

HOLISTIC MINISTRY



A Human Needs Approach

SRIPTURE FOCUS

“Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.”
Proverbs 14:31

“Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’” Matthew 25:37-40



QUOTES

“Genuine development is a reflection and fruit of the gospel.” William A. Dyrness

“Attempting to worship God while closing one’s eyes to dehumanizing injustices in the social, political or economical realms....is regularly denounced as unacceptable (in the Bible). Iniquity joined with solemn assembly is an abomination to God...Biblical spirituality calls us into a relationship with God that thrusts us out into the world as agents of healing, liberating grace.”
Robert Mulholland



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of the readings, discussion and activities in this session, the cross-cultural witness candidate should be able to do the following:

- See the value and potential strategic impact of utilizing holistic or human needs ministries as a missions strategy.

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- Learn how evangelism and social ministries can and should be integrated rather than being separate approaches in our missions efforts.
- Explore practical tools for developmental ministries.

HOLISTIC MINISTRY AS A MISSION STRATEGY

During the last century of missions, there was a general turning away by some from human needs ministries due to the fear of a “social gospel” and the challenges of manipulation and post-colonial suspicion. However, in recent years, a resurgence of holistic strategies has taken place.

As you prepare for your cross-cultural experience, it is important for you to have at least a working knowledge of developmental ministry approaches to missions. You will in many cases be confronted with poverty, hunger, social injustice issues and human suffering in a way that you have never seen in your home country context. What will be your response to these?

This subject is important in that it lays a biblical foundation for understanding poverty and human needs. It also takes a look at practical ways in which these things can be addressed. Moreover, this session will help you find some basic means of ensuring that evangelism and discipleship are integrated hand in hand with social ministries.

THE BIG PICTURE

Why do people suffer? Why does tragedy occur in the world? Poverty, sickness, hunger, and suffering are all products of sin—not necessarily the sin of an individual person (although this can sometimes be the case). We must consider the “big picture” when we seek a context for these types of issues. The biblical text tells us that God created people to be one with Him and to live an abundant life. As sin and death entered into the world with the actions of one man, Adam, so did the results of that sin. The results not only include separation from God but, also life in a world under the curse where hunger stalks children, disease tears apart families, wars dehumanize nations, and people suffer.

Our efforts at development are more than just people having things to make their lives better. It is also much deeper than just throwing money, education or science at people’s problems and hoping that they will accept our solutions. It is entering into a “koinonia” participation in their lives and communities and bringing the ministry of reconciliation that results in right relationships.

At the fall, all four of man’s primary relationships suffered:

- Man to God
- Man to his fellow man
- Man to creation
- Man to himself

God desires to transform all of those relationships into what He originally intended. His

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original model for community can best be seen in the pre-fall garden and finally in the new heaven and new earth.

Our role in this act of transformation is a ministry of reconciliation. Primarily, our role in reconciliation is to help man see who he is and who he needs to be in relationship to the Creator and Sustainer of everything, God the Father, because this is the rupture that has ruptured our other relationships.

Ours is also the role of reconciliation of man to fellow man -communities caring for one another out of a transformed mind and spirit.

Ours is also the role of helping them see their right relationship to the environment as stewards and cultivators, not exploiters and abusers.

Finally, ours is also the role of helping people see who they really are in the eyes of God-people created in His image with an amazing potential to make their world a better place.

CASE STUDY: A TALE OF TWO VILLAGES

This is a story of two villages – both similar in terms of size, culture, and composition. Both are rural tribal communities which are basically subsistence farming communities of 40 – 50 families with each family living on about two acres of land, having four-six children and a cash flow of about 15-20 US dollars per month. Into each of these two communities entered a missionary community development worker.

