have vetted and trust to execute the work honestly and effectively.

Increasingly, these same charities are driving toward sustainability, and can recognise the importance of training people in basic business skills as an important step to ensuring financial independence and self-reliance.

Quite a number of these charities operate from a Christian perspective, and might best be described as working out the Franciscan model of *'preach the gospel at all times, and if necessary use words'*. Still others, while they do not espouse a Christian perspective themselves, and would be reluctant to engage in anything that smacked of evangelism, appreciate the altruistic work done by many Christians, and are happy to engage with them without expecting them to suppress their identity or beliefs to do so.

In many cases these charities may be open-minded to an approach which furthered their aims in a particular region, especially where the approach provided them: funds which helped to move things forward; volunteers which set things in motion; and a model which they could see as effective. Having said that, most charities also have a clear focus for their work, a particular *modus operandi*, which both serves to form a contract with their benefactors and also a means to stop them being distracted. If they can see your approach as being consistent with their focus, then they are likely to be quite enthusiastic, but if they cannot, then it is unlikely that your discussions will bear fruit.

Where you can find a charity which operates in the areas where you are working, and which has aims which are consistent with yours, we would heartily recommend that you consider working with that charity to administer the necessary funds for cascading the training. If you approach them open-mindedly, they will probably respond in kind, and while the final conclusion may not be exactly what you set out for, it may well be better, and it will certainly be more workable.

Over time, we hope to publish a list of charities who are willing to work with people in this way on the Reconxile.org website, but this list will never be exhaustive, and we would therefore recommend 'if in doubt, ask (*nicely, informedly and personally*)' and if the answer is 'yes' please let us know so we can add them to the list.

Hand-in-Hand

If you would like to donate to support cascade training in the Developing World generally, we are pleased to recommend Hand-in-Hand, which has been very helpful to us in the past in placing funds overseas. They can be contacted through their website: www.hiand.org

Supporting through Microfinance

Another area to consider supporting financially is microfinance. A very brief explanation of microfinance and the part that it plays in helping the poor set up successful businesses can be found in section 6.1.

As stated earlier, we would not encourage anybody to consider setting up a microfinance scheme from scratch (see page 76) unless they saw it as a full time calling which they were going to administer directly and had the proven resources to run it in the Developing World. However there are a number of microfinance organisations which operate as part of God's calling to help alleviate poverty, and they are probably happy to have more resources to support more of this work.

Once again, if you know of a microfinance organisation which operates in an area of the Developing World that you are keen to support, we would encourage you to set up a meeting with them and to gain an understanding of their motives and modus operandi. To help you to do this, we have drafted some questions below, but before you shock yourself into ineffectiveness we must clarify that these questions come with a warning: Please do not judge the answers you get (*and even those you don't get*) by Western standards. Instead try to understand the underlying rationale and seek the heart that lies behind the bald statistics, because there are charlatans out there as well as good people, and you cannot always tell the difference by the numbers.

- Why did you decide to set up a microfinance operation; and what led you to select where and how it operates?
- What is your modus operandi in offering loans? What size of loan; under what terms; how do you select; how does security or collateral work; what happens when people default?
- What support and loan management is provided? What training is given; what peer support; what mechanisms for hardship; what is the mechanism of repayment?
- What proportion of loans are repaid in full? What is the interest as an annual figure? How does this break down to meet the various operating costs and losses?
- What is the current net worth of the scheme? What is the average total value of loans outstanding as a proportion of this? How many loans does that represent?
- What proportion of loans result in a successful business? What proportion of loans are made to people newly setting up in business? What is the quantified impact of the scheme on pulling people out of poverty?
- How would you make a decision on whether and/or how to invest in people who had been trained through the Reconxile cascade training in your area? (You may need to explain this and give them an example business plan)
- What difference would extra investment make to this decision? What are the current arrangements with investors?

And as before, if you find one that works in this way, please let us know so that we can add them to the list on the website as a start point for others who may be looking to do what you are doing.

