



GIRLS' BRIGADE INTERNATIONAL

ICGB 2018 NEWS SHEET 9: DISCUSSION PAPER

INTRODUCTION

GBI is a family and one of the best things about families is the ability to talk, share together and support one another both in times of celebration and in times of challenge.

During ICGB 2018 we hope that the members of our GB family will have plenty of opportunity to do just this. We pray that you will try to reach out to as many members of your 'GB family' as possible during your time in Livingstone. Share meals with those from other parts of the family, experience worship from around the globe, sit next to family members who you've never met before and hear about their joys and share their challenges.

CROSS FELLOWSHIP DISCUSSIONS

In addition to all this, there will be some designated times during ICGB 2018, when we will meet in cross fellowship groups to discuss some key areas of shared concern and practice. We asked all national boards to let us know what issues they wanted to be addressed as we gathered. Now from recent reports from our national boards, feedback from the 2017 Gathering and in response to issues raised at IPC 2017 we have selected three key areas that we will explore at ICGB 2018. These are:

Resourcing our Work

Intergenerational Leadership - Hearing the Voice of our Younger Members

Raising Hope for Girls - Advocacy

PREPARATION FOR ICGB

In order to make these Cross-Fellowship discussions valuable, we have prepared a discussion paper for each subject (attached). Delegates and Supporters are asked to reflect on the issues raised and the questions posed so that we can share our perceptions, ideas and responses and learn from one another. If you have an opportunity to discuss these issues with your national board /executive members or with your fellowships this would be great. If this is not possible because of time constraints or travel issues, then please reflect upon them personally so you can still contribute to the discussion sessions.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

As a result of some of these discussions there may be some key decisions to be made by GB Internationally, but this may not be the case. We all come from different backgrounds, varied cultures and a range of political and governmental regimes and it may be that what works for one group is not right for others. However, through sharing in this way we pray that new ideas, different ways of doing things and creative seed-thoughts will be sown that will help you to grasp some of these issues and move forward with renewed enthusiasm.

DISCUSSION ISSUE ONE: RESOURCING OUR WORK

Context:

In order for our work to be effective we need a range of resources. These range from financial support, to effective personnel and tangible assets. It is clear that across the world the impact of GB has been affected by many resourcing issues. IPC would like to unpack how our members are facing these challenges.

Key thoughts:

Many countries, fellowships and even GBI itself have identified the fact that the current economical situation is affecting the level of their financial resourcing. Many countries are wholly dependent on membership fees for their finances. The limited income restricts activities and the fruitfulness of their work.

Effective ministry is also dependant on a range of personnel who have skills to help GB fulfil its vision of transforming lives. The vast majority of GB personnel are volunteers who give their time and skills in response to a sense of calling. The effective equipping of these leaders is a key factor which impacts greatly on their effectiveness.

Possible questions to explore:

Financial resourcing:

- What sources of income does GB in your fellowship/country/company access and what groups of people do you actively approach for financial support?
- What are the possibilities/challenges relating to sponsorship, partnership or external grant aid?
- How do local companies/groups access funds to support fellowships/ national boards?
- In what ways can the current system of funding GBI be improved?

Equipping personnel:

- What key skills are included in your basic leadership training for girls/adults and how does your training programme help to develop Christian leadership and discipleship?
- How often and in what ways are leaders refreshed and helped to grow in their leadership skills? Do you engage with the local church or the national denominational bodies to assist in recruiting help or accessing training possibilities?
- How do you overcome challenges such as cost of travel, time availability and accessibility of training?
- In what ways are your leaders mentored or inducted when they take on new roles in GB?

Finally:

As a result of your discussions are there any recommendations you would like to make to GB either internationally or locally?

DISCUSSION ISSUE TWO: INTERGENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP - 'THE VOICE OF YOUTH'

Context:

As an organisation that focuses on girls and young women it is important that our methods, programmes, decisions and protocols all relate the world these young women live in and the experiences they encounter. Through our programmes and training we have developed strong models of intergenerational leadership where experienced officers/leaders and younger officers/leaders work alongside one another to help GBI stay true to its roots yet relevant to the modern world. IPC would like to explore the ways in which various boards and executives have enabled and empowered the voice of youth to be heard and responded to.

