MORE THAN A MILE DEEP

EDUCATION STRATEGY, AND PROCESSES

***Programme Description***

More Than a Mile Deep is a response to the popular assertion that Christianity in Africa is a Mile wide and an Inch Deep. We want to change that narrative into Christianity in Africa being a More Than a Mile Deep (MMD). MMD seeks to help churches and other Christian organizations including Seminaries and Theological Institutions to meet their training goals in a more effective and efficient manner. It does so by coaching them to develop highly effective and sustainable training systems that help the entire community of God’s people in their area of influence. Through discipleship, the programme helps leaders to provide services that help their families to transform their communities whether ravaged by poverty, war, corruption, immorality or natural disasters.

MMD works in partnerships and collaborations. We partner with Churches throughout Africa to develop accessible Bible based training to all. Together we develop training that is transferable, transformative and contextually relevant. Training that empowers their leaders to manifest and multiply their faith in Christ. This manifestation happens through the discipline of love towards God, others and the environment. When such leaders increase their churches transformational impact on their communities, they continue to grow each in their giftedness in leadership, preaching, discipleship and counselling.

MMD is not a school, university or college. Rather it is an educational service provider to those partners who want to meet the needs of their network. MMD is prepared to serve a wide range of churches, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, and para-church institutions.

***Programme Strategy***

Transformative learning is central to our identity and to the way we provide coaching and together develop tools that serve the educational needs of our community. We strive to develop communities that implement excellent and dynamic leadership training programmes that are

* Designed and owned by Africans and for Africans;
* Contextually relevant and biblically grounded;
* Church-based and wholistic in all dimensions.

***Educational Model***

The educational model adopted in MMD falls within the bigger family of constructivism. It uses a blend of situated, project, problem and place-based learning to develop leaders in the Africa Church. It is defined by the following

1. Training is in ministry and not for ministry: Learners are situated in their context. They stay in their ministries as they learn. Their context is their laboratory. Consequently no field work or internship is required. The community of practice is the community of learning
2. Training is in context: The daily experiences of the learners constitute the driving force in their learning. The motivation for them to learn is driven by the confounding challenges they face in life and ministry. Thus, we say they are trained to respond to situations (often in a proactive manner) that they encounter in their communities. Leaders are expected to provide solutions to problems. When through their education such solutions are discovered, it becomes rewarding. It adds immediate value to their leadership. The satisfaction this derives becomes an intrinsic motivating factor.
3. Training is with community: Leaders already have communities of practice. MMD, through its resources, empowers the leaders to also train their people to form a community of proactive responders to societal issues. This is how multiplication for transformation occurs.

Zone for building professional competence

***Education Process***

The learning process adopted by MMD is fondly called ARA (Acting --- Reflecting ---- Acting). African leaders are very active in ministry. Before they even enroll into a training program, they may have vast experiences of ministry, some may have preached countless sermons, or have discipled many people or may have done many counseling sessions. They are already actors in ministry trying to address various issues in their communities. It is from those activities that MMD provide a platform and resources for them to critically reflect and build enduring insights. When such insights are built, the leader again acts on what he or she has learned and then reflect again. It is this spiral of acting and reflecting that MMD builds professional ministerial competences in its students.



**POVERTY**

**CORRUPTION**

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**WITCHCRAFT**

**CONFLICT**

**PROSPERITY**

**ILLITERACY**

**GLOBAL MIGRATION**

**REFUGEES**

**CHRISTIAN LIVING**

**FAMINE**

**ISLAM**

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

***Context of the Learner:***

***These are the situations that MMD desires to transform***

**ACTIVITY ZONE**

**Ministry Activities that Bring Transformation**

* **Preaching/Teaching**
* **Counseling**
* **Discipling**
* **Leading/Managing**
* **Mobilizing for action?**

**REFLECTION ZONE**

**(Manuals)**

* **Bible**
* **Theology**
* **History**
* **Social Science**
* **Social and Spiritual Research**
* **etc.**

***The Learning Process Illustrated***

Helen is a pastor of a rural congregation. She has basic secondary school education and desires to train further in ministry but cannot enroll because she does not have the academic qualifications, having scored only five points below the required number to go to college. She has been a pastor for over 10 years now. Pastor Helen’s church and congregation live in community where men abuse their wives to a very large extent. Most of the women in her congregation have been abused. The men who abuse their wives are also in the congregation. Pastor Helen wants to handle this conflict in a profoundly biblical way but she has no training in handling conflicts.