Five Talents

If your project is in India, Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan, Kenya, Indonesia, Philippines, Peru or the Dominican Republic, you might like to consider 'Five Talents', the microfinance organisation set up by the Anglican communion as a result of the 1998 Lambeth Conference.

You can see their website at www.fivetalents.org.uk

Summary of Chapter 7

- This programme will depend on prayer for its ultimate impact
- Your own team will need specific prayer
- And beyond that, there is a mass of general things to pray for between pages 82 and 86, each of which can be tailored to the specifics of your own situation and network
- Fundraising for your local team helps to develop a sense of collective ownership and responsibility in your church community, and thereby a growing interest, and hopefully a growing vibrancy
- Support may be best achieved through existing charities and microfinance organisations, who have the infrastructure to support things locally

What for you were the main messages of Chapter 7?

This image shows a vertical rectangular sheet of white paper. It features ten evenly spaced, horizontal dashed black lines running from the left edge to the right edge. These lines are designed to guide handwriting practice, typically used in elementary school notebooks or composition books. The lines are simple and consistent throughout the page.

And what do you plan to do about it?

[illegible]

Actions ...

Dates

[illegible]

8 Youth programmes

Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.

Proverbs 19:18

This section of the manual is the one area which we are still piloting, and at the time of writing it is a work in progress. However, we believe that the potential of this area is so important that we wanted to share our thinking with you from the outset, so that if God is nudging you in this same direction, you do not have to wait for a rewrite of this manual to think about how you might take it forward yourself.



8.1 Objectives for Engaging Youth

I run a youth group in the village where I live. Until recently, my work with Reconxile and my work with the Youth have been two separate activities, only related by the fact that they are both charitable and both part of my service to God. More recently however, God has been nudging me to see the overlaps: the Youth have become drawn to doing something concrete in the Developing World; I have seen the possibilities of the business training in helping them to develop an income to support this; and they have leapt at the idea of business training with a suprising degree of enthusiasm (*Three nil to God I'd say, or forty love for those who prefer tennis!*). And through this, I have been developing a broader vision.

Attracting young people to see the wisdom in the Bible

There is a real hunger in young people for the idea of entrepreneurship; for the idea of setting up their own business.

In part this may be materialistic, in part it may be about influence and power, in part about proving yourself a success, in part about corporate graffiti on the billboard of commerce – the ability to write your name where you think it matters. In part it may be all of these things and more, but in any event, the movers and shakers of the future world and the shapers of its destiny for the next generation or two are currently at school and have a real interest in what business training can do for them.

What better way to equip them for this role than using the wisdom of the Bible to teach them the fundamental truths about business success; to use the word and the blessings of God to give them the skills and the attitude to make a difference – after all, that is all Workbook 1 really does.

And when they have learnt the skills, and proven for themselves the wisdom, then we could have a whole new generation of leaders for whom the word of God makes sense, and who may then be more amenable to making that personal choice to meet that Word in person.

Equipping the young with healthy skills and attitudes

For many young people in the West today, many of the problems they are presented with are solved with extreme violence at the end of a karate kick,

or a gun, or a rocket launcher, or an entire state-of-the-art gunship, or, if *even that* fails, by clicking the button to restart the game console.

And given the evidence that is all around them of how adults solve problems, which they see in the news, in soap operas, in action films and even in some song lyrics and music videos, there is little to disabuse them of the notion that this might be their life someday. As somebody once asked, how do you expect to influence your children in just 10 minutes a day when Amy Winehouse has their attention for the other 1,670? Good question!

Youth engage with things which meet their needs for image, for influence, for belonging, for excitement, and though we understand how our walk with God does this for us, even those Youth who have been brought up by Christian parents often struggle to see how it can do it for them in their situation, particularly where they are not part of an active Christian crowd attached to a vibrant Church. For those Youth who have no observable history of God in their lives to relate to, 'religion' (*as they might call it if they were not partisan enough to use the word 'dogma'*) is the exact opposite of what they are seeking: Not cool; not listened to; rejected and boring. But, running your own business ... that is a different matter!

