

NOTES FOR MISSION NET UK MOBILISERS CONSULTATION



Tuesday 23rd November 2010
WEC HQ, Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, SL9 8SZ

Prayer & introductions - Jo Jowett

The Mission-Net UK Team was introduced and the concept was explained – that Mission-Net is about mobilising young adults to live a missional lifestyle. The UK working group operates under the banner Global Connections which is seeking to encourage healthy co-operation within the wider network of mission agencies. Those present were welcomed and encouraged to contribute to the discussion.

We're in it together (The context of Mission Net) - Mark Styants

Mark Styants, who chairs the UK working group for Mission-Net read from John 17:20-23.

He continued by explaining what Mission-Net is about and what it is trying to achieve.

It was commissioned by and accountable to the European Evangelical Alliance and European Evangelical Missionary Alliance.

PURPOSE

Mission-Net exists to 'inspire a missional lifestyle among European Christian youth'

I hope this is a purpose that excites us and upon which we can unite!

A few points to clarify...

'Missional lifestyle' basically means mission as a way of life - every aspect of everyday - that starts wherever you are but extends to the uttermost parts of the earth. It no longer views mission as something reserved for professionals, or is just about activities or events, but a way of life that faithfully represents Jesus and touches the world, locally and globally.

'Youth' in this context refers to 16-30 year olds.

TWO STRANDS of Mission-Net

- 1. Mission-Net congress – bi-annual and pan-European**
- 2. National movements** – This will be the main focus of our discussions.

This second strand recognises that a bi-annual conference is not sufficient to achieve the purpose. So in each European country, Mission-Net is encouraging us to ask the question 'how can we encourage, inspire and equip young Christians from the UK to live a missional lifestyle?' 'How can the enthusiasm and learning from the congress be encouraged and put into practice on a national level during the 103 weeks between the conferences?'

The Mission-Net congress is bi-annual and pan-European. The first one took place in Germany in April 2009.

- 3000 participants
- 47 countries, out of these 42 European
- 156 organisations in exhibition
- 800 visited the Mission Advice Center
- 2 outreaches in the afternoon together with local churches
- 80 participants on Mission-Net outreaches afterwards

The days consisted of bible studies, teaching, worship, workshops/seminars, outreaches, 'family groups', opportunities to meet with others from your country, huge exhibition area with vocational 'Mission Advice Centre'.

On the Mission-Net website you can read stories of lives that were impacted hugely by the congress...

2009 promo video - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njOVHsCYzks>

The next Mission-Net congress is **28th Dec 2011 – 2nd Jan 2012**. Put it in your diaries!

Think about whether your organisation might want to exhibit there, contribute seminars etc.

Are there young people you know, who you work with/have contact with (interns, people who have been out short-term) who you could encourage to go along and be part of this?

It is a unique opportunity for this age group to go to a very mission-focused conference and meet Europe, to bless and encourage our European brothers and sisters (many in v. difficult situations) and also be blessed by learning from them.

The main thing we want to talk about today is creating a national movement.

I don't particularly like the terminology, but the question is how can we put mission on the agenda of young Christians in the UK today?

Or

How can we encourage, inspire and equip young Christians in the UK to live a missional lifestyle?

How can we work together to achieve this aim? How can we pool our resources? We believe there is so much more that we can do together than any one agency can do alone.

Up until now a few of us have been meeting to think and pray about this and we have a few ideas that Jo, Martin and Dick are going to share about in a moment...

The purpose of today is to tell you about some of the things we have been thinking about, invite your contributions and look at how we can move forward together.

This is not about pushing a 'Mission-Net' brand - We really believe Mission-Net provides a great platform and opportunity for us to stand together and unite towards this goal....encouraging, inspiring, equipping young Christians in the UK to live a missional lifestyle...

- But it will require us to an extent to put our own agency agendas to one side.

- We are determined this will not just be another talking shop, but will result in real action that will make a real impact!

Doing it together (with discussion & feedback) - Martin Lee, Jo Jowett, Dick Davies

Jo began by giving some of the background to interagency events that have taken place over the past ten years or so. When asked for a show of hands, only a few people had had any involvement in past inter-agency projects and many present were relatively new to their jobs.

