

Network Training Course - Unit 4: Programmes

Key Scriptures and Network Development Reflection pages

Developing Collective Action: Luke 10:1-24 (p. 47-9)

Collaborating Across Sectors: Daniel 1:1-21 (p. 52-4)

A Solution Focus: Mark 6:30-44; Matthew 13:31-32 (p. 61-5)

Main themes

Networks can use programmes to make change for children and churches in their cities. It is important that networks carefully consider the programmes they run, and how they can work together to achieve the network's goals.

In this section we will look at Network Collaborative Programmes

Viva's Four Drivers for lasting change

Viva has developed its model for growing and developing networks and helping them to positively impact the lives of children, which it calls the four drivers for lasting change. The four drivers of lasting change are:

- **Connecting:** Inspiring local churches and organisations to work together and support each other with a shared vision for children
- **Capacity building:** Building capacity of churches and organisations through training, coaching and peer to peer learning to increase sustainability and quality of care for children
- **Collective action:** Mobilising churches and organisations to work together to design and implement joint programmes that meet the needs of children on a deeper level than any one organisation could achieve alone
- **City-wide influence:** Addressing negative attitudes and behaviours towards children and engaging with decision-makers to result in greater protection and opportunities for vulnerable children across the city

Running a combination programmes under these four drivers will inspire the local church and organisations to work together, strengthen the network and its member churches and organisations, and enable the network to achieve long lasting and impactful change.

Networks should run at least one programme from each of the drivers each year. These programmes can be based on programmes Viva has developed or networks can develop their own. But ideally networks should be running a combination of programmes to achieve long lasting change for children in their locations

Viva's Four Drivers for Lasting Change Checklist

- Networks run a minimum of one programme in each of the four building blocks each year

4.1 Connecting

Good communication and connection is vital for a healthy network for the following reasons

- Good connectivity increases the pastoral support that churches and organisations are able to give to each other through the network, through prayer and in sharing their achievements and challenges.
- When members are well connected, they are able to provide holistic care for children, that covers a number of the issues facing children; not just one or two.
- Members stop working in isolation and achieve more for children by working with others
- When members know what the network co-ordination team is planning, they can get involved
- Members need to know what each other are doing to move forward
- Good communication leads to a sense of shared identity and community
- Good network connectivity encourages the expansion of the number of organisations and churches in the network who are engaged together in the mission of serving children in their communities; increasing the capacity of the network to reach the needs of more children.

To connect members in the network effectively, network coordination teams need to ensure:

1. Regular communication: Each member of the network needs to be kept up to date with the activities of other network members and the progress of the network as a whole. A Facebook/WhatsApp group, or similar, is useful for this. These should also be supplemented with regular forms of written communication through a newsletter, email or website.

2. Fellowship and community: This can be achieved through regular network fellowship meeting and AGMs. These meetings will help to inspire the networks joint vision, to plan the work of the network so it can be at its most efficient, and promote the work of the network to the wider community.

These meetings should have opportunities for:

- **Pastoral support**, so that members of the network can connect with each other's work, and support one another on a personal level, as well as a practical one.
- **Prayer**, the meetings should envision and inspire new visions for the leaders and members of the network through prayer.
- **Mutual learning**, opportunities for discussion of the work of the network increases the members understanding of the work of the wider network. There should be the sharing of resources and best practices, which also prevents the duplication of effort in one area;

3. Coordination of work: Network member churches and organisations will have different areas of interest and expertise, different resources they can offer and different links for additional support. Co-ordinating these network members means that resources can be maximised.

Action groups are a good way to ensure those committed to particular programme areas can work together more effectively and that expertise and best practice is shared in the action group and with the network.

The number of churches and organisations and churches receiving communications and attending events should be recorded in the network database and shared on the Network Health Check.

Connecting Checklist

- Regular communication with networks through written communication
- Regular opportunities for members to connect with each other and be inspired by the network vision through events
- Number of churches and organisations receiving communications and attending events recorded in the network database

4.2 Capacity Building

Capacity building programmes aim to equip individual churches and organisations, and the network as a whole. They enable the network to

- Increase the quality of care and effectiveness of individual organisations and churches,
- Attract new members (as capacity building programmes are often seen as beneficial to organisations)
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness and credibility of the networks work, thereby making the work of the network easier and more beneficial.
- Encourage a culture of protection and accountability – which will be disseminated throughout wider society.

The network should provide a range of training opportunities each year, based on the needs of the churches and organisations in the network.

The capacity programmes that Viva offers includes:

Child Protection – Developing and implementing a Child Protection Policy or Code of Conduct.

