

NATIONAL NEWS

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BROTHER NOEL CORCORAN, Regional Leader, tells us of his 2007 summer visit to Sri Lanka.

From July 20th to August 17th, accompanied by Bro. Denis Kerins, Community Leader Lisieux Hall, Chorley, I paid a return visit to Sri Lanka. The purpose of the visit was threefold, to attend the installation of a good friend of mine and of the Brothers in Katugastota, as Bishop of Ratnapura, to visit our Brothers, particularly those in the East who have been living under difficult conditions with the renewal of the war and while in the East to check on the Tsunami housing scheme (Village of Hope), which was built through the generosity of our co-workers in Britain and Ireland as well as family and friends.

On the 25th we went to visit the Community and Boys' Home in Hatton, which is in the Tea growing Hill Country and about two and a half hours drive from Kandy. With financial help from St. Joseph's Region a new roof had been put on the building during the past year as during the rainy season the old roof leaked like a sieve. Just prior to our visit they had a spell of very heavy rain and unfortunately at a particular point in the roof the rain came pouring in. They told us that this had been happening for a long time and when it happened they had to turn off the electricity as the water was getting into the system. The only solution is to replace the complete roof, which is in two parts with a hip roof. We promised that we would try and get some financial help for this when we returned home. On the 28th we attended the installation of the new Bishop.

During the second week Bro. Denis went to Tudella to visit our Training Centre for young people with an intellectual disability while I spent the time calling on old friends and catching up with the news. All complained of the pitiful state of the country, the war had restarted and security was very strict, movement was restricted as there were check points everywhere and the cost of living was rising every day. I experienced this myself as on day one I went to buy bread and it was Rupees forty the following day I got the same bread in the same shop and it had risen to Rupees forty four. Before I left last January it was Rupees twenty two. That was only one product but an important one for the poor who can no longer afford to buy rice.

Tuesday 7th August we set out for the East driven by a local Brother. Fortunately he was with us otherwise we probably would not have arrived as there were so many check points and so much documentation to be filled in we would , more than likely have turned back or been turned back. The nearer we got to the East the presence of soldiers patrolling along the roads became more intense. Our first port of call was the community in Trincomalee. This is a very nice Port City with a beautiful natural harbour. The population is almost equally divided between Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims who generally get on well together with little communal problems. The Brothers told us that they have become so used to the massive security that they hardly notice it. They would however be very reluctant to go out without wearing the religious habit for fear of being taken in by the police or army, which happens frequently. That evening we could hear the shelling going on and we wondered about this as the Government claims that the LTTE had been driven from the East. The following morning we did a tour of the ...

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The Brothers of Charity Services recognises the importance of high quality ethical research. In order to promote and ensure best practice when undertaking research within our services the Chief Executive Forum have convened a Research Working Group who will operate under the following terms of reference.

“The Task of the Working Group is to formulate and recommend a National Research Strategy to the Chief Executive Forum. This strategy will be in keeping with the ethos of the Organisation and the Law. The Working Group will

- Evaluate the implementation of the National Guidelines introduced in 2007 G507 – “Research within the Brothers of Charity Services” within each Company;
- Develop a system to ensure the communication of research approaches and projects throughout the Services;
- Explore ways to introduce a system which will offer support and training to those wishing to undertake research;
- Report findings and recommendations to the Chief Executive Forum;
- Consult with all relevant groups;
- Communicate every eight weeks approximately to complete a national strategy for research in the Brothers of Charity Services; and
- * Complete a draft/interim report by January 2009 which will be submitted to the Chief Executive Forum for ratification and implementation across the Services.

Members: Gina Magliocco—Brothers of Charity Services Ireland
Barry Coughlan—Brothers of Charity Services Limerick
Mark Quinn—Brothers of Charity Southern Services
John Colfer—Brothers of Charity Services Galway

The second meeting of the group is due to take place in September 2008.

NATIONAL ICT STANDING COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive Forum commissioned a review of existing IT services primarily to determine the most appropriate IT service delivery model, which would support the strategic aims of our National and Local Companies. Tony Carroll of Scribe consulting Services carried out the review. On the 6 September 2007 Tony presented his draft findings to the Chief Executive Forum.

The report contained recommendations on organisation and governance, including setting a National ICT Steering Committee. The first meeting of this committee took place on 9 April 2008.