In the first community (let's call it "Village Alpha"), the missionary saw the poverty and day-to-day struggle of the people just to have enough food to eat. He was moved with compassion and decided to do something about their plight. He had some knowledge about improved farming systems and decided that with a little technology and capital, the people could increase their agriculture outputs, giving them more food and cash, which would undoubtedly improve their lifestyles. As he launched his agriculture improvement program, he also held weekly Bible studies aimed at helping them spiritually.

In the second community, "Village Beta," the second missionary ran into almost the exact same situation described above. However, instead of making decisions about the issues from an outsider perspective, she decided to engage the community in dialogue to try to better understand the actual situation and struggles from the peoples' perspective. She initially began by attending pre-existing community meetings and groups, listening to what they were discussing and occasionally asking for clarification on points they were raising.

Work in Village Alpha started very quickly and initial results looked good. The missionary brought some new farm equipment into the village that helped increase the community's labor capacity. He also introduced some new breeds of animals and plants that made an immediate impression on the community. His Bible studies were going well with many villagers attending who seemed to enjoy his weekly sermons.

Work in Village Beta seemed to progress more slowly. Even though the missionary was learning a lot during village meeting times, her attempts at holding a weekly Bible study were

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not very successful. Only a handful of people attended. However, she was becoming more and more involved in deeper relationships in the community. People began coming to her with issues related to their families such as questions about raising children and even issues about marital relationships.

After almost two years of work with Village Alpha, the missionary began to notice some disturbing trends. The villagers would work with him in new ventures only if there was some sort of incentive for them, such as cash for work, new breeds of animals, etc. What bothered him the most was the constant questioning by villagers as to when he was going to bring them something new. His consistent efforts at trying to encourage the people toward self-motivation in addressing their own poverty issues always seemed futile. They always came back to him demanding that he do something else.

His church planting effort was also waning. It seemed that as he decreased outside input and support for his agriculture projects, the participation in his small church plant diminished. He also noticed that his most faithful church members were from families who benefitted most from the agriculture projects. This seemed natural in that they were the champions for change among the whole village. But one thing disturbed him – many of these “champions” also had ineffective relationships with the rest of the village and some even had questionable reputations. He attributed this discrepancy to jealousy over their successful agriculture projects. He feared that the time was soon coming when he would need to leave the village for another place and he was not sure if the church group would continue meeting once he was gone.

After almost two years of work with Village Beta, the missionary began to see some promising signs of development. A small women’s savings and loan group had started among the community. They were utilizing a rotating savings system that was culturally appropriate to the community. Families were using the money to help pay for education needs, farm inputs and even started small stores selling basic food items.

She also noticed that her small Bible study had slowly but steadily increased in numbers and had begun to function as a local church. She noted that most of the members were quality people whose lives had been touched in some way by her development efforts in the community.

One lady was there because of a prayer the missionary had prayed for her sick son who got well. Another family was attending because she had helped them during the struggles with their alcoholic father. She wasn’t ready to leave the community but she knew the time was approaching for her to go elsewhere. She was encouraged by the fact that people were beginning to come up with development projects on their own and were working together as a community to solve their own problems. The small church that started was struggling but it was sustaining itself, meeting together and supporting all its own needs.

REFLECT #1

1. Briefly describe in your own words the two differing approaches to development work in each of the communities described above.
2. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of each approach?
3. What do you think will happen in each village (Alpha/Beta) after the missionary leaves? Why?

DEFINING HUMAN NEEDS MINISTRIES

Relief and development ministries have experienced a resurgence as a viable missions strategy among some Christians and mission organizations over the past few decades. Often classified as holistic, these are strategies focus on human needs. Many people committed to mission service are implementing these strategies out of a passion for God and His glory and out of their concern for the souls of those who do not know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. At the same time, they are moved by compassion and a deep belief that touching people in the name of Christ at their deepest and darkest needs, whether spiritual, physical, emotional or intellectual is a viable way of making Christ known. In short, those ascribing to these strategies desire to make Christ known in word and in deed.

