

Encouraging and Inspiring... Biblically Based Business

Delivering the Training in the Developing World

Excerpt of Chapter 5 of Workbook 0

*(Please be aware that this excerpt may contain traces
of references to other parts of Workbook 0)*

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5 Training

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act

Proverbs 3:27

Transformation = Empowerment + Dignity

Vinay Samuel

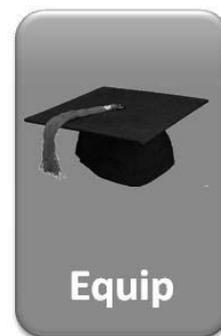
The key mechanism for the benefits we are stimulating across the Developing World is training; it is the pivot on which all of the rest of the things we have been talking about in this book swings; it is the goal of all of our preparation and the springboard for transformation; it is the channel for empowerment and the means to dignity; it is a platform for God's wisdom to speak into their economic situation; and it is a forum for deep and meaningful fellowship.

You could be forgiven, then, for thinking that training is somewhat important. But what is more important is that you do not confuse 'important' with 'difficult', that would be a real tragedy. The training may be vitally important, but it can only assume that importance to the extent to which it is delivered, and that depends on people having the confidence to deliver it.

Accordingly, we have made delivery of the training very simple. The training is delivered in Uganda by people without qualifications, it is delivered by people with less understanding of commerce and business than you have (*we can say that because we know the culture you have probably grown up in*), and it is delivered by people who have never done any training or teaching before. It has to be, because that is really all they have available, and because it is specifically written to be capable of being delivered by such people; if it wasn't, then the whole idea of the cascade model would be a non-starter.

And because they can do it, and because they can do it successfully, then you need to accept that you can do it. The decision that you can deliver this training could be the most important decision not only in your own life, but also in the lives of many who are waiting on you to do exactly that. Remember that when God picked 12 people to help Him communicate the most important message in the Universe, he did not pick the best communicators, or those with the most credibility, or those with the highest level of education, he picked those who would choose to 'stay with it' when the others walked away (*John 6:66-68*). The rest was not easy, but it was right. And commitment is as important a qualification here and now as it was there and then.

The best teachers are rarely those with the most developed understanding, but they are often those with the hardest-won understanding, and they are usually the ones with the biggest heart and commitment for those they are serving, in this case both God and His people; our brothers and sisters in poverty.



5.1 Allowing the materials to do what they are good at (Getting to really understand the materials)

But I do not want you to think that this is teaching in a conventional sense of the word. The people who you are helping are not dependent on you as

the source of wisdom and insight. They are only dependent on you as the orchestrator of their engagement with it; they only really need you to pull them together, and to keep them moving through the material themselves – each of them helping the other to understand. Practically everything is done through questions and answers, and mostly you asking the questions and them providing the answers.

Workbook 1, the key piece of training to which we refer, is designed to allow people to work through the material by themselves; to train themselves by working methodically through its pages and engaging with its exercises – try it yourself and you will see what we mean. We are aware that people can, and do, gain all that they need to plan and set-up a successful business through working individually through Workbook 1.

So why the training?

We are equally aware that although you can work through Workbook 1 on an individual basis, people get far more out of it when they work through it together. There is something about working through the material in a group which:

- Helps people to see other perspectives and to develop better quality and more comprehensive answers
- Works to resolve any misunderstandings that may have arisen
- Provides greater emphasis on important points which sometimes get overlooked or forgotten
- Encourages people to work together and use each other's strengths to find the answers that are needed
- Stimulates new levels of creativity and insight
- Builds confidence in the conclusions that have been reached, and a greater willingness to put them into practice



Group discussion during training in Kampala

So the task of the trainer in this case, is less to do with formal training, and far more to do with leading the group to engage in a series of group discussions.

Preparation: reading, understanding and applying the materials

If you have read and worked through Workbook 1 you will be able to see the truth in this, but if you have not done so yet, then this is probably the most important place to start. To understand the rest of this Chapter, you will need to really understand Workbook 1. Our recommendation is that you actually work through the exercises as you read through the book, and this includes the exercises of going out and talking to 'potential customers'.

To work through Workbook 1 properly, you will need to identify a 'business' which you plan to develop – it does not matter if the business is not viable, this is more about using the business as a learning aid, but it would be very helpful if the business was something which you could practically conceive of yourself doing. The early parts of the Workbook may help you to identify a suitable business, but if it does not, then think of something small and easy to test out. Perhaps a business making your favourite ice-cream, or washing cars, or selling healthy snacks to school-children at break time, or

providing a secretarial service – anything which will enable you to fully engage with the exercises in the workbook.

Working through Workbook 1 will do two things for you: firstly it will build your confidence in the materials and your ability to help others through them; and secondly it will provide you with new insights and deeper levels of understanding – understanding which will help you to better equip those you will be training.

Allowing the materials to work - ensuring the approach supports and enables, not replaces

As you work through Workbook 1 you are likely to develop your own ideas on how this material could be used, and how to take a group through it – which is good. However, you do not have to do this – in fact, if you take it too far, it could become counter-productive.

Part of ‘how’ you take people through the training is about creating a model which others can follow when they use the material to train. When your trainees have set up successful small businesses, and some of them have decided to take the next step and become trainers, they will think back to how they were trained as a basis for how they will train others. It is therefore vitally important that we keep things as simple and straightforward as possible in the training, and keep our flashes of brilliance to a minimum.

Think of it this way, John Cleese is a brilliant trainer, and can probably get you to understand things clearly which others would struggle to get you to see first base – but there is a real danger that he would not be as effective as you in transforming a community through Workbook 1 – seriously!

Why? Well think about it for a moment, he may do a far better job than you in getting the first group to understand, but what happens then? Who is going to ‘follow’ John Cleese? How many are going to feel confident about doing what he did? ‘His’ training is very likely to stop where he stops – while yours will cascade on, and on, and on. *(Sorry Mr Cleese, if you are reading this, I know that you would make adjustments, but I just want them to see that their fears exist for precisely the wrong reason!)*

The key thing in training Workbook 1 is to let Workbook 1 do the training. By taking a simple and straightforward approach, you will help the people you are training to see how this works, and build their confidence in delivering the training themselves. But fully understanding Workbook 1 by using it yourself is key to having the confidence and the deep insight that this is so.