Financial Transparency – Provides training to ensure that good accounting practices are in place in the church or organisation.

Understanding Gods Heart for Children – A programme which aims to make church a friendly place for children, facilitating the improvement of organizational structures and understanding around the importance of strong families for children.

Celebrating Children – Gives good quality practical training on holistic child development, which will immediately influence work with children. It is adapted to relate specifically to participants own work situations, and provides support in implementing the learning.

Child Friendly Churches – This programme helps churches to create a safe and welcoming environment for children when children’s participation is encouraged in the life of the church.

Quality Improvement System – Develops quality standards and principles for organisation that enables the provision of better care, and ensures systems are in place increase sustainability. This can unlock funding opportunities from larger funders with more stringent requirements – enabling future work and longevity.

Why Families Matter – A programme which gives the biblical foundation on importance of strong family for children; this moves the trainings increasingly into the community to effect wider community attitudes.

Better Homes for Children – This programme aims to practically help Christians working with in residential care and to help them make the transition to family based care

Being Family:- This programme gives network members an understanding of the importance of family based care for children.

Network Training Course – This programme trains coordination teams and steering groups in networks to increases understanding of network development,

Many of the programmes work towards building the sustainability of the work of the churches and organisations. They do this by supporting good practice (in working with children), child protection, good management systems and financial accountability. Having good practice and sustainable systems in place enables the network and its members to:

- Improve the ability to serve vulnerable children and their families effectively and holistically with quality care

- Be strong enough to continue to provide quality services for children.
- Offer a continuity of care and a community of people who can support children as they grow and into adulthood.

It is important to ensure that network members are regularly attending training, and keeping up with new developments. Attendance at all the training should be recorded and put on the network database and shared on the Network Health Check. Those churches and organisations which are not attending training can be tracked and should be contacted and encouraged to attend.

Capacity Building Checklist

- 75% of members trained in child protection and Financial transparency each year
- Each Network provides a range of training opportunities based on member needs to churches and organisations
- Attendance at training is recorded on network database/ tracking spreadsheet

4.3 Collective Action

The role of the network is to encourage collective action programmes where network members are working together to address one issue through a joint programme. Collective action programmes combine the efforts, resources, expertise and people power of the network into one collaborative programme. This has a number of positive impacts

- The scope and scale of the programmes being run for children increases, compared to individually run programmes
- More children can be reached by a combination of resources and connections that individual projects have to children
- A wider range of children's needs can be addressed by different members of the network in a co-ordinated way
- Expertise of network members can be combined and external advisors can be used which leads to better quality of work and deeper impact
- Programmes for children becomes more sustainable as they are not dependent on the funding of individual organisations

Collective Action can take time to do well, due to the need to develop confidence and trust in the network members to work together. There are two types of Collective Action Programmes

Short Term Collective Action Programmes: The network should start with one-off, short term collective action programmes, which build confidence and lead to churches and organisations wanting to contribute to larger more wide-reaching programmes. Short term collective action programmes such as Christmas Parties should become regular annual events to continue to build relationships, reach new children, and introduce new members to working together.

Longer Term Collective action programmes can involve different programme elements. They should be designed around the findings from situational mapping to target the priority needs of the children in your communities. This is called the **focus** of the collective action programme. Once the focus is agreed, the network is encouraged to consider a portfolio of programmes that have been tried and tested in other partner networks. These can be adapted to suit the context and needs in your city.

The Network Development Guide Unit 5 on Strategic Planning explains how to develop a focus for longer term collective action programmes

You need to be clear about the changes (outcomes) that you want to see as a result of your collective action programme. When designing it, you will need to choose a number of different elements which when run together, address the priority issue that you are trying to change for children. When thinking about these different programme elements, you should consider:

- **Prevention** (looking at how to stop the problem from happening in the first place) - Examples could be teaching girls about sexual and reproductive health, parenting courses, education programmes on trafficking, building up life skills and self esteem of young people and adults through mentoring, Child Ambassadors programmes
- **Intervention** (taking action when problems are happening) - Examples include catch up education to help girls return to school, birth registration, feeding centres, safe spaces for children
- **Restoration** (helping children to thrive again after they have experienced trauma or abuse) - Examples include reintegrating children back into families; trauma counselling

Viva's Programmes, which can be used as elements within a collective action programme include

Child Ambassadors: Children learn about how to protect themselves from harm and life skills for the future and educate their peers about what they have learnt

Flourish Life Skills Training: This course equips adolescents to improve their self esteem and their relationship with others and to become assets to their community. The course includes a mentoring element

Parenting training and alternative discipline: Working with parents to help them support and empower their children in new ways.