GC did have a Youth & Children's Forum, but it covered too wide an age range (from 5-30) and ended a while ago. In terms of material for children, WEC has been one of the few agencies to provide any resources & the more recent 'Global Kidz' magazine material is one of the only things currently available for children. Contact Jo Jowett for copies of Global Kidz.

In relation to students and young adults, Jo has been involved with inter-agency projects in various ways for about 14 years and has seen various projects rise and fall. The trouble is that in some cases, the right questions weren't asked at the time so some of the lessons that could have been learnt were lost.

In the late 90s, and project called '**The Mandate**' toured successfully around England over a three week period visiting a number of universities and churches with a multi-media programme presenting a strong mission challenge.

A couple of years later, the above mentioned tour mutated into a project called '**Light The Window**' which again toured successfully in England, Scotland, and Ireland (North & South) over a four week period.

In 2004/5, **Motiv8** brought together a number of agencies for a few one-off events in various parts of England. Where there was local ownership it worked well but it struggled to get off the ground

properly and didn't continue beyond the three events that were held. The entrepreneurial spirit helped it work so why did it eventually fail? Was it due to lack of local ownership? Or was it due to lack of agency co-operation?

Go Global [5 people present were involved in it and only two had never heard of it]

This also brought together a number of agencies who liked the model and therefore worked well together within it.

Go Global began with a number of church events which evolved into CU events involving about 30 agencies.

The church model involved each agency having a stand at a day event and the programme simply consisted of a couple of plenary sessions with a main speaker and a couple of seminar sessions. These events tended to have good local ownership and in conjunction with UCCF, attracted students from the local university.

The CU model consisted of a group of agencies participating in an event, usually held on the normal CU night. Each agency would have a piece of literature on display and could provide an advisor who would attend only a few out of all the planned events to be available to give impartial generic advice. This model worked for about 10 years but dissolved after the overall organisation went from the agencies to UCCF.

Go Global worked in the South West and Midlands but struggled more in the South east and London area. A group of agencies are still running occasional events in the north of England but were not connected to the SW & SE who worked closely together.

We, the agencies, need to think seriously about our level of commitment to this agenda and to find a model of organisation that works for us. The student world is a very key audience and we would like to resurrect something that will reach them with this important missional message. It matters not what we call this – 'Mission-Net', 'Go Global' or something else. The point is, we can do it if we work together with a common goal. Whilst UCCF is very key in this we also need to be aware of how we can partner with other student groups like Fusion.

Discussion and reflections on Go Global from others:

* The current Northern partnership (which operates under the name 'Go Global' in going to the CUs) works on a smaller scale with about 10 agencies involved. UCCF are on board and are driving it.

* Scotland and N. Ireland also have a very workable model. The reps partner with particular CUs which increases dialogue and helps maintain ongoing relationships.

* 'Opening the Door on Islam' was another project based on the same model as the 'Go Global' church events and targeted university cities. These events have been fairly successful. After 9/11 one event attracted around 300 people. It was relevant to what people were thinking about.

* 'World Changers' is a more recent initiative which involves a small number of agencies. This also uses the Go Global pattern. One has already taken place in Eltham in Sept '10 and another is planned for Derby in Jan '11. WEC has been a key player plus with around 10 other agencies.

We need to encourage communication internally within agencies. The discussion highlighted the fact the some of the smaller agencies tend to get left out of some of these projects because they have fewer resources to give to it or because they don't get to hear about it. We also need to establish models of working which facilitates different levels of engagement thus ensuring a fair and level playing field for agencies.

Comments from Russell Knell, East Central staff worker for UCCF:

Currently Peter Day (UCCF North) and in the past Emma Brewster (South West) worked well with agencies.

UCCF staff are already stretched so it's a challenge to know how to keep world mission on their agenda.

It's more difficult to get smaller CUs involved.

Currently they're encouraged to take summer teams. These focus on IFES partnerships especially in Europe.

A number of UCCF staff have overseas experience and are pro-world missions.