And to help you in delivering Workbook 1 simply, consistently, and in a way which others can follow, we have more good news – most of the work is done for you! On the website you will find two key documents for you in delivering the training, and for them in cascading the training. These are the ‘Session Plan’ and the ‘Support Materials’, and they can be found on the materials page.



A trainee-trainer in Kampala practices on his co-trainers

The Session Plan is a tabulated document (see *right*), which spells out the training session by session – outlining each period of 10 to 30 minutes in terms of what exactly you are trying to achieve in that session, and the questions to ask, and the instructions to give, to achieve it. It consists of seven columns as follows:

- **Time:** The time at which the session should start if you are to keep the overall programme punctual
- **Description:** The title for the session
- **Duration:** How long the session should take to achieve the objective, if you are not to overrun
- **Objective:** What exactly you are trying to achieve by means of the session
- **Inputs:** What props or supporting materials you will need for the session
- **Process:** The steps you will need to take to achieve the objective, often in the form of “Ask the group ...”
- **Outputs:** Anything practical/tangible that is intended to be delivered by the session

09.40	Business Planning	10 mins	To ensure people understand the use of the business plan pages in the back of the guide	Business plan in the appendice of the workbook	Ask people to turn to the business plan pages and ask if they know how to fill them in. Answer questions, and draw out the relationships between the numbers and the exercises we have been doing over the last three days. Ask people about why it is important to fill in the business plan and flipchart their answers – ensure that they include something along the lines of ‘demonstrating they are in control’, ‘ensuring they know the key points’, and ‘looking professional to investors’ in their answers. Then referring back to ‘investors’ ask who they might be.	
09.50	Micro Finance and Loans	55 mins	To provide people with an overview of Microfinance Initiatives, and Loans, and how they can practically engage with them.	Representatives from a number of different Microfinance businesses	Representatives from a number of different Microfinance businesses each present briefly what they do, what they are looking for, how to approach them, and what they require. The group asks questions until they fully understand what they need to know about getting their business ideas financed. Then ask the microfinance people about what is important to how the business is run after it is set up, and lead on to the next section....	Knowledge of how to approach microfinance organisations
10.45	Coffee	15 mins				
11.00	Running your own small business 1	15 mins	To ensure that people understand the principles of running a business after it has been set up	Diagram of guitar maker’s business Flipchart of principles of running a business	Explain that even if you now have a viable business plan, that is just theory. Ask how in practice a viable business plan can turn into a failing business, and draw out the need for disciplines in what is spent and how money is collected (direct them to the picture of the guitar maker to help them arrive at this if required). Put up the flipchart of principles of running a business and direct them to pages 46 and 47 of their workbooks.	

Excerpt from the training session plan for Workbook 1

The Session Plan, and particularly the ‘inputs’ column, is linked to the ‘Support Materials’, these are a collection of visual aids designed to be easily replicated on flipcharts and blackboards (see *the image on the right*), and these are used to help support each session (*as their title suggests*). While these could easily be projected from a computer and a data projector, this is a route we have deliberately avoided, and encourage you to avoid also. If you are lucky, some of your cascade trainers are likely to be training (*and making a difference*) in places where conditions are harsh and there is no electricity or equipment. At this point, your cascade trainer will be very glad that you modelled a way of delivering the training which he or she can use in that place.

Day 3, 12.10: Fill in the rest of the figures in each column by adding the income to the opening balance, and then subtracting the expenditure and the repayment, and writing the answer as the closing balance, and then copying the closing balance to be the opening balance of the following week, and continuing the process for the next column. Get the group to help you by shouting out the answers as you go through it. Point out that it wasn't so difficult to do a cash-flow table – it just looks complicated. But then circle the minus figure in the bottom row, and ask what this means. Point out that without money you can't buy more supplies (arrow and circle around the 66) and without supplies you can't make and sell product (arrow up to the 90 and cross it out). Then scribble out columns 4 and 5 for effect, and explain that as soon as your cash flow goes negative, everything else is just a dream – all that lovely profits in the future will never happen!

Notes

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Example page from the ‘Support Materials’ Some of the materials are best written up before the training starts

Don't try too hard - Uganda trainer training experience

The session plan is deliberately simple. The degree of sophistication is deliberately low. The emphasis is deliberately on drawing inputs from them rather than providing them yourself – not because we think you are lazy, or because we think you are incapable of training any other way, but because we know it is the most effective way to train and, in this case, it is definitely the most successful way to train trainers.

That said, we are consistently baffled during our work to train trainers that a twenty minute session, which has the simply stated process of ‘Ask the group to share their answers to Exercise 9’ leads to 19 minutes of presentation and talking by the trainee trainer! I mean, how difficult can it be? The process is ask: “*What have you written down in your workbooks for Exercise 9?*” and then ... SHUT UP!

Now I know somebody reading this is burning to ask “*But what happens if they don’t say anything?*” The answer to that question is simply: “*You have 19 minutes and 54 seconds of silence, sat down with your arms crossed and looking curiously at people*” – but frankly it never works, because they can only stand about 30 seconds of it before someone caves in!

The point of this exposition is to illustrate that we sometimes find it hard to accept that it really is as simple as it appears to be, and so we complicate matters by adding bits in, and by this actually stop the process from doing what it does well.

In truth, what we are doing is not really ‘*teaching*’ it is ‘*facilitating learning*’, and this is a very important distinction.

