

# GLOBAL CONNECTIONS, IT'S ONLY MONEY! CONFERENCE

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## CHILD SPONSORSHIP - Workshops 4D

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What is your overall vision? Is child sponsorship the right strategy to achieve your vision? Ensure integrity with your vision. And ensure integrity of your vision with the Kingdom of God.

Why is the child in need? What is needed in order to fix the problem? Think holistic!

Reasons to sponsor children: vulnerability, formative stage of life, marketing appeal, gets people involved. Not all reasons are good.

What is Child Sponsorship? Takes many forms, but essentially links the sponsoring individual, family or group with an individual child. Examples:

- Singling out a needy child and providing goods & services – may be appropriate in some circumstances, but usually the whole community is poor, and this model doesn't usually address the underlying issues.
- Using sponsorship money to fund the development of the whole community – but it becomes difficult to connect the community development impact directly with the sponsored child.
- Church-based model, empowering the local church to run the programme – but does not work where there is no church, or where the church is weak. Can also work against the church's development, or cause division with other churches in the area.
- Need to re-emphasise the development of the children.
- FHI applies it's Churches, Leaders & Families philosophy to child development. Each has a unique role in the development of the children.

So our strategy is as follows:

- Focus – the most vulnerable children.
- Objective – to see the most critical unmet needs met.
- Process – churches, leaders and families. When you engage the churches, leaders & families in addressing the most critical needs you find they deal fairly with the children, according to their cultural norms. Poor communities don't need more injustice!
- The FHI worker is the facilitator, bringing ideas, skills, encouragement, active involvement and, when appropriate, direct leadership in activities that will positively impact the children. A major part of their task is to encourage and (sensitively) challenge the thinking and ideas of the church, leader and families to see all aspects of their life through God's lenses and to function in the manner that God intends for them. Kingdom messages, Kingdom messengers and Kingdom methods.
- Sponsor – to fund the process, with the privilege of knowing one of the children by name and face, and having the opportunity to encourage him or her directly through prayer and letters. Sponsors are kept up to date on community progress, and gain a better understanding of the part they play.

Integration with your other programmes.

Monitoring and evaluation.

We are still learning!

Jesus is the answer! Release, not relief.

See [www.dontbuyicecream.com](http://www.dontbuyicecream.com) for a good overview of sponsorship and of many of the organisations that offer it, from a sponsor's point of view.

What does it cost? Examples range from £20 per month down to £5 per month. Why not allow for flexibility? Eg, "It costs £xx per month to sponsor a child. Some sponsors give more, so a smaller contribution is also acceptable if you are unable to afford this much."

What about admin costs? 20% seems average, but some claim to take nothing. Some use the Gift Aid money for admin, some pass this on. (A participant pointed out that under the new SORP, the Gift Aid money must follow the project to which the gift was assigned.)

What to tell the sponsor?

- Your vision for the child (and the community), and how child sponsorship works to bring this about. How long you expect the project to last.
- About the child, their family, school, church and community.
- What you expect to provide to the child, eg schooling, uniform, books, health care. What (if anything) the sponsor might do or give in addition, eg write, send photos, pray, visit. Note: discourage gifts, unless they can be shared.
- What you expect to provide for the sponsor, eg, letters, updates, reports. Note: discourage/prohibit disclosure of personal address to the child or his family. Give the option to NOT go on your mailing list.
- How a child is allocated. How to give. How much to give. How the money is used.

Additional comments and points raised in the workshop:

- Some recruited sponsors almost entirely through their website. In this case, it is necessary to put money into promoting the website. One agency uses a travel agency – a flyer going out with every travel package.
- There was some concern about photos of children being shown on websites etc. It could not be agreed whether this was acceptable, but as a rule, permission should be obtained, and there should be an effective child protection policy in place. It was noted that a good child protection policy is a useful tool to influence government and local authorities in the field countries. 'People in Aid' could be a useful resource for drafting such a policy.
- There should also be a contractual relationship between the home office and the field partner.
- It was suggested that it is best to have a Westerner running the field partner/office, in order to provide the sort of accountability expected of UK sponsors.
- It could be a useful exercise to run focus groups of sponsors, using an external professional facilitator.

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