Child Protection training in schools: Training teachers, school staff and students in a range of child protection areas including self-protection training for children.

Measuring Collective Action Programmes. It is important to understand the impact of collective action programmes, and learn from them to shape future programmes. Demonstrating evidence that collective programmes have made a difference is not only encouraging and empowering for network members, it is also vital to being able obtain funding. To do this;

- Baseline information, should be collected. This is information about the situation of children before the collective action programme has been carried out, which is measured again at the end of the programme to see what change has taken place.
- The number of children and adults impacted by the programme should be tracked and recorded
- The change which has taken place in those children and adults as a result of the programme should be measured and recorded.
- There is a significant move towards targeting and measuring 'outcomes' and not just measuring results or 'outputs'. As Viva we will be moving in this direction and helping to set appropriate indicators and advise on gathering the right sort of data. The goal is to better describe the 'impact' of our work which in turn will attract better funding.

Collective Action Checklist

- Networks run Christmas Parties and/or other short-term programmes annually to build new network members' confidence in collective action
- Collective Action programmes are designed based on need, network competence, with clear outcomes and results measurement.
- Numbers of children and adults impacted by programmes are tracked and recorded.
- Collective action programmes grow to cover prevention, intervention and restoration

4.4 City-wide influence

For the network to achieve sustained and preventative change for children in their communities, the network needs to gain city wide influence. It allows the network to play a leading role in changing the long term situation for children – and allows the network to have a larger impact.

City-wide influence can be created through 1) Campaigns and advocacy initiatives 2) Relationships with leaders outside the network.

1) Campaigns and Advocacy initiatives: These campaigns mobilise network members and churches and organisations outside the network from across the city, to target adults and children in order to change attitudes and norms, they provide a great opportunity for:

- The network to work with churches, organisations and authorities that are outside of the network membership, connecting the network to additional resources and expertise.
- Influencing mind-sets, attitudes, norms and behaviour of people in the communities, making children feel more valued and safe.

The number of new churches, organisations, adults and children who are influenced by the campaign should be recorded and reported to know the reach of the campaigns and track growth year on year.

We recommend all the networks to run the **World Weekend of Prayer** and the **Good Treatment Campaign** each year, with groups inside and outside the network. These can be adapted to suit the focus of network activities and complemented by additional campaigns.

2) Relationships: Alongside the campaigns and advocacy initiatives, the network should build relationships with actors outside the network. This helps the network to increase the scale and reach of campaigns and its ability to have an influence in the wider city. Key groups that the network should be forming relationships with are

- City authorities, government authorities, community leaders, service providers, business leaders, civil society groups (*These relationships with key city leaders should aim to produce recorded and signed agreements with them*).
- City churches – often influential leaders – may engage in a campaign whereas they may have ignored the network until now because they have their own large agenda.
- Denominations or fraternities – good reach for information and awareness but often little influence regarding engagement
- Media (*to help spread a broader understanding of issues and solutions; this creates a social demand for change*)

Strong relationships will increase the opportunities for networks to influence policies, city decisions and actions. It also allows the church to be part of the conversation addressing structural problems affecting children, which can lead to reforming systems in favour of children.

In order to facilitate these relationships, the network needs to record and promote its good track record of collective action programmes and positive impact of the campaigns and advocacy initiatives.

City-wide Influence Checklist:

- Networks run 2 city-wide influence campaigns each year such as World Weekend of Prayer and Good Treatment Campaign or other such campaigns with groups inside and outside of the network.
- Number of new churches, organisations, adults and children influenced by the campaign are recorded and reported
- Network leaders are building relationships with key city leaders such that they record signed agreements with a range of city leaders.

Programmes and the Viability and Sustainability Benchmark

Benchmark Criteria 8: Collective Action

- 1 or more collective action programme focused on prevention
- 1 or more collective action programme focused on intervention
- 1 or more collective action programme focused on restoration

Benchmark Criteria 9: City-wide Influence

- 2 or more city-wide influence campaigns
- Engage an average of 10 or more new churches and/or organisations in city-wide influence campaign programmes
- Signed agreements with city leaders outside of the network

Reflective Questions

1. Do our programmes excite and encourage the majority of our network members? What could we do to improve this and attract new members?
2. Do our programmes reach a lot of children? Do our programme impact children deeply? What is the right balance between scale and depth and what can we do to improve this?
3. Do our results really demonstrate 'impact' or change in regard to children and to the church? What do we have to do to prove that children's lives have been changed?
4. In what ways is the network influencing the city? How can we do this better?

Action Plan

- What actions do you need to put into place as a result of this unit, particularly to achieve the required benchmark criteria?