5.2 What do we mean by ‘facilitating the learning’?

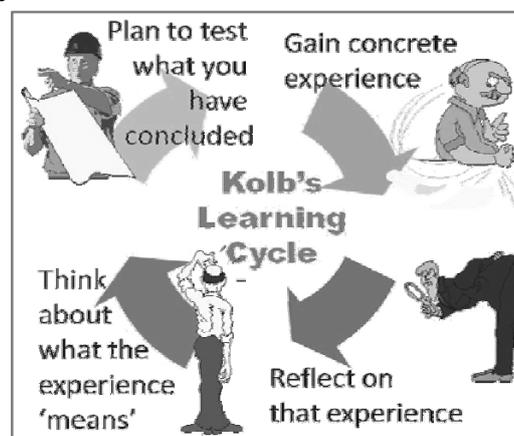
There is a wonderful cartoon that covers this distinction well. It shows two small boys talking and a little dog sitting by the side. One boy says, “*I taught Spot how to whistle.*” And the other challenges, “*I don’t hear him whistling.*” The first boy responds, “*I said I taught him. I didn’t say he learned.*”

The point is the difference between *transmission* and *reception* – in ‘teaching’ we all too often focus on *transmission*; what leaves our mouths. But far more important is *reception*; what enters their brain – and this can be something entirely different, and something which we can remain entirely unaware of for as long as we remain in ‘*transmission*’ mode. (Please note, to those who I may otherwise unintentionally offend out there, I mean the verb ‘teaching’ as opposed to the profession, whose skills in facilitation are to be envied).

Modern thinking on how we ‘*learn*’ shows that there are a number of steps which we cycle through to assimilate the learning which is available. We may start in different places (*at different steps*) and we may have different preferences in how long we spend in each step, but all of the steps are necessary for effective learning. This cycle, named after psychologist David Kolb, consists of four steps (*as shown on the right*):

- concrete experience; for instance, smiling at somebody and seeing them smile back at you
- observation of and reflection on that experience; for instance, actually recognising that someone smiled back at you when you smiled at them
- formation of abstract concepts based upon the reflection; for instance, developing a ‘hypothesis’ that if you send out ‘friendly’ signals to people, they tend to return them
- testing the new concepts; for instance smiling at someone else (*and starting back at step 1*)

Where we start in the cycle is not important. For example: the training tends to promote concepts; and then asks people to test them out; from which they will gain experience; which they can reflect on. And how long we spend in each step is not important. For example: some will want to think long and hard about what is written in the book; while others want to rush out and do something with it. But what is important (& key to our



Can you see the learning cycle in yourself?

Think back to the last new task you tried: how did it start? Then what? Then ...? Can you relate these things to Kolb's cycle?

eventual success) is that that we provide opportunities to complete the cycle.

But, you may ask, don't we have to '*transmit*', for them to '*receive*'? Well actually not in this case, no! The transmission has already taken place in the materials, or more precisely Workbook 1. Our job is simply to check and correct the '*reception*'. That is what we mean by '*facilitating the learning*' – we are basically running a series of engaging activities which allow people to check and correct each other's reception, and through this to engage with the learning more completely.

Providing the book as pre-reading

An important factor in the effectiveness of this process then, is that they have received the book as pre-reading, and that they have read it and done the exercises. This is always a bit of a challenge, and never yet have we managed to achieve this before any training session we have run – there has always been some form of problem or another. However, it is the ideal, so it is worth us considering how to achieve this, and then we will need to consider our options for when it does not quite happen that way.

The ideal is to ensure that there is a clear plan to translate the materials (*primarily Workbook 1, but also the 'Support Materials' – the flipchart sheets and blackboard examples*) and to have Workbook 1 printed in their own language, and circulated to participants, some time before you arrive. Where reading skills are an issue, and they sometimes are, even among those who want to set up a business, it may be necessary to have the Host organise reading sessions in the local Church – but please be aware, an inability to read or write in their own language is likely to prove a major handicap not only to the training but to the business of record keeping and business communication as well (*please see the note in the box on the right*). However, it is possible that they may be able to get someone to work beside them who can read and write, and who is willing to help them through the materials, and even to help them set up their business.

More commonly however, you will find that Workbook 1 has not been circulated, or if it has been circulated it has not been read, or if it has been circulated and read and even the exercises have been completed, then this is only by a minority of the participants. No matter, all of these things can be addressed – the only thing we cannot cope with is if the materials are not even translated (*as was covered in section 4.2*).

Where some of the participants have completed the exercises, you can at least ensure that these virtuous souls are distributed among the groups, and then each group has something to debate and discuss as the training progresses, and the virtuous soul reaps the rewards of their efforts in having an unusual amount of attention focused on their ideas. However, it is important that you gain a commitment from the others in the training to read the material and do the exercises before the next session. Getting them to work up to page 29 by the end of the first

Please note:

We recognise that the literacy level required to benefit directly from the training potentially leaves a large proportion of the population of the Developing World relatively unsupported through Workbook 1. We do appreciate that there are many who cannot read and write who also need to be helped out of poverty.

We have written Workbook 2 to try and address this issue, not by undertaking the immensely difficult task of training the illiterate in business, but by encouraging their employment through making existing businesses more successful and exploring their responsibility for helping others through employment.

If you would like to know more about Workbook 2, it may be found on the Reconxile.org website and downloaded, as usual, free of charge

evening, and then getting them to read and work on pages 30 to 45 by the end of the second evening, is often the most manageable and realistic way of achieving this. You can see this strategy reflected in the red text on the four day session plan – text which has been added precisely to cope with this eventuality (see page 46). We have even used it to cope with a situation where nobody had read the material before the training – far from ideal, but somehow (*read: with God's help*) it worked.

One approach which we have not yet tried, but which I am increasingly drawn to, and would encourage you to seriously consider, is the addition of a fifth day at the front of the training which is purely intended to meet the participants, to circulate the books, to provide a reading for them, and to give them time to work on the exercises (perhaps in pairs). I believe that it would have been a significant improvement over what we have done so far. However, just to bring your fears back into perspective, we achieved 72% overall success and 220 new businesses in Uganda despite these problems – it is important that we do not get too anxious about them, just think about what we can do to prevent them, and then calmly deal with the situation if it should arise.

Use of questions

Questions are the most powerful way of facilitating learning. One good question can be worth hours of statement – it opens up people to the fact that there is something to engage with; it alerts them to a gap in their own understanding which calls for learning; it encourages people to draw on their own experience and to build on it; and it increases commitment and acceptance of the answer which they finally arrive at. That is why there are so many of them in the training materials and the session plan.

And yet so often we are afraid to use them, particularly if we feel we need to prove ourselves. There is a fear that by asking a question we expose ourselves to the criticism that we do not know the answer, and where we already lack credibility that may well be so. But where you are going, you will not lack credibility. In their minds (*and quite correctly so*) you have been selected and sent by God, from a land where business thinking is largely common-place, to help them in their time of need. What better credentials do you need? When you ask them a question, there is no doubt in their mind that you might not know the answer, only a slight fear that they aren't sure whether they know the same answer!