Key thoughts:

IPC feel that it is important to maintain this intergenerational approach to leadership and have tried to model ways to develop this. To encourage the empowerment of younger members they have provided a training PowerPoint which has helped several National Boards and executives to explore this whole area of development. Over the last three ICGBs we have raised the profile of younger leaders by suggesting a higher percentage of 18-35year olds be included in country delegations to ICGB. We have used the two International Gatherings (2013 and 2017) to hear the voice of our 18-30year olds. We have garnered their views of GB's future and ways of working by asking questions on specific key issues. Additionally, this year we have invited each fellowship to nominate one under 35year old, to join IPC for a day to see how the committee works and for IPC to hear their views, dreams and aspirations about key issues facing GBI.

Possible questions to explore:

- Have you a Youth Council or similar forum for hearing the voice of your young people? If so how does this group link with your main governance structure?
- Can you identify any ways in which the views of this body has impacted upon your decision making process?
- Do the personnel on your National Boards and Executives represent a range of ages? If so, how is this achieved e.g. through set criteria or by natural means?
- What challenges have you met in relation to intergenerational leadership and how have you overcome them? How do you avoid tokenism?
- Do you use monkey surveys or some other form of questionnaires to gather the views of young people on key strategic issues? What issues have you consulted on and what were the outcomes?
- How do you ensure these surveys reach the young people in your companies and groups?
- What specific strategic areas do you think our younger members could give valuable input into?

Finally:

As a result of your discussions are there any recommendations you would like to make to GB either internationally or locally?

DISCUSSION ISSUE THREE: RAISING HOPE FOR GIRLS

Context:

At The Gathering 2013 and The Gathering 2017, our younger leaders shared a deep desire to see Girls' Brigade use our international, national and local platforms to advocate with and for girls across the world on issues that are impacting their lives. To help focus GBI's ongoing strategy, IPC would like to unpack how our members understand advocacy and how we are already raising hope amongst girls.

Key thoughts:

Advocacy can conjure up a lot of different words – from government lobbying to petitions, from social action to speaking out. Biblical advocacy can be defined as caring for, standing with and bringing God's hope to people experiencing injustice and being denied their God-given value and worth. Just as Jesus did, speaking in God's truth, hope and light into the world to bring about transformation in lives and communities. In many different ways, Girls' Brigade is already an advocate. Around the world, countries and fellowships are reaching out to the marginalised, lobbying governments on behalf of the Chibok girls, sponsoring girls to go to school and praying for girls around the world.

Through discussions at ICGB, we want to build a common understanding of advocacy, particularly Biblical advocacy and explore the unique challenges that girls around the world are facing and how GB is already raising Gospel hope for girls. We also want to explore if GB is called to be an advocate and if so, how would our brand of advocacy be different from other social justice organisations.

Possible questions to explore:

- What are the top three unique challenges/social justice issues facing girls in your community/country?
- How is Girls' Brigade already responding to those challenges and raising Gospel hope for girls? What are your different methods of advocacy (share some examples)?
- How would you define advocacy? What do you think of when you hear the word – advocacy? Now how would you define Biblical advocacy? What kind of words do you think of?
- In your country, how is Girls' Brigade speaking in God's truth, hope and light into the world to bring about transformation in lives and communities?
- As the world's oldest and largest Christian faith-based movement for girls, is Girls' Brigade called to be an advocate with and for girls?
- If Girls' Brigade is called to be an advocate, what is our unique brand of advocacy? What principles would define us differently from other organisations like Tearfund or Worldvision?
- In practical terms, how could Girls' Brigade International equip and support you to advocate with and for girls?

Finally:

As a result of your discussions are there any recommendations you would like to make to GB either internationally or locally?