



Viva's 4 building blocks for changing the situation for children in a city



City influence – using the track record of programme delivery and various campaigns to influence decision makers and public attitudes

Collective action – learning to work together through programmes of increasing scope and scale towards a solution theme for children

Capacity building – raising the standards of practice and procedures of the network participants to increase impact

Connecting – bringing together churches and organisations to work together with a common vision

Dear friends,

I want us to look at the different building blocks in turn and will start with 'City-wide Influence'. Most of our network activity engages the Christian churches and organisations that have been attracted to the network through the success of past efforts and good reputation – this in effect becomes our working constituency.

To increase our 'City-wide Influence', I see us going beyond the boundary of this constituency group by running activities that have a wider reach. Yes, these activities will still involve and engage our network participants but the intent is to also go further.

The World Weekend of Prayer (WWP) provides an opportunity to go beyond our network and reach churches and their congregations across our city. These will often be small, local churches that could become part of the network in the future but I also want us to engage the large influential churches. Larger churches are often more self-sufficient with their own set agendas but, through their leaders, are able to exert strong influence across the city. Wouldn't it be great to see them supporting the WWP to enable many more people to be thinking about and praying for vulnerable children.

The first weekend of June is very near – I do hope you have plans in place to use this event to promote the cause of children with a wider group of churches beyond your network membership. **Go to www.worldweekendofprayer.com for details and resources for the WWP.**

As networks we also need to influence the thinking and attitudes of the general population to reduce barriers to child development and change behaviours in favour of children. We can do this through the weight of numbers of people in our church congregations but need to go much further and make use of various forms of media to reach everyone. Campaigns such as the **Good Treatment Campaign** have enabled many networks to take a first step in this direction – see the attached summary of the achievements of the 2017 campaign with **11 networks presenting the challenge to over 92,000 people.** Some networks are also making good use of videos on television or through social media to get their messages out – this is clearly a direction that we need to travel in the future.

Mathew 5:13-16 speaks of us being 'salt' and 'light'. Please do reflect on how your network can reach out beyond network participants and begin to influence our city or district to better promote wide-reaching and sustainable change for children, and indeed the reputation of the network. God bless you.

Brian

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