If you are worried about how you will deliver the training, look through the session plan, and practice the questions you will ask – it will do wonders for your morale.

Examples of questions you can use to open debate:

Does anybody have a story about ...?

What answers do you have for Exercise ...?

What do you look for when you go to buy ...?

...there are many more listed in the sections of the session plan

Focus on group work and discussions/relationships

But bear in mind that when you ask a question from the front, only one person can answer it correctly. And in a large group of say 30-40 people, that is a very small proportion, even if you get one or two offering subtle variations. It is far more effective for their learning and confidence for a larger number of them to answer it correctly, but that is difficult to do when you are talking to the whole group.

Far better to throw open the question but then to get them to discuss their answers in smaller groups. While it makes it more difficult for you to assess the quality of the answers, it does have a number of advantages:

- it engages more people mentally because they realise that they not only have a chance to speak, the others around them have an expectation that they will;
- it draws out a range of contributions, but gives the group the responsibility of thinking through how they assess the quality of them;
- it gets people to commit themselves, because they are more committed to a statement they have made than a statement you have made;
- and it means that they will retain the conclusions longer, because people tend to retain more of what they say themselves than of what they hear others around them say.

Furthermore, the group based discussions help to build deeper relationships between the people in the group; relationships which may well extend beyond the training and provide mutual support at a time when their businesses most need it.

Using the exercises and projects

The exercises in Workbook 1, provide a good basis for group work and discussion/debate. Even where people have not completed the exercises before the training, setting the exercise for group work can help everybody to gain new insights which will help them with their own answers when they go through the workbooks properly themselves.

It is probably worth highlighting here, that the idea is for people to work through Workbook 1 a number of times, refining their answers, and repeating the whole sequence with new ideas, until they have one that works for them. The advantage is, that when they alight on their final business idea, they will be very skilled in thinking it through. And that is the goal of our training – to have people skilled in thinking businesses through, rather than to have people with a business – because with the achievement of the former, the latter becomes a sustainable and replicable certainty.

The afternoon projects provide the first real opportunity for people to take the learning which they have further developed in the morning session, and to apply it for real on their own personal business idea. The idea is for people to work individually, or in pairs, but not in larger groups. Here the goal is to get the individual to push themselves into doing the work for real – only in this way will they gain the confidence to make the decisions for their real business.

And there is a key psychological barrier to be overcome here, and you will probably notice it in a reluctance to write in their own Workbooks. They are worried about making a mistake. It is very important that you help them overcome this fear, not by convincing them that they won't make a mistake, but by convincing them that they will, and that this is a good thing – making mistakes on paper is the best way to learn, and it is the best way to make sure that you have used up all of

The effect of the exercises in the training material on group working in Dalanzadgad



Exercise 7: What do I buy?
.....
Who do I buy it from?
.....
Why do I buy it from them?
.....
What would cause me to buy it elsewhere?
.....
What do I mean by 'better' in this case?
.....

An example exercise from Workbook 1 explores the concept of 'better' as raised in the text

your mistakes when you go to do it for real, with a real business, and real money. With one group, I went so far as to get them all to turn to one page together, and to get their pens, and scribble over it, just to break through the reluctance – a bit extreme perhaps, but it did seem to work.

5.3 How do we know if it is working? (Tips in observation which will help you to be successful)

Facilitation is largely about two things: process (*the sequence of interrelated tasks which people are working through*) and intervention (*what the facilitator says and does over and above what the process asks them to do*). Strangely though, if you get the design of the process right, intervention is largely unnecessary – it is almost as if the process anticipates where the group will go and is there to support

them when they get there. Unfortunately, it is unusual (*almost unheard of*) to find a process which is that well designed, and so intervention is required to keep people on track, and even to adjust the process where required.

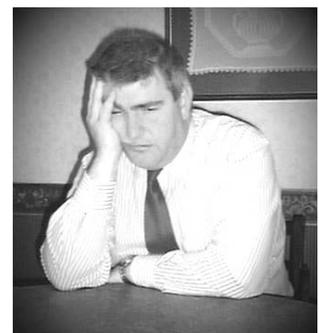
In the case of Workbook 1 training, the process has been designed for you. It is a good and proven process, but it is not perfect, and so you will need to intervene when people go off track. The key thing in good facilitation (*apart from having a good process*) is being able to spot when people are going off track early, before they have wandered too far, so that you can nudge them back on track quickly and easily. That is what this section is about.

Body language

You will know from your own experience of groups, either leading them or being a part of them, that you can wait a long time, and be a long way off track, if you wait for somebody to actually voice that there is a problem. There is a strange dynamic here, in that those in a group who are most prone to speak out are often so engaged in the detail of the debate that they do not always notice that things aren't working, and those of a more reflective disposition, who can see that things aren't working, tend to be the least prone to speak out.

But people don't only communicate with their mouths, and while they may be reluctant to be as overt as to raise an issue verbally, you will find that they have been communicating the problem very clearly in '*other*' ways for some time before they get as far as speaking about it. And knowing what they are '*saying*' in this way is what gives the facilitator the opportunity to respond early and sensitively, almost without disrupting the flow.

This '*other*' level of communication is known as 'body language' because it is communicated largely through our bodies: Our facial expressions; the angle of our head; our stance or posture; the position of our hands and arms – all provide clues as to what the person might say if they were about to speak out, long before they actually do speak out. The whole subject is a fascinating one, and if you ever get the chance to see Allan Pease, an Australian expert on the subject, talk about it, you will be both amazed and amused in equal proportions – he has a few clips on www.YouTube.com



Examples of Body Language

There is a lot that can be read into all sorts of details about how you touch your face, and the angle of your head, and how you need to read clusters of gestures together, that it can be quite confusing for anybody new to body language who is trying to do it at that level. But just as we generate body language messages subconsciously, we also 'read' them subconsciously. To illustrate what I mean, look at the pictures on the previous page, and tell me what you feel that the person in the picture is thinking or feeling. Do you feel that they are: Bored? Interested? Annoyed? Arrogant? Enthusiastic? Happy? Or may be one of each? And if so which relates to which?

