

# **Educare September 2008**

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## **Introduction**

This edition continues with themes relevant to the rapidly growing Brazilian contingent of cross-cultural workers with more details of the home education programme from Brazil, as well as news of the latest development from Bourofaye with the opening of a Brazilian branch.

Also, one question often asked by Korean parents relates to the regulations concerning university entrance in Korea for foreign-educated Koreans. It's our hope that the article on page 6 will help answer some of those questions.

A subject of relevance to all in cross-cultural training is that of pre-departure preparation for children. The question of whether we should take teenage dependents for first-time cross-cultural experience has arisen a few times recently, including at the IMKEC meetings in Colorado this year. The article included is just an introduction to this hot topic.

We welcome any correspondence on the issues and concerns raised in Educare, either for private discussion or for letters and responses in future edition.

## **Pre-departure Preparation for Children**

### **Why?**

Many parents spend years preparing for an overseas assignment, but all too often children's preparation is inadequate or even non-existent. Frequently it is children's issues that bring an abrupt end to overseas work. This means that such a lack of preparation for children is a serious deficiency in some organisations.

Historically many organisations sent out mostly young single volunteers, but that has changed completely now with greater numbers of families with all ages of children. There is also an ever-growing contingent of older workers leaving young adult children, and possibly grandchildren and/or elderly parents. Many organisations have worked hard to change faced with these trends, but others still leave too much to chance faced with the needs of children.

The need to prepare children as well as the parents is widely recognised. This subject was one of the all-day seminars at Eurotck last year, and there are more and more resources available to help parents and agencies to do a better job. The problem isn't the theory, but the practical organisation of something that would be useful for the children. Agencies have very different policies to prepare their workers; generally it is easier to run something useful for the children if the parents attend a residential course. In some cases this may be as long as 3 months at the agency centre and this gives plenty of scope for an adequate children's programme. Even with a shorter course though there are still possibilities – we saw an excellent programme set up for children over a course of less than a week. The keys are the decision at management level that such preparation is needed and the right person or people to run it.

Some organisations don't have residential courses, but it is possible to sign up for short courses specifically aimed at preparing families in this situation.

### **Who?**

The programme during the one week course that we saw was blessed with a young woman with creative ideas who really enjoyed working with children, and who had grown up overseas, giving

her real empathy with them. It isn't always possible to have such an ideal combination in one person! That shouldn't stop us though; anyone who has lived cross-culturally and relates well to children should be able to run a worthwhile programme, especially with the resources available now. Others who could make a useful contribution are nationals of the country the children are going to or TCKs who have lived there. In bigger organisations it is often possible to find people like this.

## **What?**

The starting point in this is to get to know the children to find out what they know already, what their expectations, hopes and fears about the new culture are and to find out how they learn best. Whatever is done should then be age and child appropriate. One of our sending offices ran a short course based on puppet making which worked really well with the group concerned, but may not suit others.

Within any course though it is worth including the following elements

*Family history & identity* – the children need to know where their family and relational roots are. They should be allowed to express how they feel about moving away from the extended family, especially where extended family ties are strong.

*Culture* – it's good to understand as early as possible that different doesn't mean wrong. With older children it is worth looking at themes of right and wrong in all cultures, so that they can stand back and assess their passport culture more objectively as well as the host culture when they get there. This won't deal with all of the frustrations of culture shock – that is an unrealistic goal – but it will give them the tools to help cope when there. Culture shock should also be introduced as a separate theme.

*What is it like to move?* Many children may well have already done this, but it is still useful to consider what it means and how we can react to this. For children who move repeatedly such as those from diplomatic, military and some business families, this can be the biggest single challenge – greater even than cultural shifts. Every move brings this renewed sense of upheaval and chaos coming from disengagement, moving and trying to re-engage. Close friends are left behind and new friendships have to be formed. Working through these issues and the feelings that stem from them should help in the long run if handled sensitively. For children who are more introverted it is worth considering how to make friends and what the realistic possibilities of keeping in touch with current and future friends are.

*Third Culture Kids* – it is important to understand how they will be influenced by growing up in different cultures. A simple way with younger children is to show the overlap of different colours and how blue & yellow make green, red and blue for purple etc. The older the children involved the more they can have explained to them. With teenagers the book "[Families on the Move](#)" by Marion Knell is useful. These older children can also understand more complicated explanations of what a TCK is. It is important to focus on how TCK life style can produce positive effects both in the short-term and for the future. Some of the literature and websites can be quite negative at times so it's good to get the idea across that being a TCK isn't a syndrome to be treated.