Terms of Reference

- To provide vision and strategic leadership to the ICT function.
- To prioritise key projects, plans, work programmes, resources and expenditure for ICT services.
- To determine ICT policies and standards and resolves policy issues and conflicts that may arise.
- To Identify priority conflicts in respect of competing resources and projects
- To empower the ICT team to maximise their potential within the Brothers of Charity Services.
- To ensure that commercial contracts and commitments are fully discharged. Authorises changes to same. And
- To establish organisational arrangements and related procedures to monitor the development, implementation and safe operation of the Brothers of Charity Services information systems.

Members: Winifred O’Hanrahan, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, Marian Keigher, Brothers of Charity Services Roscommon, Gina Magliocco, Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, Tony Carroll, Scribe Consulting, Tony Collins, Brothers of Charity Services Galway, Teresa Ryan, Brothers of Charity Services Limerick, Michael Hennessey, Brothers of Charity Southern Services, Elizabeth Tyrell, Brothers of Charity Services South East, Kevin Carey, ICT National, Alan Wallace ICT National.

Technical Institute run by the Brothers. Most of the young men who attend are school drop outs and here they are trained in welding, auto electrical work, and motor mechanics. One of the big jobs they had on hand was making shelters for internally displaced people. These same people were displaced by the Tsunami, last year by floods due to the severe Monsoons and now by the war. In the afternoon we went to see the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary in Nilaveli about sixteen kilometres from Trincomalee. There is a beautiful beach there but for safety reasons we were unable to visit it. This was an area very badly affected by the Tsunami.

The following morning we left for Batticaloa to call on the Brothers and visit the Boys' Home and the Printing Press, which is owned by the Brothers. We didn't stay overnight there as accommodation is very limited but instead after our visits we headed for Kalmunai approximately one hour away. This was one of the areas worse hit by the Tsunami. Here again accommodation in the Brothers House is limited so we stayed in a small Hotel nearby, which could be compared to 'Faulty Towers'. In the morning we went to the Village of Hope and to my disappointment all of the houses have not yet been built. I was told that this is again because of the war and threats to the workers from terrorist factions. Forty families are housed and the place is taking on a character of its own. One of the problems with the houses is that they have no kitchens and cooking is done on the outside. This is not very practical particularly during the rainy season. It would be nice if we could help with the building of kitchens and I am using this report of our visit to make an appeal for any help that could be offered for this purpose. In the afternoon we went to see the new Boys' Home, which has replaced the one badly damaged by the Tsunami and which is now used as a community centre for the Village of Hope. Although the boys have moved in, the building is not yet complete as here again the workers had to leave because of the renewed fighting.

Our final week was spent in Nisansala Tudella and from there we went to visit Galle and Matara in the South where the Sisters have schools. The school in Matara was badly damaged and for safety reasons they have to build a new school in another area of the town. There is a mark on the wall to show how high the water rose. Next door is the Parish Church where a number of people including one Sister died while attending Mass on the fateful day. The Cross is still on the wall but all that remains of the figure of Christ are the two arms. Here also there is a mark to show how high the water rose, almost 16 feet.

While it was great to have had the opportunity to revisit Sri Lanka it was very sad to see how things have deteriorated in the short period since I left to return to Ireland. There is a general air of despondency among the people and they are very worried as to the future of their beloved country. Despite all that it would still have been nice to have been able to remain there.

Christmas Cards are produced by the young people attending our Centre at Nisansala. The sale of these cards help purchase housing and equipment—see insert for details of purchase.

HEALTH ACT 2004(COMPLAINTS) REGULATIONS 2006

The Regulations for Part 9 of the Health Act came into operation on 1st January 2007. As organisations who have service agreements and /or are funded to deliver services on behalf of the HSE, we must comply with the HSE policy and procedures which are currently being finalised in relation to how we deal with complaints. Our National Guideline on "Complaints & Appeal Procedures for People who Use our Services" developed in May 2004 is now up for review. This Guideline will aid Companies who are currently updating their Complaints Policy and Procedures to ensure compliance with the act. The key areas covered by the act are: Complaint, complainant and /or advocate, time limits, matters excluded, complaints and review procedures, refusal to investigate, recommendations, arrangements with service providers, regulations, referral to ombudsman/ombudsman for children and Annual Report. Every one of these areas affect our current procedures and we must adhere to the legislation.