Interesting, you reached your conclusions without the pictures saying a word, and you probably feel pretty confident with most of your choices and would be willing to argue them if required. Now these pictures are of a white British male, but basic forms body language, like the ones above, seem to be consistent across colour, nation, sex and culture. You see we pick up cues naturally, and we are already reasonably skilled in their interpretation.

But what we are often not so good at is being aware of the cues, and taking notice. In many cases we either filter them out, or we allow them to affect us subconsciously. The challenge we face as facilitators is simply to make that last piece of the process more conscious – to ask ourselves regularly: "What do I feel they are feeling?" and "What do I think this means?"

Checking it out

But we could of course be wrong. It is only what *I* feel, and what *I* think, and let's face it we have all got the wrong message before now (*and some people have still got the four red finger marks on their cheek to prove it*).

So the first thing is to 'be aware', and think about it. But the second thing is to 'check it out'. We need to verify that the things we feel they are feeling, and the things we think are causing it, really are happening, and we need to do this before we act. This is not a matter of frequently interrupting them to check, especially when the information we appear to be getting is "I am happy and interested in this", but we do interrupt them to check when we would otherwise be intervening, for instance when they appear to be sending out signals of "I am bored" or "I am annoyed".

Which leads us on to the question of "How do we check?" For instance, saying "You look bored, are you?" could be a bit confrontational, and is either likely to push the information further down and suppress it, or to create an over-reaction to justify the information: "Yeah well, who wouldn't? I mean this is really tedious stuff!" Both of these responses are difficult for the facilitator to handle by simply 'adjusting the flow'. Far better to ask a more general question of the sort we are more used to in those who take a concerned approach to us; questions like: "Is everybody okay (with this)?" or "Would it be helpful to spend a bit more time on this?" or "Is this at the right pace for people; would you like us to speed up; or to slow down?" or "Do we want to pause for a moment and take a little break?".

This last option gives the option of checking things out with people privately and individually, either by you approaching them or them approaching you. In any event, what you have done by asking the question is to lower the

Practicing Observation:

Take some time to look around you and practice your skills in observing body language in the following situations:

- Watching television soaps with the sound turned off
- Looking around the room at other participants in a conference
- Checking yourself and how you are sat and how you feel from time to time

threshold for those who might otherwise be reluctant to voice their concerns; you have invited them to speak, rather than left them to interrupt.

All of this is actually common sense, and wonderfully captured in *“Do to others, as you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12)*. If you can think about how you would respond if you were in their shoes, you are a long way forward to asking precisely the right question at precisely the right time, and it is this, and practically this alone, which makes facilitation look so easy in those who are good at it.

A useful piece of advice:

I have long valued the following advice:

Before you criticise someone, walk a mile in their shoes.

To which, somebody wittily added:

That way, when they get angry, you’ll be a fair distance way and they’ll have to chase you barefoot.

Eye contact, standing up, sending out your own non-verbals

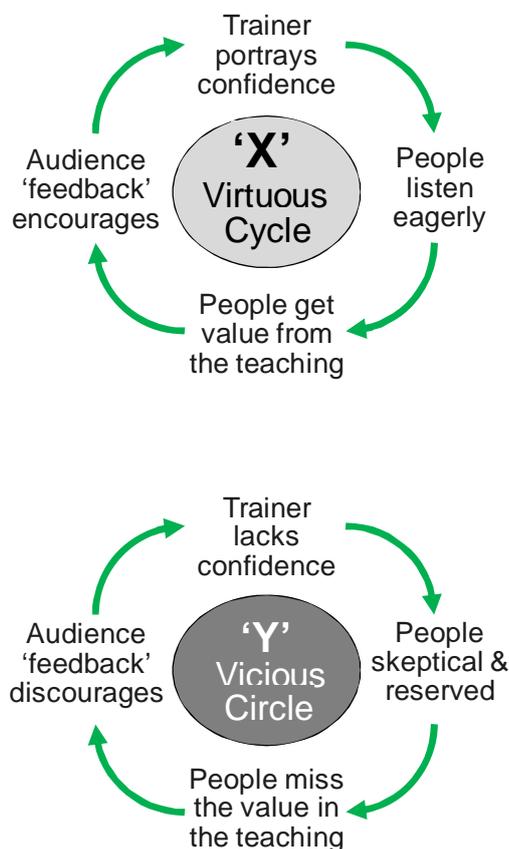
Of course, body language works both ways. Not only can you respond to their body language, but they will respond (*consciously or subconsciously*) to yours. People often under-rate that simple fact, and therefore handicap their work at the front of the room from the outset.

People will tend to see you as you see yourself, and they will take their cue for this from your body language. For instance, if you walk into a room in a manner which speaks of self-confidence (*upright, expansive, smiling, strong voice, good eye contact*), people will automatically assume that you have good reason to be confident. Equally if you walk into a room in a style which exudes a lack of self-confidence (*creeping, reserved, worried, weak voice, shifty eyes*), people will sadly assume that you have good reason to lack confidence.

And because of the way they will treat you (either in the case of ‘self-confidence’ or in the case of ‘nervous timidity’) your attitude quickly becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. Think about it, who would you rather listen to, given all other things are equal: Person X who clearly has something to say which he or she is confident is of value; or Person Y who would quite clearly rather not be saying anything?

In the case of Person X, people tend to listen carefully, openly and enthusiastically, seeking not to miss anything of value (*and thus become an encouraging and supportive audience to talk to*). But in the case of Person Y, people tend to listen critically, reservedly, or distractedly, trying to find the flaw that is ‘obviously’ there – why else would Person Y so lack confidence? (*and thus become an unsupportive and sceptical audience with whom it is almost impossible to gain rapport*). The truth is that both people will be saying things which include value and flaws, but the filters in the audience have only been set for *value* in the first and *flaws* in the second. They could both say exactly the same words, but they would leave totally different messages.

What you will be saying to people in the Developing World is of immense value to them. (*It could literally mean the difference between life and death*). Please do not create in them the impression that it could be anything less than this. To be blunt, please don’t let



your own means of cosseting any small insecurity you might have about standing up there be a contributing factor in their future misery; please do all that you can in word and deed to provide them the compelling confidence in taking you and what you are talking about seriously.

