**Minutes of Mission working Group committee meeting 22.01.2020**

Mike Robbins had been invited to talk to the group in order that we could investigate the possibility of widening our involvement with Compassion such that the link could be on a par with our other Mission Partners.

Compassion presentation by Mike Robbins (Elim Pastor)

* Present: Paul Salaman: chair., Wendy Vincent, Hannah Green, Hannah Crewdson, Polly Barton.
* After an introduction to his church background, Mike showed three videos illustrating the work of Compassion.
* **Video 1**. From Uganda, entitled ‘Hopeless’, told of 71,600 children sponsored by Compassion. It demonstrated the huge impact on children in extreme poverty, including a man named Richmond Wandera who had been enabled to return to school and be lifted out of poverty to become a pastor now running a pastors’ discipleship ministry which has already worked with 4,000 trainee pastors.
* **Child sponsorship**:There are 350 million children in extreme poverty in the world. This number has been halved in the last 15 years. Compassion locates a church in a needy area in the developing world, establishes a project director in the church for outreach in the surrounding area and seeks sponsorship for each child; currently at £28 per child.
* The children are taught in church every Saturday and in the school holidays with bible based lessons, health education, games and a cooked lunch.
* Every child is put in school, plus any extra teaching required. The programme is wholistic caring for: **Mind**- school fees and uniform

**Body**-Nutrition and health education, treatment, mosquito nets etc.

**Heart**- Letters every sponsor should write to their child sponsoree and endeavour to have a face to face meeting.

**Spirit**- gospel teaching.

* **Church partnership:** This is a scheme empowering the local church in the field by linking it to an evangelical church in the Western world using Compassion as a conduit. The difference made is a church growth explosion as the children and parents/guardians are added to the congregation. Offshoots can be new church buildings, church toilets, vocational training eg tailoring courses. The local UK church engages with the church in the field. It could fund a medical or maternity programme , vaccinations etc.
* **Church visits:** can be managed by Compassion ( minimum 10 people) or arranged personally.
* Compassion is based on the Evangelical Alliance Beliefs. Accountability is strictly observed. A minimum of 80% of donated money goes to the sponsored child. A proportion goes to a ‘most needed fund’ eg for serious or urgent medical treatment. 12% is spent in finding the next sponsor.
* **Video 2.**From Hope Baptist church, Plymouth, showed a celebration and report back 12-18 months after the start of a child sponsorship scheme by that church.
* **Video 3:** From Mariakani on the Kenyan coast showed a visit from St. Mark’s church where 200 children had already been enrolled. This figure has now reached 350.
* **Discussion** by the committee and questions looked at best use of personal visits to a project and where would be most suitable. Kenya, Uganda and Peru were all proposed.
* **Further information** on whole church sponsorship and where would be most practical and needy was requested to Mike Robbins. Another committee meeting would be required at a later date when this data was received.

At The end of the evening it was felt that there was insufficient time for the group to come to some sort of decision as to how to respond and so a short meeting was scheduled for the 26th before the scheduled tea with Richard Wallace.

Polly Barton

23.01.2020

Follow up Meeting:

The group met once more briefly on the 26th January at Hannah Green’s house before sharing a tea with Richard Wallace. Present: Hannah Green, Paul Salaman, Marc Baker, Polly Barton & Wendy Vincent.

The single item agenda was to decide whether and how to proceed with the link with compassion.

We unanimously agreed that we should proceed with developing this link.

It was noted that Mike’s main concern was the encouragement of individual sponsorships however the group was more concerned with the interventions mentioned.

It was decided that:

* + We would try to find out the details of children already sponsored by church members
  + We would look into finding a suitable intervention either linked to or geographically close to one or more of these current links.
  + We could commit to an intervention with a budget of between £10,000 and £15,000 considering that we could allocate between £2000 and £3000 a year for the next few years and even ear-mark unspent funds from last year.

Further Developments:

After asking for details of current sponsorships from church members and passing them on to Mike he was able to give us the following message:

You have:

2 in Indonesia

2 in Rwanda

1 in Tanzania

1 in Uganda

1 in Ecuador

My advice is that you consider focusing on a primary country. So any further children that are sponsored come from a similar locality, any charitable donations can go to that area and if in the future you want to take a team through Compassion, it is easier to connect up.

Paul then requested that Mike find suitable interventions that fit our criteria and budget.

Paul Salaman 11/3/20