Human needs are the basic or essential needs of people for food, water, security, shelter, welfare, etc. They come in the form of physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual needs. **Human needs ministries** can be any program(s) that addresses the basic needs (felt and real) of a people or population segment and helps that group move toward a solution to the problems associated with those needs. Human needs ministries from a Kingdom development perspective always keep in mind that the deepest and most basic human need is for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Generally, human needs ministries and development work are broken down into two broad categories – acute and chronic needs. These categories serve as the foundational ethos by which one approaches a particular potential problem or need. A well-rounded development organization and/or worker will analyze a needs scenario and determine a strategy based upon the type of needs.

1. Acute Human Needs

Acute needs arise from disaster events such as war, famine, earthquake, flood, etc., and are highly unpredictable. No one knows when or where these disasters will happen. Acute needs arising from these disasters are generally short-term and life-threatening. Immediate response (within the first 48 to 72 hours) is critical to saving lives and is critical to the effectiveness of the program. Acute needs can and do often open windows for ministry, though usually of a shorter duration period than the window opened by chronic needs. Acute needs are generally dealt with through emergency relief/disaster response when a crisis occurs. Acute crises usually last a brief period of time in which food and/or other needed resources may need to be distributed or appropriate aid given. They can be massive in scale such as the 2004 Asian tsunami that killed more than 225,000 people in eleven countries, or they can be small isolated events tied to a single community such as flash floods, landslides, fire, tornados, etc.

2. Chronic Human Needs

These problems include human suffering due to hunger, poverty, poor health, etc., and are generally long-term and often massive in proportion. Because the problems causing chronic suffering are deeply rooted in human societies and cultures, chronic human needs usually require long-term, transformational, education-based solutions. These solution initiatives generally seek to address the issues within the community that are the causative agents of the problems. The projects and programs addressing these types of needs are seen as proactive and transformational in nature.

REFLECT #2

1. What are human needs ministries? Name some examples based on your experience or from something you've heard about? 2. In your own words, define acute human needs. What are some appropriate responses to needs of this type? 3. In your own words, define chronic human needs. List some examples of appropriate responses to needs of this type.

OUR VIEWS ON POVERTY AND OUR RESPONSE

God's love and concern for the poor and needy are consistent themes in the biblical message. The message is one of hope to those who are needy, afflicted and oppressed.

"For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever." Psalm 9:18

Time after time, God comes to the aid of those who suffer injustice.

"For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight." Psalm 72:12-14

About three out of every four lost persons alive today live in the 10/40 Window. The area extends from 10 degrees to 40 degrees north of the equator and stretches from North and Western Africa across to China.

At the same time, almost four out of every five of the poorest of the poor live in that same window. These areas are characterized by armed conflict and extensive suffering from both acute and chronic human needs. Many of the lost of the world today are also the least, and their needs are both physical and spiritual. Our missions strategy, to be aligned with God's strategy, needs to consider how to reach the lost who in many cases are also the poor.

How do we respond to those in need? It seems that our actions are typically based on our philosophy and views on poverty, suffering and the poor.

Bryant Myers, in his book *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* says, "It is important to articulate our view of poverty because our view of poverty strongly influences what we think transformational development is and how we should be going about doing it."¹

For instance, if we view poverty as a lack of things, we will be tempted to give the poor "things" to help make them not so poor. If we see the poor as helpless we will be inclined to rush to their aid and "help" them out of their poverty. If we see the poor as being uneducated, we will try to "educate" them out of their poverty. Many times, our methods are guided by our views on poverty – but it is important that we be thoughtful about what "helping," "giving" and "educating" mean.

So, who are the poor? They are people just like you and me – people created in the image of God. They are families, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents...who desire security for their members in areas of food, water, housing, clothing, and education.

In the Old Testament, poverty is often described in subsequent deepening levels. The nation

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of Israel often experienced all those levels. Time and again they pass through stages of poverty where there is:

- a loss of things and possessions,
- a loss of influence,
- a loss of identity,
- a loss of hope
- and finally, a place deplete of their own ability or resource to resolve their situation.