*It is important to give specific and accurate information about the destination country.* With internet access it is easy to get information, but we need to help in filtering out the irrelevant and even counter-productive. It's also important to know about the exact location, as the urban lifestyles of most countries are a very different proposition to a small town or village where they may be few or no other foreigners.

*God as the reason for mission* – in mission it is vital that children understand why God wants us to go to a lost world and reach people who have never before heard the Gospel. Understanding that mission is part of God's plan and that they fit into this is vital. They aren't just tagging along with the parents, but God has known about their future all along. They can also learn to trust God through all of the changes and the related difficulties and challenges.

## Resources

*WEC International Guide for Parents and Organisations* - this is available for cost price along with all the other WEC resources on a CD. The guide is due to be updated next year, but many of the ideas already included will be in the new edition.

*Off We Go* - a workbook by Pelly Ho and Hwai Bing Pwee for children aged 3 to 7 preparing to go overseas. This can be obtained directly from Pelly in HK, or from us. The data file can be sent via broadband e-mail (2.2MB) or on a cost-price CD.

*Harold & Stanley say Good-bye* Jill Dyer, MK Merimna. Mail order from OMF International. A family of bears set out to travel overseas and leave family and friends behind. This is a good one to read to younger children.

*Children Just Like Me* Barnabas & Anabel Kindersley, Dorling Kindersley books ISBN 0751353272. Each page of the book has a different child from many different parts of the world telling their own story of what life is like for them.

*Window on the world* Jill Johnstone and Daphne Spraggett. A book designed to encourage prayer for many parts of the world highlighting the needs of different countries and peoples.

Country specific internet sites, books and DVDs

The Eurotek site has a short article on preparing children to cross cultures. Follow this link <http://eurotek.wec-int.org.uk/reports.html>

This is just a short explanation of the discussions held there. We can e-mail much fuller notes to anyone who asks. (If you have the Eurotek CD the notes are on there.)

In the USA our MK staff have run a programme called MK IT several times now with families preparing to go. Anyone wanting further information should contact us or the US office directly on.

## Should we take teenage dependents into first time cross-cultural experiences?

A big question many organisations are facing is whether to allow families with teenage children to go out overseas. This is a very difficult age to make such a huge transition, as evidenced by the struggles of TCKS on "re"-entry. Most organisations would be cautious about sending out teenage children for the first time because of the major upheavals in social and educational life that such a move brings. This is not to say that a move like this should never happen with teenagers; we have seen this really help develop the character for some. However, there are certain criteria that have to be fulfilled.

- The teenager/s should have been part of the decision making process and their voice and views on the proposed move should have been fully considered. If agency staff find out that this has not happened, they should insist that it does. There should never be any question of accepting a family that is dragging unwilling teenage children overseas. Although the final decision won't rest with the teenagers, they have to be positive about the idea.
- There must be a really viable educational solution worked out that will deliver the social and academic conditions needed for a successful re-entry. There have been some good transitions to home-based options such as internet or correspondence schools, but normally this would involve finding a good school that reaches the appropriate academic standard for what the child is capable of.
- There needs to be a reasonable expectation of a peer group to welcome the children. Normally here, unless there is a serious push factor from an unsuitable school or peer group in the passport country, the teenagers will leave friends behind at a critical age. This breaking away from friends is a huge upheaval that should never be underestimated. Teenagers who do go through this need the same sort of preparation and care that re-entering teenagers should receive. Everyone concerned must be satisfied that the school and other social groups such as the church youth group will be open and welcoming. It is impossible to predict all reactions, but it would be foolish in the extreme to go to an isolated setting with no real expectation of friends and a good peer group.

- Unrealistic expectations of the child need to be dismissed. The idea that they will seamlessly adapt to a new culture and group of friends at that age is naïve. Also Christian teens will want to share their faith, but they need to do that in their own way as they make friends and contacts – not just as another worker along with the parents.
- Have a plan B if there are problems. It may not work, even if the teenager was very positive before departure and it looked as though the school was ideal, the huge cultural jump at this age could be too much. A shift to a home-based option may leave the teenager too isolated. Plan B is vital – all the developmental years are vital, but these mid-teen years up to the end of school are especially so. If it doesn't work, have the alternative worked out.