'Forum' (UCCF Training event) has in recent years encouraged more interaction with agencies [but

others feel this could be improved on, they don't make enough use of us there]. This year at Forum they tried something new which meant that the missions and prayer night didn't happen. They realise this didn't seem to work and many felt something important was missing. Tim Rudge is the main contact between agencies and UCCF. He's very keen to see this partnership grow.

Dick Davies on Go 2010: [half present had heard of it]

This event was a mutation of WEC's May Day event. This year an event was held on the Saturday with a focus on young adults. Despite having UCCF on board with the planning, having Pete Grieg as the main speaker and the Soul Survivor band leading worship, the event was very disappointing in terms of numbers. But the content was great and if publicity is improved with more engagement from agencies the event could be a success.

Postcards to publicise GO 2011 were made available to take away. There isn't much detailed info about the programme on the postcards at the moment but this will follow in later publicity.

WEC are happy to take care of logistics but are looking for help with the programme and presentation. All creative ideas welcome.

While it could be said that the event attracts those already mission-minded, a creative, well thought-out programme could attract young people on the fringe. This event could be the beginnings of a national Mission-Net event but we need to know how we can develop the event in 2011 and seek greater engagement from agencies.

Agencies are encouraged to use their existing contacts of young people who have been on short-term programmes etc. to publicise the event.

Dreaming together (with discussion & feedback) - Mark Styants

This was an opportunity to reflect on the input so far and think about what we can and can't do together.

[Below are comments made by one small group – that of the minute taker]

Fusion believes that young people are not interested in big events. (How do they explain the popularity of Soul Survivor?)

Disseminating information is more key than getting people together.

We're not hitting black Pentecostal London either.

We don't have to resource – just change the attitude.

Are we 'preaching to the converted'? Do events help empower and resource young people to go back and spread the word?

The message [of mission] is powerful enough.

Perspectives course – like Christianity Explored but on mission. Could we run these? They're popular abroad.

Student alpha is downloadable. Are Podcasts the way to go?

16-30 is a transition time. Could we use internet & Facebook more?

Post-graduate to 30s. Are they in the church anyway? Should we be at New Wine not New Word Alive?

How much of the 16-30 age-group are we trying to cover?

Collated feedback from small groups

CU roadshow

In the North, UCCF are on board and it's promoted well. It takes place on a normal CU night as is the case with all Go Global CU events. It is key to have agencies working together and not promoting themselves. It's a commitment but worth while.

Event like these can help bring CUs together. Some areas don't have regional reps. How can we cross share?

Some agencies feel they 'can't find a way in' to co-operative events.

Communication within agencies is imperative so that information gets passed on to the right person.

There's a sense in which UCCF as the gate-keeper for CUs has to protect CUs from agencies. So much attempted communication to students by mission agency personnel has been poor and therefore counter-productive.

The regional breakdown for many mission agencies is different to UCCF's which can bring an added challenge.

GO event

We don't want to be just preaching to the converted – how can we encourage others to come?

Challenge of ongoing discipleship is relevant for ALL Christian young people.

Other ideas?

Global village at New Wine etc.?

Would it help to have a joint presence?

The Keswick model for agencies works well. Can this be replicated elsewhere?

New Wine is too expensive for many.

Time investment is a challenge.

Some smaller agencies would contribute to something bigger when they can't afford it on their own.

Agencies can work together but it doesn't necessarily need to be through Global Connections.

Is there something we can offer as part of an 'after-hours' programme for young people at events?

'Momentum' may be an event to start with – partnership with Tearfund would be essential as they are already a key player.

18-22 is very different from reaching 22+. Are we trying to be too broad?

It was suggested that prayer needs to be a real focus for us as we think this issue through. We need to shift from 'what can I get as an agency?' to asking God to raise up this generation for mission engagement. Can we spend more time praying together as agencies?

Moving forward together (Martin Lee)

Martin made some final comments about the benefits of partnership and encouraged us to continue the discussion and be willing to invest energy in helping this generation to live a missional lifestyle.

With time out, we ended with prayer and went to lunch for further informal discussion. It was noted that we would try to continue the discussion in a similar format to take things forward from the thinking stage to pro-active planning.