Your demeanour when you stand at the front of the room is not 'you', but it is a choice which 'you' make, and given that it really is a choice, we would like to ask you to think seriously about what you are going to choose, and why. Initially it may seem like a bit of an act, but that is only because you are not used to it. The other way is an act as well, but one that perhaps you have rehearsed so often, in reality or in your imagination, that it seemed real to you. You are God's agent in that place; accord the Jesus that is in you, the Jesus that wants to speak and act through you, His rightful honour in your frame. Make a choice which honours Him.

And I know this is the opposite of the culture in Judaea at the time, but please stand up whenever you have something to say, not just because of the reasons above, but also for four other very important reasons:

- The first is that it gives people an easy focus for their attention.
- The second is that it naturally raises the energy of the group; people tend to feel better when they are looking slightly upwards.
- The third is it is easier for you to see the body language of the group when you are stood up.
- And the fourth is that it is easier to use your body to convey 'intentional' body language when you are standing up, and easier for others to register it.

What do we mean by 'intentional' body language? To this point we have really been talking about body language as an almost subconscious flag, but you can also use body language explicitly to convey a more direct message when you do not want to interrupt with words. You can use nods and smiles to encourage a speaker, and a look of anticipation to draw more out of them; you can raise your hand slightly and drop your gaze for a moment to draw people to a close (*the sort of gesture we use naturally before saying "But..."*); you can look quizzical to encourage clarification, or look confused to encourage them to backtrack and reconsider what they have said; you can walk into the group to encourage attention back toward you, or back gently out from the group to encourage their attention toward each other; you can raise your hand to bring people to a stop; or make an open-handed gesture to encourage them to start; you can glance sharply at someone to register displeasure (*normally for a misdemeanour like starting a side-conversation*); or you can smile broadly to do the opposite; you can look sympathetic to give support; or you can look unsympathetic to sow seeds of doubt. The list is almost endless, but this is not intended to be a menu to pick items from, it is meant to be a trigger to you saying: "Yes, I've seen that ..." or "You know, I've done that...". All of these gestures, are in us somewhere, and they normally happen naturally. The trick here is to let them out, and let them out at a time you choose. And perhaps the trick to that is to practice.

Do you want some fun? Practice being more expansive and expressive; use your hands and arms and face more to accompany your words; pretend you are on stage. And when you have got more used to being expansive and expressive in the gestures around your speech, try

Practicing Intentional Body Language:

Practice getting people to respond to you by only using body language and not your voice:

- Getting someone to expand on an answer
- Getting someone to come to the point
- Generating a sense of disapproval
- Generating a sense of encouragement

doing it without speaking. Play a game with yourself in your next church meeting, and see what you can get people to do without speaking to them, just by gestures and murmurs alone. Try it with people you meet, try different gestures and expressions and see what happens, but try and make it as natural as you can (*albeit not natural for you*). They may think you have gone a bit strange, but it will be a real education to you exactly how much can be achieved without speaking a word.

Responding to problems

Body language can be a way of identifying problems and it can also be a way of avoiding them, or of dealing with them quickly and sensitively. But sometimes the situation needs more direct intervention to keep things moving forward. The most common things which require this are:

- Somebody who keeps interrupting you and dominating proceedings with their questions and concerns
- Somebody who dominates their table-group, and effectively discourages other people from participating
- Side conversations or a general hubbub of background noise from the group as people natter to each other
- Late arrivals, who then want you to go back over things which you have already covered with the rest of the group

The first thing to do is to remain totally calm. You can only do your best in your given set of circumstances, and nobody can expect more of you than that, so there is no point in getting upset about it – this is simply a problem which needs to be addressed, and it is best addressed by clear calm and confident thinking.

The first thing to do is to understand what the problem is, and whether it is with an individual, with a group, or with everybody. The second is to reach a decision as to whether it needs to be addressed in front of the whole group, or whether it is best addressed privately, and if privately, whether it needs to be addressed by you or whether someone else can handle it. And the third is to develop a strategy to tackle it:

If it needs to be addressed to the whole group, for instance in the case of numerous side-conversations or other unhelpful behaviours, then the best thing to do is to stop the training, and get everybody's attention, and then:

- Explain to the group that you are having a problem at the moment, what the problem is, and why it is a problem
- Flag up any relevant information, such as the groundrules, but be careful not to isolate any individual
- Where possible, empathise with them, and explain that you realise that it is difficult at times, but then re-emphasise why it is a problem and the consequences as you see them
- If it is the first or second time of addressing this problem, re-assert what it is you expect of them, and ask if they are willing to endeavour to do this in order to help you to help them

Groundrules of the Training

We will, at all times,...

- Be courteous and helpful to our trainer and fellow trainees
- Listen carefully to what is being said - by anyone - and avoid distractions like side-conversations, phones or other things not to do with training
- Attend each session, and do our project work as planned
- Be punctual and return at agreed times ready to start work immediately
- Enjoy ourselves

7

Copy of the ground rules
from Support Materials
pack for Workbook 1

- If it is the third time, explain that things are obviously not working out on this, and ask them what they want to do about it – then see what you can work out together. If it is a real problem which threatens the training, speak to the Host for their advice, and then let the local group handle it. Be open-minded about the outcomes, and how they can be made into a workable solution (*even if not the ideal*)

If it needs to be addressed to one or two individuals, then it is probably best addressed in private, and you need to decide whether this needs to happen immediately, or whether it can wait until the next organised break in the training:

- If it needs to happen immediately, then call a break in the training anyway – you are allowed to do that, and you do not have to give a reason for it
- If it can wait for a natural break in the training then endeavour to wait for this. Or alternatively, if you are not leading the training at this point (*for instance in the case of group work*) you may be able to do the following steps without disrupting the timetable.
- Decide whether you can address the issue directly, or whether you need the support of your Host. If it does need the support of the Host (*or if the situation would benefit from the courtesy of raising it with them*) then speak to the Host first, and agree a course of action with them
- If you are to handle the issue personally, gather those who are causing a problem to one side, as inconspicuously as possible. Politely but firmly dismiss any hangers-on. And raise the issue of their behaviour and its consequences for the training with them directly, and ask them what they want to do about it
- Ideally they will see the problem, and seek to do something practical about it, but if their proposals are insufficient (or even non-existent) then you will need to explain clearly what you expect them to do, and the consequences (for their continued part in the training) if they are unable to meet these expectations
- Suggest you meet with them at the end of the session in order to address any remaining concerns that they may have (*on a one-to-one basis*) and to review their participation in the training from now on (*see the example dialogue in the box on the right*).