### **Other Issues**

Issues of the law in some countries; as agencies we need to be careful on the grounds and manner of refusal if this is a big factor in the decision – it may be necessary to say 'not recommended', rather than 'no'. This is particularly the case in rights-based societies such as the USA where it could well be illegal to refuse an overseas placement on the grounds of the teenage children. This could apply even if the organisation is convinced that such a move would be detrimental to the children.

On the other side many countries now stress the duty of care – the organisation could well be liable for allowing something self-evidently detrimental to a child's education or welfare to happen with the organisation's overt or tacit approval.

There are organisations where the members are more of an association of self-employed volunteers in some countries. This makes the situation a bit simpler in that the family is not considering paid employment.

These kind of legal problems need to be borne in mind, but ultimately missions need to be praying with the family concerned about what is right for them. It may be possible that the best thing is to say "not now" rather than "no" – possibly considering a passport-country assignment while waiting. With prayerful consideration it should be realistic to reach the right conclusion together.

## **Brazilian Home-based Education**

God is raising up an army of missionaries that are going out from Brazil to the far flung countries of the world. We are excited to see how effective and well received they are. Brazilian missionary families are faced with immediate decisions on arrival at the field. One of the most important issues is in regard to the education of their children. There are several options available; each has positive and negative ramifications.

There are international schools in many large population centres world-wide. This offers an excellent education but most are very expensive and there is usually a need for fluency in English as the educational language of the schools.

Another option is private or public national schools that function in the language or languages of the country. This is usually a good option for families that arrive when their children are young and have time to become fluent in the national language. It also allows the children to assimilate the culture and be able to enter into relationships and interactions more easily within the country. There can be problems when the MKs are not of the major religion of the country and children can suffer from ostracism. In some countries it is illegal for a foreigner to study in a national public school. There are a few schools specifically for missionary children; these are less expensive than the international schools, but to study there requires fluency in English as it is usually the language of instruction.

These options do provide a diploma from the country of residency, the USA or Cambridge International Examinations in order for the student to receive credit for years studied in another language and culture. None of these options prepare students in the area of Portuguese language

or Brazilian Social Studies for re-entry into Brazil for continued education in Portuguese or university studies.

A possible augmenting option for students is to purchase grade level books in the Portuguese language and Brazilian Social Studies to work through at home in addition to classes in an accredited school within the host country. This option HAS to be accompanied by a government accredited program from the host country and is not recognized on its own in Brazil. Its sole purpose is to prepare for re-entry and further studies in Portuguese.

A new option has arisen for Brazilian MKs as well. This is a home schooling program (Edução Básica a Distancia) that is in Portuguese and accredited by the Brazilian Government. It is CIER, Escola AngloAmericana based out of Rio, and information can be found on [www.angloamericano.edu.br/CIER/](http://www.angloamericano.edu.br/CIER/). It provides a Brazilian style and curriculum education in Portuguese for children and adolescents in 49 countries. This school is structured so that each module of studies covers the same material as is taught in the curriculum within Brazilian schools. The lessons are also accompanied with a schedule and time table as to the amount of time that each module should be studied and the time slots when teachers are available to receive questions in the form of emails, faxes, phone calls and letters. The parents are also an active part of this educational process. It is specifically designed for and offered to students that desire to complete their studies in Portuguese and are unable to attend a school within Brazil due to handicaps, distance from a school or living in another country. There is a document that must be signed affirming that the child falls into one of these categories in order to be enrolled.

I know that Latin Americans as a whole are usually NOT excited about a home schooling option and feel inadequate to teach their kids and terrified by the thought. We need to help them understand that it really isn't rocket science!

As we see more and more Brazilians going to "the ends of the earth" to share God's Good News, we are excited to see those that God is raising up to meet the needs of Brazilian MKs and families, wherever they are serving God.

*Claudia Limpic*

## **Bourofaye introduces a Brazilian branch**

A new development this year is taking place at Bourofaye Christian School with the establishment of a Brazilian section there. There are now 10 children and several staff, and the approach is to teach part of the curriculum in Portuguese and the rest in English along with the other "English-speaking" (many of them are EFL/ESL as well) students. This has been worked as a model in a number of schools previously with Europeans & Koreans, but this is a new departure for Brazilians as far as we know. In past years, Bourofaye did this on a limited scale, but couldn't get the Brazilian staff needed to make it work properly. We'll follow this development in future Educare editions, and this could be a very useful role model for the future. With growing numbers of Spanish speaking families, this could be a good way forward for them and some of the schools they are studying in.