Pastor Helen enrolls in an MMD-G program offered by her denomination just for her to develop her pastoral competences. She is so excited and the first manual she takes is in handling conflict. How will that manual help Pastor Helen?

1. The manual is a guide towards developing the competences Helen needs in her ministry. The manual assumes that Helen alone cannot handle the problem. Consequently, the first thing the manual instructs Helen to do is to form a group of learners in her Church who are interested in resolving conflict. Normally, these would not be more than six people. These are the people she will teach as she goes through the manual. Every learning tasks she does is replicated with this group. These may be illiterate people who may only speak the mother tongue, so Helen may need to do her tasks with these people in the language that they can understand.
2. When Helen successfully forms this group, she will start the manual that has three parts

***Orientation Tasks (OT)***

Helen wants to transform a behavior in her community. The first requirement is for Helen to know what that behavior is like in her community and how it is manifested. Helen is aware of the situation of spouse abuse, she may have suffered it herself, she may know people who have suffered from it, but now she needs to approach the issue, not as a victim but as a transformer. She needs to do a little research. The Orientation tasks (OTs) provide that opportunity. OTs are mini-projects and research that connect the student directly with the context required for transformation. These tasks will make Helen get a firsthand information about spouse abuse. For example, the task will require Helen to go into the community and interview or just talk to three families in which the spouse is abused. She starts to go deeper into the situation by asking questions and trying to find out. After the exercise, Helen starts to have a fair idea of what is happening. She writes her findings in not more than two pages.

***Self-completion Exercises (SCE)***

After the OT, Helen comes to the manual to start building insights into the situation. The manual consists of self-completion exercises. The manual presents little doses of integrated knowledge that she uses to understand and explain the issues she encountered during the orientation task. The resources provided in these SCEs cover theology, sociology, psychology, African cosmology among several others to provide a holistic approach to issues. They are built into the course manual and Helen is required to complete these exercises independently. Quite unlike other approaches that use self-completion exercises, MMD-G does not require correct answers or feedback that student can memorize and reproduce. Each exercise calls for some level of critical reflection and contemplation. The SCEs provide the resources that empower the students to act and reflect on the activity.

***Post-Unit Assignments (PUA)***

These assignments send the students back into the community with adequate resources for them to start acting in a transformative manner in relations to the issues they identified during the orientation tasks. The Post-Unit Assignments will require Helen to preach, teach, disciple, or counsel people in the community directly on the issues. Notwithstanding, Helen is required to train her group of people to go also in the community to address the issue. Through these assignments, the Church moves out into the community through the work of Helen to address the issues. The group Helen trains constitute the Response group. It is within this group that multiplication and transformation takes place. Helen is able to multiply her leadership skills by empowering others at the basic congregational level to transform their communities

***Facilitation and Peer Learning***

While Helen is going through her manual, doing the assignments and empowering others, she learns in a cohort group that meets periodically under the guidance of an experienced reflective practitioner. During these cohort student learning moments, Helen and others exchange ideas, they learn from each other and each is exposed to the diverse issues and situations the broader community faces. The role of the reflective practitioner is to help them process the issues by asking critical and creative questions.

Issues of Spouse Abuse

SCE Manual

Issues of Spouse Abuse are addressed by Church people

Training others in the Church and Community

Critical Reflection

**Leading**

**Preaching/Teaching**

**Discipling**

**Counseling**

**Orientation Tasks:**

**Post Unit Tasks**

Insight building

Through the ***orientation tasks***, the student gets a first-hand experience of the issues they may want to transform. When the student starts to understand the issues, she goes through the Self-completion exercises (SCE) manual that allows her to get informed perspectives on the issue. Once she gets the perspectives, she is obliged to pass that information to others in the Church or community through the Post Unit Tasks. These others are trained and together with the student they engage with the issues. Through this process, many people are directly trained at Church level to bring transformation.