But what happens if you combine business with the Bible in the young person's mind?

We recognise the power of the Bible in these areas as it speaks into our life, our situation and our understanding of our place in the world; it is not the Bible so much as its practical applicability to situations which matter to us – it is our '*relationship with*' and '*application of*' the word of God that is contained within its pages.

Workbook 1 provides a means of *relationship with*, and *application of*, scripture with something which matters to Youth, and for many of the more open-minded youth in our communities that might give it just enough '*cool*' factor to tolerate it and give it the benefit of the doubt, just long enough for it to deliver. And when it delivers, well that really is '*cool*' and all of a sudden we have credibility, and perhaps a willingness to look further into this '*God*' thing.

And through engagement with Workbook 1, and its scriptural basis, the youth can better get an understanding of service, and discipline, and planning, and responsibility, as solutions to the problems that they face, and begin to see how mastery of these new '*weapons*' can help them to achieve '*levels*' which they only dreamed of before.

Building relationships across continents

And that is just the business side of the equation. Link that into using those same business skills to change a group of kids lives around in an exotic country, and all of a sudden you are into the stratospheric domain of '*really cool*'. Actually, many of today's youth are sincerely concerned about the Developing World and the plight of the people within it, but their engagement with it tends to be at the same level of most of the rest of us – it is really '*somebody else's responsibility*' (*adults, government,...*), and '*they* ought to do something about it' (*and in five more years it will probably have that final tag-line of 'as long as it doesn't raise my taxes'*)

But when you add in friendship, relationship, shared experience, and personal investment of effort the picture changes; the suffering is no longer



an abstract concept or a remote situation. All of a sudden the phrase *'real people, just like you and me'* is tangible to them, and our responsibility is something altogether more meaningful.

And more importantly issues are no longer black and white, and the key seductive component of the tabloid press headlines has begun to lose its currency – these are *'thinkers'* now, not simply *'reacters'* – well okay, maybe it is only really at the beginning, but it is an important beginning!

Breaking the poverty cycle at an early age

And for some of the young we reach, the training may be fundamental to their own personal future. In a world where job security is still declining, and where the concept of a *'portfolio lifestyle'* is on the increase, the business skills training may represent a very real escape route from impending poverty for them personally. Understanding the fundamental principles of business and having the confidence to apply them could make the very real difference between *'security'* and *'the street'*.

And it is all based on the Bible. How cool is that?

8.2 Process for Engaging Youth

Now the challenge: How do we get them into this process? As I explained at the start of this chapter, we are still at the very beginning of this story ourselves. As we progress along the path, it is our intention to provide copies of the materials we have developed in the same way as we have with the other materials, but for the moment, we are in the same position as you are. Still, it's a great place to start, it means we can learn from each other!

The rest of this section is given over to outlining the process as we currently see it, which we hope may provide you some food for thought.

Adapting the materials

At present I see no reason to modify Workbook 1 for this audience. It is proven, and there is something alluring about using materials not originally intended for your use, especially for those of school age – something about a prophet not being accepted in his hometown perhaps? And the link to the Developing World provides a very real reminder of what all of this is ultimately for, and could therefore be a continuing incentive.

But it is my intention to modify the session plan and the support materials for my youth group (*and we will make this available on Reconxile.org as soon as it is done – even though the experience of using it is likely to cause me to generate version 2.0*). Our sessions are only just over 2 hours long, and we will need to make sure each unit of training fits effectively into that period of time. Equally, the support materials will be delivered on a data projector rather than a blackboard, so that gives me more scope for ensuring their attention.

Engaging interest

The interest of the existing Youth Group was engaged at the mere mention of the phrase *'business training'* but it is my intention to use the business training as a means to attract new members into the Youth Group.

In the case of our Youth Group that could do with a bit of explanation. We meet on first and third Fridays, First Fridays are essentially Church for teenagers; fun activities; pointed activities; challenging topic; biblical link; debate; prayer; worship. Those who attend first Friday's know what to expect, and are content/happy to receive it. Third Fridays have been activity sessions (*using the local outdoor centre and their extensive range of exciting kit*). These are attended by the First Friday crowd, but are open to everybody free of charge – the idea being to attract people in, and build relationships with them, so they realise we are nice guys, and may be open to trying out First Fridays with us. The intention is to replace these with the business training sessions.