It is in this deplete place that Israel was and others are more receptive to the hope offered by a loving and caring Heavenly Father. The poor of the world are in a unique and unequivocal position to respond to the loving overtures of this Heavenly Father. So, the question is – how do we respond to the poor in ways that can facilitate them arising from their various forms of poverty and turning to abundant life in God? How do we do this in such a way that we catalyze rather than hinder them in their efforts? Additionally, how do we avoid creating an unhealthy dependency on outsiders?

WHEN HELPING HURTS

When called upon to be involved in disaster response to acute needs we must respond in urgency to provide basics needed to sustain life. However, in responding to chronic needs, we will need to respond in a way that leads to long-term systemic change. In order for this type of community transformation to occur, local people must lead and be involved in the process utilizing their own ideas, realistic preferences and, for the most part, their own resources.

When we bring too many resources too quickly from the outside to address chronic issues, we run the risk of bringing more harm than good. There are two common mistakes many make in implementing holistic ministries.

- **We demoralize the poor** by creating and/or reinforcing their poor self-image as people who cannot help themselves. In essence, we rob them of their dignity as people created in the image of God
- **We “play God” in the lives of the poor**, making their decisions for them and inadvertently becoming their “savior.” The result is that the poor become victims of what Myers calls our own “god-complexes.”

Corbett and Fikkert in their book *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor* say, “...one of the biggest problems in many poverty-alleviation efforts is that their design and implementation exacerbates the poverty of being of the economically rich – their god-complexes – and the poverty of being of the economically poor – their feelings of inferiority and shame. The way that we act toward the economically poor often communicates – albeit unintentionally – that we are superior and they are inferior. In the process, we hurt the poor and ourselves.”²

Here is a simple truth: the poor and needy of the world do not need you or me to play the role of their savior. They already have a Savior and His name is Jesus. Our role in biblical, sustainable development that leads to Kingdom impact is to come alongside them and participate with them, as a catalyst, in their efforts at developing their own communities.

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We need to be learners and participators instead of experts and dictators. We need to be facilitators and not funders. We need to no longer view our efforts as a *hand-out* or *hand-up*, but should view communities as our equals walking *hand-in-hand*.

REFLECT #3

1. How does God feel about the poor? Support your view with Scripture.
2. What does it mean to be poor? What are some common words or phrases we use to describe the poor? Are these labels accurate? Do they influence the way we respond to the poor?
3. What potentially harmful things can happen when we bring too many resources too fast from the outside in to our developmental missions work?
4. In your own words, what is the “poverty of the rich” and “the poverty of the economically poor” according to Corbett and Fikkert?

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THAT LEADS TO KINGDOM DEVELOPMENT

How can we work with the poor and needy in a way that promotes dignity and keeps us from “playing God”? Can we encourage healthy development that gives people an opportunity to hope in the one true God? How do we implement **Kingdom development**?

Kingdom development is community development with eternal significance. As in any good community development practice, we can view development as a process by which communities are able to become better at meeting their own needs. We can encourage them to work together in interdependence and to take charge of their situations, moving toward an empowered and satisfying life. In addition to these good development principles, Kingdom development provides avenues by which God’s truth is made known. God’s truth helps individuals and communities view themselves as God sees them (created to bear His image) and introduces the concept that God has a plan for their lives and their community. This is what Jesus taught his disciples when he asked them to pray, “*Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matthew 6:10).

People are anxious to get busy solving the most pressing needs of their community. They undoubtedly want better roads, schools, clean sources of drinking water, and better income. At our best, we will not seek to resolve these issues for them but will serve as a catalyst or facilitator of a process that focuses not only on the task but also on how they get these things done. Because of the process, are they gaining better capacities? Are they increasing in their capabilities and confidence to handle issues in the future? Are they growing in community? Most importantly, are they understanding God’s desire for them to move toward Christ-likeness in the way they love God and live with others?