***Approaches to Transformation***

The story of Helen is just one approach toward transformation that MMD uses. Depending on the situation and context of learner, MMD can offer several other responses. The various approaches are available:

**Rapid Response Training**

Imagine there is a disaster that needs urgent intervention. The disaster has occurred and it is taking a heavy toll on lives. MMD approaches this type of intervention by raising a “Rapid Response Group Training” which will be trained and deployed in just a few days.

Example:

When Ebola was declared a national epidemic in Sierra Leone, this diseases was spiraling out of control. An MMD seasoned Reflective Practitioner intervened by rapidly training 10 individuals in two days. These were unleashed into the community with the message that protected 50,000 people. The strategy he used was simple: He got a group of 10 local inhabitants, and brought in a medical doctor whose responsibility was simple: To educate this group on basic information about Ebola – how it is contracted, the symptoms and prevention. The process took five hours. The reflective practitioner then came in with the task of packaging that information to deliver to the common people in their own language. Stories were identified, posters were made, etc. On the second day, local learners demonstrated the use of their strategies and practiced them on their families as the practitioner and doctor trained them. Thereafter they were released. Low cost but maximum impact.

**Prevention and Mitigating Training**

MMD engages this type of training when the disaster is over or is endemic or perennial. The training takes about a week but the presence of those trained will linger in the community for a longer period. Such trainings are specific and target particular people in the community.

Example

When the Ebola was declared over in Sierra Leone; there was then the question of how to prevent such outbreaks or outbreaks of any diseases. There was need to train people at the community level on diseases prevention, surveillance, community health and development. MMD has the capacity to facilitate the production of such training manuals for those community members, organizes their training and send them into the community to train others. At the moment, MMD is producing a manual for disaster preparedness and mitigation for a Mozambican community

**Integrated Training**

MMD engages with this type of training when it desires to build integrated competences in handling community issues using sound theological and biblical resources. This approach aims at producing seasoned reflective practitioners that are capable of responding both pro- and retroactively to issues.

Example

When the disease ended in Sierra Leone, there was the call for a more comprehensive and integrated approach of the Church in handling community issues. One of such issues is health. There was then the need for pastoral training to include issues of health in relation to the mission of the Church. A course was then required to help pastors to integrate health into their evangelistic and mission activities. MMD has lead the move to design such a course that will be incorporated into the curriculum of a theological institution in training of pastors.

Training Approaches Illustrated

Seasoned Reflective Practitioner

Integrated Training (BTh)

Preventive and Mitigative Training (Response Group)

ToT

Rapid Response Group Training

it

Situation: Disaster, Epidemics, etc.

John Jusu 2019

***The Type of Multipliers MMD Uses***

Every learning approach operates within, among others, two continuums: The learner (Individual or in Group) and The content or Knowledge (Low or High Knowledge). There are four scenario:

High Internal Knowledge + Process + Group = Transformer is a **facilitator**

High Internal Knowledge + Process + Individual = Transformer is a **Coach**

Low Internal Knowledge + Process + Group = Transformer is a **trainer**

Low Internal Knowledge + Process + Individual = Transformer is a **mentor**

It is clear that MMD brings in a learning process called ARA. But often MMD faces the situation where internal knowledge is low. In such cases, MMD solicits such knowledge from reflective practitioners but do also empower the learners to generate knowledge from their learning tasks. Individuals with low internal knowledge needs some external knowledge.

GROUP

TRAINER

PROCESS + CONTENT

MENTOR

PROCESS + CONTENT

COACH

PROCESS ONLY

FACILITATOR

PROCESS ONLY

INTERNAL KNOWLEDGE

EXTERNAL KNOWLEDGEDE

INDIVIDUAL