The Consumer Affairs, HSE representatives are holding information days around the country and will also be training front line staff in complaint handling going forward. They have very kindly offered to review our complaints policy to ensure that our policies are fully compliant with the new legislation. Further information can be obtained from: Chris.Rudland@mailh.hse.ie

Service Transformation” Conference ‘When Person-Centred Options are Made Available to All People Served ... *Without Exception*’

Asheville, North Carolina April 30th – May 4th 2007

Real Lives

The setting and accompanying travel, hard work, and (after work!) socialising and shopping that came with our attendance at the “*Service Transformation*” conference in Asheville North Carolina gave us pause for thought. The opportunities for thought-provoking work, together with long, laugh-filled evenings with colleagues and friends in the really beautiful surroundings of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Lake Lure [film site for *Dirty Dancing*] and Chimney Rock Mountain [film site for *Last of the Mohicans*], provided a striking snap shot of what it means to have a ‘quality of life’. Against this backdrop the “Transforming Services” conference, held on May 2nd to May 5th addressed the question of how organisations might think about restructuring themselves in order to provide supports that make it more likely that people will have in their lives what we may often take for granted in ours – travel, meaningful work, friendship, choice, variety, privacy etc – in short, a real life.

The conference was sponsored by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities and facilitated by Dr. Michael Kendrick, Denis Harkins and Michael Mayer. The conference material informed us that we would learn that you can successfully convert group supports to individualized services and that we would hear from eight agencies that have maintained their commitment to offering only personalized supports, without exception, for one or more decades. The key theme of the conference was this basic concept of ‘individualisation’ - a simple, self-explanatory idea with profound implications for disability service providers and funding agencies. It is a philosophy or model of service delivery which argues that real lives cannot be provided for people from the current group home and centre-based service structures and that individual lives can only be realised when people are supported individually. The CEOs presenting were: Jeff Strully, *Jay Nolan Community Services, California*; Michael Lundquist and John Struth, *Nonotuck Community Services*; Pat Fratangelo, *Onondaga Community Living, New York*; Mark Vincent and Scott Ryder, *Common Ground, New Hampshire*; Lyle and Mary Romer, *Total Living Concept, Washington*; Jacqueline Blaney, *Independent Living, Louisiana* and Kim Turner, *Community Options, Wisconsin*.

Values

One of the first questions addressed by speakers was “Why individualise services?” The consensus response was that the change process was value driven; that individualising people’s lives is self-evidently the right thing to do. The common experience of services was that, while the journey will differ from country to country, service to service and individual to individual, the approach is fundamentally and unarguably correct in its vision. As one speaker put it “*Why individualisation? Because it is right and it is time*”.

Making the Change - Delivering Individualised Supports

Not surprisingly people were very interested in the cost implications of their services delivering individualised options. In this regard it was clear that the delivery of individualised supports cannot depend on increased monies from funding bodies. While the prospect (or even possibility) of delivering an individualised service within current budgets was met with some scepticism, delegates were challenged to think outside traditional service boxes. If you try to deliver individualised services within the same staff and organisational structures that you delivered group services then you will undoubtedly run into difficulties. Individualising services on the other hand requires our taking up a different point of view. You must change support structures to deliver services individually. Given the need for innovative and new approaches to service delivery and the need for flexibility around funding, all services highlighted the importance of an honest, transparent relationship with the funding body.

Service Transformation” Conference Continued.....

A lot of the presentations concentrated on the way the services have set about providing individualised *living* options for people they support. Traditional group based housing options were seen as simply the compromise services have made and continue to make on the basis of funding constraints. It was argued that it is hard, if not impossible, to defend the group home model as appropriate – housing people together on the basis of disability makes as much sense as housing people together because they're female or Irish. Of course there was an understanding that group homes were a step away from segregated institutions but a challenge too that they were by no means the desired option for most people. One way that services began to change structures of support was to explore the possible alternatives to traditional paid staff support for people looking to live on their own. This was done in various ways including, for example, finding a member of the public interested in renting a house and sharing with a person with disability. In some cases this might entail offering reduced rent rates for the person involved as they would have certain minimal care responsibilities. A number of the presenting services offered examples of the successful setting up of this type of arrangement. In other cases the emphasis was on the person's natural support networks. Some services found these to be under-explored and therefore under-utilised. Obviously, paid staff remain the cornerstone of supports in the short and medium term and the conference emphasised the need to find the right staff to provide supports. This comes from the basic idea that *'Right Relationship'* is the key to success at all levels of support. In this context it was stressed that a lot of energy should be invested in getting the right people to act as direct support workers – this is the key relationship in many ways and will often dictate the success of the services being delivered.