To attract people into the new Third Friday group, we are planning both local publicity (*posters, village magazine etc.*) and also personal invites from the existing Youth Group (*with fliers perhaps*). The exact nature of the key marketing message (*the 'hook', but perhaps, given our shepherding role, the 'crook' may be more appropriate*) is still to be agreed, but it will probably link to the popular culture in some way (*see right*).

Agreeing the groundrules

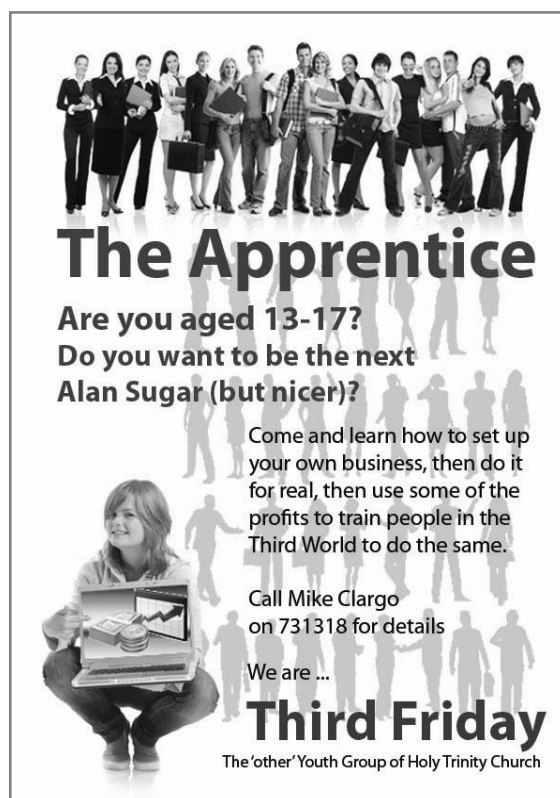
The link between the business training and a planned trip to Uganda, and the possibility of conflict in sharing out the rewards where contributions may have been variable are two risk areas which we are mindful of from the outset. There will almost certainly be others.

For this reason it is vitally important to get everybody's expectations clear from the outset, and to enshrine these into a commonly agreed set of ground rules. These can be used both to encourage appropriate behaviours from people through the training sessions, and to justify any unpopular decisions at the end. Another important learning point for them perhaps?

We have developed our groundrules into a code of conduct for those who are signing up to the training, and these can be seen in the text box on the next page.

Running the sessions

The sessions will be taken from the standard Workbook 1 Session Plan, but rescheduled to result in a series of 2.5 hour sessions over a number of months. The intention is to end each session with a new set of activities for individuals and teams to work on over the next four weeks: initially market research (*perhaps over two months, but with a different emphasis in each*);



The Apprentice

Are you aged 13-17?
Do you want to be the next Alan Sugar (but nicer)?

Come and learn how to set up your own business, then do it for real, then use some of the profits to train people in the Third World to do the same.

Call Mike Clargo on 731318 for details

We are ...

Third Friday

The 'other' Youth Group of Holy Trinity Church

then planning out their business (perhaps over two further months); and then sorting out the finances and developing a business plan.

Once the programme has been developed it will be available through the Reconxile.org website for others to adapt and use as they see appropriate.

Providing ongoing support

While the programme has not yet started, I envisage that there will be a need for ongoing support. My guess is that the teams will have problems and issues that are peculiar to their projects, and which will best be handled outside of the formal training sessions.

I hope to do this through emails in part, but I suspect I may also need to make other days available for open clinics, so that teams can simply turn up and work through things. Further, the existence of these scheduled open clinics may provide a stimulus for teams to get together on clinic days – and my experience of teenagers is that without such stimuli we are quite likely to find a distinct lack of progress between sessions. Their hearts are in the right place, but their minds are on football and X-Box Live. Bless them!