Do not be afraid to confront problems. Your responsibility is to create an environment in which people can learn from Workbook 1, and the rest of the group are looking to you to do that. But be careful to monitor yourself and manage your reactions so that they remain on the right side of objective and dispassionate. You are simply the facilitator of whatever is needed to ensure an effective programme, and people can live with that. But if you allow any sense of superiority or standing-in-judgement to creep into your demeanour, then you will be calling-down all sorts of problems upon yourself and your training programme. This is explained in a bit more detail in the next section on *'positioning'*.

Example Dialogue:

- *I am a little bit concerned that you are having some trouble fitting in with the groundrules on side conversations ... is this anything I can help you with?*
- *What actually is the problem?*
- *My issue is that side conversations distract the people around you, and for their own success I need their attention to be on the course. So we need to find a way for you to be able to avoid side conversations from now on*
- *Yes, that's fine, but if you find the groundrules prove to be beyond you then we may need to rethink your attendance here, and what alternatives there may be to meet your training needs.*

(*they are not difficult*) and who has built their own confidence in the value of those materials.

A weak or inaccurate explanation to you may simply be a matter of “*I must remember to do that better next time*”. A weak or inaccurate explanation to them may well be a matter of: a business which you are fighting to save with huge emotional and physical effort against the odds; the shame of going back and telling your family that their hopes are confounded and that what little they did have has now gone; the misery of watching your family suffer further hardship which you had so hoped to avoid.

Please do all that you can to ensure that you do understand the materials, and that you can answer questions on them. For their sake.

But also for your sake. Because when you feel that you know what you are talking about, your whole confidence level changes, and it becomes so much easier to lead the training and build rapport with the group. Your confidence will become that self-fulfilling prophecy which we talked about in the last section, and your joy at being God's agent in that place at that time will become real to you.

Positioning: A helpful guide rather than an expert

The second level of confidence comes from having a correct positioning between yourself and the group. If you have prepared diligently, then you definitely have value which you can offer the group, and it is important that they recognise that.

You have value as someone who simply understands the materials and who is willing to take time in explaining them – nothing more and nothing less – and that is what the group needs to understand about you. And if they do understand this about you, they will relate to you, treat you with respect, appreciate the effort you are putting in on their behalf and be very forgiving of any pauses you might need to check on things and confirm what you are saying to them.

But if for some reason they see you as a business expert, or worse, as someone who sees themselves as a business expert, then your relationship is in danger of being founded on a falsehood (*which God has no part of*) and a number of things may begin to happen.

- The first may be that they become less tolerant and more confused by pauses as you check and confirm things
- The second may be that you become less inclined to check and confirm things because you fear it might undermine your standing in their eyes
- The third may be that you then become more likely to make mistakes, and more likely to become flustered and stressed when you do (*and therefore less relaxed and likely to make even more mistakes*)
- The fourth may be that you will begin to try to reclaim your credibility by embellishing points, and digressing rather than allowing the materials to do their work
- The fifth may be that they will begin to notice the mistakes before you do. And when they do, you may begin to find excuses to justify your position in the vain hope of maintaining your standing in their eyes

“He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts”

Luke 1:51b

- The sixth may be that the rapport begins to break down, the training all becomes a lot more difficult and less enjoyable, and you also begin to lose your link with God because you are finding it more difficult to *'look Him in the eyes'*

Or is that just me? Yes perhaps I have overstated it a bit, although it has felt that way on occasion when I have looked back on things. And you may have observed hints of this in yourself in the past.

Instead, if you can get the group to understand that they are responsible for their own learning and that we are all going to work together as a team to support each other in that; and that you are simply another member of that team; and that you will try to play your part in keeping things simply moving forward; then it is likely that they will be keen to see you succeed and do all that is in their power to help you to do so.

The point is that with correct positioning with the group, and indeed with yourself (*a total and open honesty as to who you are and what you are doing*), all of the above snares have no claim on you whatsoever, and you can be confident in who you are and the simple value which you bring.

Prayer: Seeking help for people and for situations

And you can be confident in your calling by God to that place, to be part of His plans there. And that is a real joy.

Sometimes before a training session, I get into the room about an hour before-hand, and I wander round the room, and I stand behind each seat, and I pray for the person who will be sitting in it that day, and that God will use me for His purposes with that person. It is easier on the second and subsequent days, because I know who will be sitting in that seat, but even on the first day it helps me get a true perspective of what I am doing there.

To be frank I do not do it enough. But when I do, it has the effect of making me feel like a conduit of His grace and favour. And sometimes He brings to mind insights or things which I have forgotten.

There are suggestions for prayer in section 7.1, and you might take relevant bits of that as a basis for prayer before the training session and in the time leading up to it.

And the session plan has a period of time at the start of the meeting for prayer, which can be a time of blessing for all concerned. In Uganda, we were blessed by some beautiful a capella voices which led us in worship, and in Dalanzadgad by a tumultuous fever of prayer in tongues which gladdened the heart. When Jesus said *"Come unto me you ... who are heavy laden ... because my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30) perhaps he also had in mind the feeling you get when a group of Christians gather for worship before the training – it makes you feel that the task of learning and the task of training is shared between you, and that between you and with God's help, it not only feels possible, but joyously so.

5.5 What do you need to get started?

So how do you actually get started?

Most of what you actually need to do is explained in detail in the Training Session Plan which is available for download from the Reconxile.org

- Get a good night's sleep
- Awake, and welcome people with a big encouraging smile on my face, knowing that everything was in place behind me
- Begin the training punctually at 9am with everyone present, having done all of their preparation

However, things rarely turn out as planned.

