

36 Pronouncements Regarding Shared Understanding of Best Practices in Global Mission.

Now that several weeks have passed since the Rising Tides conference, we at HCW wanted to share with you the thoughts and takeaways we've gathered from your feedback. Your participation in Rising Tides was so essential to the success of the conference, and we're grateful for your engagement, but that was just the beginning of what we hope will be an ongoing conversation. To that end, we'd like to share this report with you as a catalyst for further connection and discussion. Based on the data we collected during and following the conference, we present these takeaways:

1. The Future of Global Mission in Child Welfare

- a. We urge child welfare organizations to collaborate with local governments and institutions tasked with child welfare responsibilities when attempting to initiate policies, programs and permanent changes that will effectively serve the needs of the target community,
- b. We recognize that the world is experiencing a family preservation crisis and development in child welfare should be focused on corrective solutions for families as a whole. Solutions that focus on single elements of crisis for a single child can have unintended consequences of harm, or conclude without addressing the root causes of crisis, and thus be ineffective to create permanent change.
- c. We welcome changes derived through creative models of unity and understand how the value of mutual exchange through shared vision, respect and transparency brings buy-in and promotes responsibility and dignity.
- d. We can best address what the child needs through consideration of the plight of care leavers and the knowledge they possess.
- e. We are aware that the medical community has determined that a child's brain develops better and children thrive best when raised within their family; therefore, a change from orphanages and other residential institutions to family-based care as a primary response to children in adversity is needed.
- f. We acknowledge that no one model suits every situation or provides the best care to meet the needs of every child. We urge nation-states and private organizations to implement transition of care options to promote family care systematically and avoid sudden closures that leave any child stranded or unsupported.

2. The Future of Short Term Mission

- a. We urge organizations to receive proper training, be it vocational or informational. An accreditation through SOE is a potential avenue to demonstrate the effectiveness of a standards program and a uniform system of accreditation is highly recommended. We strongly endorse following the seven standards of short term missions highlighted by SOE.
- b. Underlining the key factors for a successful short term mission is essential in any mission training. Preparation before the mission means the design of the right model for the team, includes clarity about the purpose, sufficient time to prepare and educating team members about the culture, various barriers to a successful outcome and reentry challenges and should include assessment and post-mission communication activities to ensure future missions.
- c. We encourage mission activity that establishes relationships with the locals that would be beneficial for future missionaries and promote understanding of each of them and their culture by the other and providing help only where it is needed, wanted and understood.
- d. We recognize the importance of casting a vision for the team members by providing examples of how they would fit into the trip.
- e. Conducting the trip in the right way rather than just following existing programs benefits the missionaries and the community. Missionaries should understand that the real work or impact for them happens after the trip.
- f. People who organize and deploy missionaries should share and use the good resources that are available and need to hold team members accountable to make time to prepare for the trip and advance the mission on their return.
- g. Noting that transition takes time while doing short term missions, we need to focus on staying committed to succeed in it.
- h. Understanding that short term missions can impact root causes, we need to focus on education and team formation in order to have a long term impact.

3. Sustainable Interventions

- a. We strongly affirm the need for mutuality and local ownership of local solutions, framing our development of overseas partnerships in helpful, not hurtful ways (moving away from the language of donors and receivers).
- b. Work should engage and empower the target population on the ground, and solicit their ideas when formulating a plan rather than coming into the country with preconceived notions of what will and what won't work.

- c. We acknowledge that real development is achieved by supporting family structures, thereby increasing livelihood at the household level.

4. Global Public Health: Medical Intervention in Developing Countries

- a. Respect in the medical field is paramount, particularly when caring for female patients and interacting with traditional practices.
- b. Listening to patients and attempting to administer a more holistic approach can help bridge the gap between western and traditional medical practices while still supplying the best care possible to the patient.
- c. If patients are used to a holistic approach and you don't give them that care, they may feel shortchanged. It is important to understand what type of care patients normally receive in-country and find an avenue to honor tradition, respect local caregivers and incorporate best practices from local customs.

5. Engaging Faith-Based Organizations

- a. We suggest that elimination of the concept of "otherness" as an element of mission activity and focusing on mutualism will bring about greater respect and recognition of the value of the faith community in development work
- b. Ignorance hinders progress; understanding that we need each other when engaging in instituting reform is essential.
- c. Faith-based organizations are often frontiers for social reforms and should be considered for advocacy.
- d. The best way to engage and make increasingly effective change is through the communication networks with our relationships and partnerships.
- e. Identify and own selfish, self-aggrandizing or ego satisfying activities and wish-fulfillment motivation or fantasy aspirations for missions and shift focus to emphasize establishing mutual connections with partners and organizations to increase mission impact on all parties.
- f. Strong relationships with other organizations are often mutually beneficial.

6. Engaging Young People Through Advocacy

- a. We recommend that young people living in wealthy communities be encouraged to question "why would I travel abroad when there is plenty I can do in my own community?" and "what do I do with my privilege when I travel to a part of the world that is less fortunate than where I live?".

- b. Awareness of why you want to travel abroad should be always the question at the back of your mind regardless of age
- c. Young people are and should be encouraged to intellectually engage in issues of local and international social and economic justice and we find that forming empathetic bonds and emotional attachment to the success of worthy causes in youth is key to becoming a well rounded and healthy adult.
- d. Young people, in particular, are subject to impulsive responses to perceived crises. They must be schooled to recognize the importance of listening before plunging into savior mode by serving with egoless intelligence and patience
- e. To encourage the development of an empathetic understanding of people in adversity, young people should not be encouraged to forgo responsibility to provide support to their local community and replace that obligation with curiosity to experience a new and exotic location; service begins at home but extends to the world through human understanding of connections and consequences.
- f. Educating missionaries about mission goals rather than giving a false impression of a sightseeing trip, would help both the missionaries, local partners and communities drastically.

7. Final Takeaways

- a. As faith and mission leaders, we want to spend more time listening to local leaders and digging deep on local issues that affect the target community.
- b. Real change begins when we as individuals and organizations learn how to adapt and improve.
- c. The bonds and friendships that we form in spaces like Rising Tides can aid the work we do by giving us a network of passionate individuals to work with and call upon and we commit to continued dialogue.
- d. Mission work is not transactional but based on symbiotic relationships, and can be transformative if carried out correctly.

All of us at HCW are so thankful for the open and honest discussions that made Rising Tides a success. We hope that the platform Rising Tides created has inspired you to continue to pursue best practices and to seek always to deepen our impact in empowering ways, and to remember that together we can make sustainable, positive changes with local partners all throughout the world. We hope that our collaboration will continue as we all strive for a better world.