Engaging with schools in developing countries

This particular part of the equation seems a bit like walking a tightrope with somebody shaking both ends. At one end we have the Youthgroup, and a real risk of UK teenagers not actually doing what they need to do to take ownership for the opportunity and make their businesses a success. At the other end there are other teenagers, who live in hardship, and who you would hate to raise their hopes only to have them unfulfilled.

Finding the schools in the Developing World will not be difficult. And I have discovered a number of organisations which specialise in taking teenagers out to the Developing World to engage with their impoverished counterparts. But I suspect that I will wait for my teenagers to make some significant inroads into their businesses before I make the commitments that will be necessary to bring the two together.

Code of Conduct for Third Friday Group:

Members of the group will:

- Endeavour to attend all training sessions, and to arrive promptly at 18.45 each third Friday
- Provide apologies and explanations for any sessions they are unable to attend, and endeavour to catch up with the work outside of the meeting
- Dutifully attend any team meetings which are agreed by members of their team in order to pursue the business idea of that team, and punctually complete actions agreed with their team
- Accept the majority decision of their team in regard to the team's business (in the case of an equal vote, one of the group leaders will have the casting vote)
- Behave legally and ethically in respect of all their business dealings
- Give fair recourse to any who have been disadvantaged through a defective product or service provided through their business
- Be respectful to other members of the group and their views and beliefs
- Be attentive to the training, listen, and do all that is reasonable to ensure that each session is effective and enjoyable for themselves and others in the group
- Raise any concerns that they have with one of the leaders of the group
- Honourably resign (or accept expulsion) from their team, and possibly the group, should the other members of their team, or members of the group as a whole, have clear evidence that:
 - they are not contributing sufficiently to progress in terms of completing agreed actions, or
 - their behaviour is disruptive to the work or the atmosphere of the team, or
 - they are failing to comply with any of the other points in the code of conduct, ... and ...
 - they have failed to respond to a clear warning from the team, and the opportunity to address their behaviour on any of the above items
- Commit at least 50% of their trading profits from their business to support the training and education of youth in the Developing World, or 100% if they are selected for a trip to deliver the training there
- Follow the spirit of this code in all things

Members of the group can thereby expect:

- To receive their training, the materials, and any refreshments, free of charge
- To be able to engage productively with the training, free from disruptive influences
- To have the opportunity to set up a business with others in the group, and form a team who will collectively determine the main business decisions between them
- To have their own views and beliefs treated with respect at all times
- To be able to resolve any issues they may have with any other member of the group, fairly and reasonably promptly
- To be part of a group led by adults who have completed CRB checks

Summary of Chapter 8

- At present we are still working on the idea of using these materials with Youth, but the idea seems promising
- There is growing interest in the young for doing work in the developing world
- There is growing interest in the young for the idea of entrepreneurship
- Combining their interests with the wisdom of the Bible could help them to appreciate the Christian faith from a more objective viewpoint than is available to them through the media and society in general
- We have begun to adapt the materials, and they will be available through the website
- BUT as yet (*at the time of writing*) the approach is not proven

What for you were the main messages of Chapter 8?

[illegible]

And what do you plan to do about it?

[illegible]

Actions ...

Dates

[illegible]

Resources and References

Key materials to consider for publicising and delivering the training and how to use them:

Workbook 1	www.reconxile.org/w1.html	The basic training workbook on setting up your own business. Builds into a complete business plan. Print off the copies you need for the team. Get it translated. Produce translated copies locally.
Translations	www.reconxile.org/tr.html	Site page to enable trainers to check for translations. Download the ones you need. Upload any new ones.
Session Plan	www.reconxile.org/sp.html	Why, what, when, and how of Workbook 1 training. Print of as word document, and edit to suit. Ensure training team is fully familiar with content.
Support Material	www.reconxile.org/sm.html	Guide on preparing basic visual aids and how to use them. Translate (if reqd). Use to prepare flipcharts. Ensure training team is fully familiar with content.
Money Exercises	www.reconxile.org/me.html	Simple maths exercises to help trainees with basic money arithmetic needed for their business plan. Translate (if required). Produce copies locally.
Certificates	www.reconxile.org/tc.html	Basic blank certificates to use at the end of training. Download, and have on file to edit/print on site.
Leaflets	www.reconxile.org/lf.html	Copies of leaflets giving a very basic introduction. Print off for circulation as part of promoting this work.
Posters	www.reconxile.org/po.html	Draft posters in PowerPoint format. Edit and print off to publicise local talks in support of this work.
Presentations	www.reconxile.org/pr.html	Presentations in PowerPoint format. Download and select slides to reflect the emphasis you want to make your pitch on involving people in this work.
Case Studies	www.reconxile.org/cs.html	Copies of brief case studies on projects. Print off as background for those interested. Upload your own.
Trainer Training	www.reconxile.org/tt.html	Download, read, edit and utilise materials as part of training new trainers.
Workbook 2	www.reconxile.org/w2.html	Aimed at people in business, to make their business more successful & increase employment. Delivered cell-group style. Print off copies needed for the team. Get it translated. Produce translated copies locally.
Surveys	www.reconxile.org/sv.html	Used to assess effectiveness of training, at the end of training and +12m. Translate as required.
Youth Work	www.reconxile.org/yw.html	Adaptations of material for use with Youth Groups

All of the training materials concerned with using the Biblically Based Business series to alleviate poverty, including this guide, can be downloaded free of charge from the Reconxile website: www.reconxile.org

Over time we also hope to make the website a source of publicity materials, an on-line community, and a link to other useful resources including those outlined overleaf.

Links

- The Transformational Business Network provides a forum and encouragement for people interested in alleviating poverty through business. They can be contacted through their website: www.tbnetwork.org
- All of the guidance necessary to establish a village savings and loans scheme can be found on the VSL Associates website, including their excellent and comprehensive manual: www.vsla.net
- Microfinance organisations, and extensive information on microfinance and how it works can be found at www.microfinancegateway.org
- Michael Clargo is a management consultant to many well known organisations, including Microsoft, Siemens and Emerson. His website contains many useful business and management resources which can be downloaded free of charge: www.tesseractacts.com
- Five Talents is a Christian initiative which seeks to alleviate poverty through the use of microfinance. It is a very helpful organisation and has established links in many parts of the Developing World: www.fivetalents.org.uk
- Hand-in-hand is a small charity which seeks to alleviate poverty through providing money for education and healthcare: www.hiand.org
- The CIA World Factbook is a great source of information on different areas of the world. It can be found at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation – 2 Corinthians 5:18

Reconxile is an explicitly* Christian organisation who take 2 Corinthians 5:18 as their inspiration and seek to work out their ministry in practical ways through building reconciliation between:

- people and their dreams;
- the dispossessed and the economy;
- organisations and their potential;

in the earnest hope of enabling individuals to reclaim their identity and build steps to their reconciliation with the creator who gave it to them.

And we do this through you.

**Explicitly? Our reality is that God, the creator of the universe, is alive and well, if a little bit disappointed. And that he loves each one of us, individually and personally, so much that he humiliates and sacrifices himself on a cross and still allows us free choice over whether we accept this or not. And that this knowledge is so fundamentally awesome that it should drive and underpin everything we do. And that we at Reconxile fall way short of living up to that, or even of trying to live up to that, but we persevere, and actually feel God smile on us from time to time. We are pleased to work with sincere and caring followers of all faiths and none, but see no value in concealing our identity to do so.*

Our intellectual limitations as human beings sadly constrain us, at any one time, to only one version of the truth, one version of reality, which we are called to fervently pursue in sincerity and love. But we are convinced that God's intellect is bigger than we can know or conceive, and the ideas that we see as being in conflict, need not necessarily be so. And because He paid such a huge price for free will, and because He loves us all as much as each other, then we will endeavour in all things to respect the importance of both.