I arrived on the Monday, the day before the training was due to start, with the intention (as outlined above) of setting up the room that evening. But when I asked about this I was told that we could not have the room until the Wednesday, but they had arranged another room for us for the Tuesday at a hotel down the road.

The hotel they sent me to claimed no knowledge of this, but they did have a room we could use – a sort of store room, but I could not get in there until the Tuesday morning. Also they had no flipcharts, they were all in the other hotel. So I used the evening, back in my bedroom in the other hotel, going over the session plan to ensure I had a feel of what was to happen when, rebuilding my confidence in the process, praying, and writing out the Support Materials full-size on pages of flipchart paper.

Tuesday came with a rush, lugging furniture up and down the street in stifling heat, setting-up as people were trying to be introduced to me (*I am truly hopeless at multi-tasking*), forgetting things, finding people weren't being told to where the training had moved, only having about 5 people present at the time we were due to start. I stuck up a number of the flipchart sheets around the walls and tried to put the rest of the pad on the stand, only to find the pegs were at a different pitch to the holes.

I prayed ..., ..., ..., and drew myself back together again. Reminded myself that I was an adventurer on God's plan and waited to see what transpired next.

We were due to be 40 people, but only about 30 of them made it that first day. They were supposed to have read the workbooks, but admitted that they had not. T.I.A. (*'This is Africa' – see page 45*) It was not the start I had either hoped for or prayed for.

I apologised for the level of disorganisation**, and we began in worship, enthusiastic worship with beautiful harmonies woven in and out of the words, and then in prayer. And I looked at the group, and I realised that although I was way off-plan, I had four days with people who needed what I had to offer, and I had God, and it would work, and it would be interesting to watch and see how.

Because so few had read the Workbook, I read through pages 3-29 to them, with one of the Host's people (*called Livingstone*) translating into Lugandan (*their local language*) for me. And I then followed the session plan, as near as I could manage, exactly as it had been written – after all, if it worked out, they would be trying to replicate this at some point in the near future, so best not to confuse them with two different versions of events.

At lunchtime, we had to go back to the first hotel to get our food, and then go back down the road for the afternoon. Livingstone and I read the remainder of Workbook 1 to them, and then stayed around to offer help and advice while they worked on their projects. That evening

**Why do you suppose I apologised for the level of disorganisation, since it was not really my 'fault'?

If you are not sure, think about the situation as a 'trainee' for a while ...

... and think about the difference between 'fault' and 'responsibility'

And if you are still not sure, perhaps start a discussion with some trainers you know.

we took everything back up the road to the first hotel, and I set up, and then went round and prayed for a while.

The next day about 40 people turned up, some who had missed the first day entirely. They did not all turn up at once, most were there for the start (*further wonderful worship*) but the rest came in ones and twos over the first hour and a half. These were assigned to groups, and were sadly disruptive as they tried to catch up with where we were. I took the opportunity to talk about punctuality in business, and its impact on customers, and most got the message and were there by 9 the next morning.

However I did discover how big the sacrifices were that some of them were making to be there, and the fact that, for some, their lateness was a result of them struggling to get through an almost impossible combination of responsibilities under very difficult circumstances. There was no rancour in this information – they really appreciated that I was there, they appreciated that punctuality is important in business, and they were sorry. And despite being late, they struggled hard to catch up with the work. And I learned that lateness can sometimes be an indicator of commitment rather than the lack of it. Particularly when you discover what some people have to get through to get there at all (*see the box on the right*).

On the second day, we took a register of everyone who was there so that we could print certificates for them and have them ready for handing out on day 4. This worked well, and we had a named certificate for everybody.

What did not work quite so well, and became a distinct problem by day 3, was that while we had more than enough Workbooks for everybody, they were not named, and so people started picking up other people's workbooks (*probably by accident*) and we had to keep finding spares. And we discovered that some people had started bringing their friends along because they had got so much out of it – and so we were losing some Workbooks that way. By day 3 we ran out. Not only that, but those who had lost their workbooks had also lost their answers to the exercises, and so each morning seemed to have a flurry of commotion as people tried to sort things out.

The arithmetic on day 3 was a bit taxing for many of them, and I was there on my own from the UK with no team to share the burden of going round the tables to help people out. I was at serious risk at this point of simply being snowed under by the avalanche of queries. But three people from a local charity had joined in the training, because they wanted to use it with street children, and they were a God-send. They were well educated, understood maths, were spirit filled and caring. Very quickly they recognised my predicament, and came and helped out, first of all on their own tables and then by wandering round and helping others.

Geoffrey (pictured right) was one of the attendees who was late for the course. He has a small business making biscuits.



After the course was finished we were invited to his home, a two room shack, which he shares with his wife & children. One room was literally half full of bags of biscuits – we asked him about these.

It transpired that in order to attend the course, he had to build up a stock of biscuits to meet his customers' needs and he was having to work on making the biscuits late at night so that he could deliver them to the shops first thing in the morning, and still get to the training, for which he was sometimes a bit late.

In the end it all went fine, as witnessed by the survey scores at the end of the course (see below). I was pretty laid back (*if a bit tired*) by this point – I have a friend whose favourite saying is “*Let go and let God!*” And that seemed pretty good advice to me at the time. I train senior teams in big multinationals at an eye-watering fee-rate for a living, and what I did in Kampala was so far below my standard as to be off the scale – it was frankly appalling. And yet the change that resulted was far greater than anything I have achieved in four days with my clients: 6 brand new businesses, and 17 more turned around from failure to success, plus a group of people who went on to become trainers and have generated ten times this impact. That surely has to be God, doesn't it?

Course Feedback								
How much have you learnt about setting up your own business?	Everything I need	10%	A large amount	62%	Some useful points	28%*	Very little	0%
How good was the trainer at helping you to understand ?	Excellent	77%	Good	23%	Average	0%	Poor	0%
How effective were the training materials and workbook for you?	Excellent	62%	Good	38%	Average	0%	Poor	0%
How useful did you find the afternoon projects?	Vitally important	44%	Very useful	56%	Somewhat useful	0%	Waste of time	0%
How useful did you find your group/ partners in helping you think?	Vitally important	46%	Very useful	44%	Somewhat useful	10%	Waste of time	0%

Survey scores from the pilot training conducted in Kampala