Below are 5 basic steps Baptist Global Response implements in the *Kingdom Community Development* cycle:

1. Community awareness raised and identification of problems.
2. Community problem analysis
3. Community solutions to problems identified and prioritized
4. Community planning and implementation
5. Community monitoring, evaluating and celebrating their project

Notice that the primary actor in each of the steps above is the community and not the outsider.

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Acting as a facilitator, we can use simple community development tools to help walk our community participants through the process. They not only gain a completed project (based upon their own felt needs) at the end of the cycle but they also gain new skills, confidence and enthusiasm to work together to tackle other problems.

Remember, the key is getting the community working for their own development. It is their community and their problem(s) that they are trying to solve. We can be advocates and partners in helping them find ways to solve their problem but we have to be careful not to rob them of an opportunity for growth. They need to identify the problem. They need to prescribe the solution and identify the resources necessary for resolution. If we take too much of a role or responsibility, we cut the community cycle short, take on their problems for ourselves and create yet one more unhealthy dependency scenario.

REFLECT #4

1. What makes Kingdom Community Development different from traditional Community Development?
2. Name the five stages in the Kingdom Community Development cycle, describing why you think each one is necessary.
3. How do you envision using a Kingdom Development approach to chronic needs among your People Group or area of focus?

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE: A TALE OF TWO BLIND MEN

(Mark 10:46-52; John 9:1-7)

In Mark 10, a blind man calls out to Jesus as He is on the way to Jerusalem for the last time. Jesus has already set His face toward the cross and He and His disciples are passing through Jericho. The blind man cries, *“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”* And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, *“Son of David, have mercy on me!”* And Jesus stopped and said, *“Call him.”* And they called the blind man, saying to him, *“Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.”* And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, *“What do you want me to do for you?”*

In the midst of all the things going on, including the travel to Jerusalem and the looming shadow of the cross, Jesus takes time to stop and ask a person in need what he wants.

It was obvious what the blind man needed. Perhaps Jesus’ disciples were confused and thought, “Jesus, the man is blind. He needs to see. You have healed people with problems like this before.”

I think it is significant that Jesus, who knew perfectly well what the man needed, did not act presumptuously, but promoted the man’s dignity by asking him what he wanted.

In John 9, *“as he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’* Jesus answered, *‘It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’* Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud and said to him, *‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’* (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.” His family, neighbors and those

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who had seen him beg all became aware of the power of Jesus. Even the local religious leaders were powerfully affected by the man's healing.

Here were two tragedies turned into opportunities to make God known. These healing events were pathways for the truth of God to be revealed in tandem with action that met a need.

REFLECT #5

1. Read the rest of the story in John 9 about the young man born blind. What other insights do you gain from the story about ways God uses ministry for the expansion of His Truth and Kingdom?
2. What are some possible "less than godly" motivations people may struggle with when it comes to meeting needs?

EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW

William Carey – You probably know much about William Carey who is often described as the father of the modern Protestant missions movement. But did you know that he was very active in helping meet the needs of people in Asia?

In addition to being a missionary, Carey was also a social activist standing up against some of the social evils of the day in India, such as "suttee," the burning alive of widows along with their deceased husbands. He is also credited with helping start India's first botanical society/gardens and helped establish Serampore College (1818), the Agriculture and Horticultural Society of India (1820) and the Savings Bank of India.

Bob Pierce – World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization that works with children, families and their communities in addressing the root causes of poverty and injustice. Their founder, Bob Pierce, began World Vision largely out of his life experiences in China and Korea.

Bob came to feel that the best way to share Christ with people was to help them physically, showing them the love and compassion of Christ in a real way. He has been often quoted as praying, "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God," which was a motto that he inscribed in his Bible.