Other aspects of the change strategy of these organisations were also discussed and were common across most of the services. There was a general consensus that it made practical sense to invest in making significant changes in small parts of the organisation and let key people influence the change process in the rest of the organisation. This translated in practice into a 'one person at a time' approach, creating a ripple effect of change within services. There were services who presented who made wholesale changes to the structure, strategy, policies and staff complements of their organisations in very short periods of time, and reported that they had successfully negotiated the various hurdles involved. However, we remained unconvinced that this would work in an Irish context and had some questions about the nature of that transition. Overall, the experience of transition to individualised services was reported as having been remarkably similar – hard, often slow, sometimes painful but rewarding and in the end basically 'right'. There was honesty about the difficulty of the process with a lot of people saying that individualisation was often harder to plan, manage and implement but were quick to add that at the same time they found it far more energising and rewarding work.

Sustaining change

One common thread across the various presentations was the importance of developing structures which will help organisations sustain change. Chief among these were 1) supporting staff 2) identifying key leaders and 3) networking with people and organisations who have made these changes already. These processes should be supplemented by other key maintenance strategies including researching the change process and organising independent reviews of the organisation's progress.

Moving Ahead

Michael Kendrick summed up the meeting referring to the serious job ahead for services that are keen to embrace the philosophies and practices of individualisation. *"We don't need any more half-baked inspired people; we've had our share of those"* he told us. Instead he appealed to services to approach the job of transformation of services in a systematic, well thought out manner which would ensure the successful move from group-based to individualised supports. Inspiration remains a key ingredient but the job at hand is too important to hope that it will get us all the way. Transforming services requires that the vision of individualisation is translated into practical, effective solutions so that transformation in the ordinary lives of the people we support is made real.

Article supplied by Brothers of Charity Services Clare:

Louise Skerit, Area Manager; ; Mary Kealy, Chief Executive; Maria Cahill; Michael Reen, Principal Clinical Psychologist and Pat Dillon, Area Manager, Disabilities Services Office, Health Service Executive, Clare

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We would love to hear from
you photos/
suggestions/ articles

NOTICE BOARD

The National Strategic Plan 2007—20 11 is available from the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland and the National Website. www.brothersofcharity.ie

Galway have published their Adult Services and Children's Service Strategic Plan 2007—2012.

The South East had produced their Strategic Plan 2007—2011 early in the Summer of 2007.

The National Web site is being up-dated to reflect the new structures. In the meantime the web site is still active in its current format.

Revised National Guidelines:

Confidentiality in respect of people who use our services and their families.
Research within the Services
And a National Governance Statement on Admissions, Transfers & Discharges have issued in electronic format to each Chief Executive's Office.

Please make yourself familiar with these Guidelines and Governance Statement.

DEFINITION OF NATIONAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES AND POLICIES.

Governance Statements: Are rules which relate directly to the reserved functions or to statutory reporting obligations between Companies. These Governance Statements are set by the National Company and adopted in full by the Local Company.

National Guidelines: Are broad statements of guidance in relation to best practice. They are documents from which the Local Chief Executive will develop a Regional Policy.

National Policies: Are nationally developed policies developed mostly by the F-Team and the P-Team in relation to Human Resource Management and Financial procedures, which must be uniform across Companies. There are other specific areas such as the Reporting of Abuse etc, which relate to matters other than the reserved functions, which are issued as National Policies and must be implemented in full by the Local Company.

Local Policies: Are formal rules and regulations for the management of the Local Company, formulated from National Guidelines. In the Brothers of Charity Services policies are developed by the Region based on the relevant National Guideline.

Procedures: Are the "how to" implement Policies, Guidelines and Governance Statements and are developed by Local Companies.

NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY— OPERATIONAL RESEARCH PLAN 2007—2009.

Over the next three years the NDA has committed itself to research which continues to ensure the provision of essential baseline data, support, implement, and monitor the National Disability Strategy, and develop their understanding of emerging issues which will affect future planning. The plan sets out the projects and activities which have been identified as priorities in the current environment, it is recognised that the plan may be adjusted, as and when appropriate, so as to respond to important relevant developments over the period of the plan. The plan sets out three research themes: Baseline Data, Research input to National Disability Strategy and Emerging and Ongoing Issues. See the full plan for yourself on www.nda.ie.

Love & Respect in Every Action