Initially, World Vision was started to help orphaned children. It was one of the first of its kind to begin an "adopt a child" program through which concerned Christians (mainly in the Western world) could help provide basic needs for vulnerable children around the world. Since its inception, World Vision has rapidly grown to help with hundreds of thousands of children and has expanded its services into other areas such as alleviating poverty, responding to disasters, and addressing various social issues.

Harold Watson – Harold Watson worked as a Southern Baptist agriculture missionary for 35 years in the Philippines. During that time, he worked with rural Filipinos in developing practical solutions to their food, health and water problems. Moreover, he was very active as a church planter, discipling believers toward obedience which led to the start of hundreds of churches among the rural and tribal peoples of the southern Philippines.

Harold, his wife Joyce and their three sons first went to the Philippines in 1964. He was initially

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assigned to teach agriculture at Southern Baptist College, M'lang. However, he had a desire to start a rural development training program. In 1968, he received permission to begin a rural life center that was to be used as a demonstration farm and extension base for doing rural development as well as church planting.

In 1971, the Mindanao Baptist Rural Life Center (MBRLC) was officially opened in Bansalan, Davao del Sur. It began with some small vegetable production plots, a few rabbits and a vision for the future. From the very first day of establishing the demonstration farm, people naturally were attracted to what Harold was doing.

In the mid-1970s, Harold began engaging farmers in the local area and working with them to determine their most pressing problems as well as exploring potential solutions. His work led to the development of projects such as Food Always in the Home (FAITH) Gardening, a simple way for a rural Filipino family to provide food and extra income for their families. He also developed a hillside farming method that eventually became known as Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) and received several national and international awards. In 1985, Harold won the coveted Ramon Magsaysay award, the equivalent of a Nobel Peace Prize in Asia, for his role in international development.

Harold has devoted himself to seeking appropriate technologies for the poor of developing countries. His work has multiplied and is being implemented in numerous countries around the world. Harold and Joyce are great examples of holistic Kingdom developers, as they have helped countless individuals and communities with hunger and health care issues along with helping catalyze the planting of hundreds of Filipino churches. Pouring their lives into holistic disciples, these equipped individuals are across the globe, leading out in holistic missions efforts. Harold has been an excellent model of listening to people and their problems and helping them develop appropriate solutions primarily using the resources they have at hand.

DIGGING DEEPER

Kingdom Community Development Strategies (Baptist Global Response) can be used as a missions approach within your target group. These are some simple skills and tools that will enable you to enter into your target group as a listener/learner and catalyst for development. These strategies coincide with the basic steps of the development cycle (p. 11).

1. Community Awareness and Problem Identification

Situation Analysis – Comparing trends from 20 years ago, today and 20 years from now will give you insight into the community's perception about itself.

Situational and Vision Mapping – Have the community draw or build two models – one as it currently exists and one as they dream it could become. Comparing the models can give them and you insight into their dreams, goals, and vision for their community.

Histories and Timelines of the Community – Asking them to gather and share written or oral history and timelines can help them and you gain a picture of significant events/milestones within the community.

Community Surveys – Surveying the community door-to-door or within groups can help to identify problems, needs, and dreams.

2. Community Problem Analysis

Cause and Effect Analysis – Analyze each problem identified by the community, allowing each member to express what they see as the root causes and the “fruits” or effects of these particular problems. We sometimes model this as a “problem tree” where roots are causes and fruits are effects.

Pair-Wise Ranking of community problems. This is a simple tool that allows communities to compare problems one-to-one and evaluate them in terms of importance to the community.

Simple Seasonal Calendaring of Problems. This tool would help the community look at their problems over a weekly, monthly or yearly calendar and see potential trends related to things such as needed extra cash for school terms, food issues during non-production seasons, water/health issues during rainy versus dry season, etc.

Labor Mapping – Mapping, particularly of social groups such as men, women, and children in relation to the problems identified.

3. Community Solution Identification and Prioritization

Use a **ranking/weighting method** such as the ten-seed method (<http://www.csd-i.org/ten-seed-technique-field-note>) to choose the community’s preference of solution to a particular problem.

Use the “**causes**” or “**root problems**” identified by the problem tree (cause and effect) analysis to begin identifying appropriate, feasible and doable solutions.

Resource Mapping – Use a Venn diagram to help eliminate non-practical solutions to their problems and to identify ones that are more achievable utilizing their local resources.

4. Community Planning and Implementation

Community Action Planning results in a simple plan answering the questions, what, who, when, how and with.

Present the plan back to the whole community for input and support.

Community launching program – Have an official and public declaration by the community that they are launching their project.

5. Community Monitoring, Evaluation, and Celebration

Memorandum of Agreement – Create a simple but official document regarding actions agreed upon by the major players in the community.

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GAP (Goals and Progress) Analysis – This is a community analysis of what happens as they implement their plan, evaluating the “GAPS” they find in executing the plan and determining the corrective action to get the project back on track.

Celebration – When the project is complete, encourage the community to celebrate what it has accomplished and to address the next priority problem they have identified.

SELF-AWARENESS, SURVIVAL, AND SOLUTION

Here are some simple principles and truths to remember as you seek to reach people and communities via human needs strategies:

Effective Kingdom community development is not done to or for people but rather with people. Created in the image of God, each person has the capacity to build something and do something amazing. We harness a God-given capacity when we work with people instead of for them or on their behalf.

People and thus communities working together are capable of doing amazing things. The writer of Ecclesiastes says that a cord of three strands is not easily broken.

Ownership by a community of the project they undertake is essential for the sustainability of that project. Whose reality really counts when it comes to solving a community’s problem? Whose problem is it? Whose solution should it be and with whose resources should they solve the problems?

Outsiders can help but insiders must be the ones to drive the community development process. The moment we “take over” the problems and solutions for the community’s problems is the moment we begin to “play God” in their lives.

It is all about relationships. If we come to the end of our time in the community and they have good projects but horrible relationships, we have failed in our efforts at Kingdom development. Good relationships are the avenues that God uses for His Kingdom truths to go forward.

Good development is more about focusing on the process and not the product. The communities and people in need with whom we work are very interested in getting good things for themselves and their community: good roads, water systems, healthcare solutions, better food, and income, etc. However, as missionary development workers, we are more concerned as to how they get to these products. How did they work together as a community to solve their problems? What new skills did they learn along the way that would help them solve other problems? How was their capacity expanded to address more complex problems? How much more confidence did they gain in the process? And, most importantly, how did the truth and love of Christ and God’s plan for their lives and community enter into the process?

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SO WHAT?

Imagine the following scenarios:

- Imagine what it would look like if you and your church when engaging an unreached people group overseas, decided to involve development strategies but not to bring in unnecessary outside resources.
- Imagine that the relationship with your target group utilized the tools of community development, primarily drawing off the peoples' local knowledge of their problems and potential solution?
- What would the result be if you came in with a relationship approach towards solving poverty, hunger and health care issues instead of using science, capitalism, and technology?

An old Chinese proverb says, "Go to the people, live with the people, learn from the people, love the people..." Can you show love as an outsider doing development work in such a way that the end result is the target community saying, "We did it ourselves," or better yet, "God did a mighty work among us?" What would make this difficult for you?

I challenge you to consider entering into your next target group with a heart and plan for meeting the human needs among them in a way that leads to the expansion and growth of the Kingdom of God among them. I challenge you to do this without using resources of technology from the outside but with a developmental approach that listens, learns from and builds upon the local peoples' resources to solve their own problems.

Remember, the relationships that come from a human needs / developmental strategy will provide multiple avenues of truth for the gospel to go forth. What are some ways that you can insert God's truth and word into the Kingdom development process?

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NOTES

¹Myers, Bryant L. *Walking With the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, p. 65

²Corbett, Steve and Brian Fikkert. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, p. 65.

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