## **Korean university admission regulations**

One of the biggest issues for most Korean parents in deciding on the right school option for their children is that of which university this will allow their children to go to. Almost all of the first generation of Korean MKs studied in Western universities, mostly in the USA. Increasingly though sending organisations want the children back in Korea, recognising that this export of young talent isn't good in the long run for the Korean church. The government in Seoul agrees with this view

and is keen to encourage young foreign-educated Koreans back into the system there. As part of this decision they have created the reserved places system in universities for re-entering Korean students.

There are 2 categories on special admission (reserved places) for which MKs can apply.

### **1) Special admission for Korean residents abroad**

a) Consecutive 12 year admission – this means that all of the formal education must be completed in a foreign system. Most universities also require an interview and a Korean language proficiency test.

b) General special admission – consecutive 3 year/broken 4 year schooling abroad, which must include at least 1 year of high schooling abroad. A student applying for university having done 3 school years abroad would be allowed to apply for general special admission. However, it is important to check the required university's website as each university has slightly different exam entrance requirements and other conditions that they apply. For example

- Korea University – Korean, Math, English (TOEFL test result)
- Yonsei University – Soosi (special admission with school record) 1st semester, Interview – Soosi 2nd semester (Entrance exams in Korean, Mathematics, Essay in Foreign language)
- Handong University – High school record (transcript), official English test result, Written exam (English, Mathematics), Interview.

c) MK admission at Handong University\* (MKs who have completed 5 years of elementary and middle school education abroad are also eligible). Handong University has a special admission policy for MKs. MKs from MK schools other than Handong International School\* can apply for this admission. Their entrance decisions are based on the same criteria as those applying for the category above; i.e. High school record (transcript), official English test result, Written exam (English, Mathematics), Interview.

### **2) Special admission for students who have a high level of foreign language proficiency**

It is important to verify with the university what their requirements are for this category, and to do so well in advance to avoid disappointment. Different universities set their own entrance requirements, so check with each university considered.

Qualification levels

a) Several top universities in Seoul

English: TOEIC 950 or more; TOEFL (CBT) 250 (IBT) 110 or more; TEPS 850 or more

Japanese: JLPT 1st level

French: DELF, DALF, TEF

German: ZD, ZMP

Chinese: HSK 8<sup>th</sup> level or above

Russian: TORFL 1st step or above

***It is important to note that since 2006 many universities have more spaces for those who are fluent in English rather than other languages.***

b) Other universities

English: TOEIC 800-850

Japanese: JLPT 2-3 level

French: DELF A1 or A2

Chinese: HSK 6-7 or above

Russian: TORFL basic level

***Please note that these details could be changed as universities seem to change or adjust their details on policies for special admission.***

**Other General Information**

If your child is planning to re-enter to Korea for university study consider the following issues.

If the child is young, encourage your child to learn Korean first and consolidate their Korean language proficiency. Most universities expect students to speak Korean, English and one other foreign language. In reality, Korean and English language skills are required to cope with the study after the entrance.

In Korea, children start school at the age of 8 (Korean age). 12 years of formal education (elementary, middle school, high school) is normally required. 11 and a half years of formal schooling is recognised if it is due to the different education system of another country. However, if it is due to repeating a grade, or advancing up one or more grades because of the child's high academic ability, it will not be recognised.

It is important to check whether the school at which your child is studying is recognised by the Korean Ministry of Education. If not, recognition by the Korean Embassy/Consulate in the country concerned is necessary. A paper by a consul of the Education Department is required. This is a paper which says whether the school has been recognised as a formal education institute, and what Korean grade would be equivalent with the grade the child had completed at the school. In the case of the needs compared to a Korean school not being met, the child will need to take the Korean qualification exam according to the schooling stage he/she took. If the high school education is not recognised, the student will need to sit a national exam from Korea, the Gumjeong Gosi, which grants a high school graduate certificate.

Home schooling isn't yet recognised by the Ministry of Education, but the Ministry is talking about the possibility in the near future. Korean parents normally find it extremely difficult to carry on home schooling for middle or high school age children unless at least one of the parents has a high level of English language skills. Some parents try with English language programmes, but often end up dependent on the provision of a home tutor. What does need to be encouraged though is for parents to do whatever they can to ensure that their children learn and develop academic Korean. In larger cities this can be partly through the Saturday schools, but without these the responsibility lies with the parents to do some home schooling in the Korean language. Koreans always prefer formal education rather than home education. In many cases parents are willing to pay the cost of separation in boarding if their children's educational need cannot be met in the locality they work in; when they feel sure that the school has good Christian environment, education and safety

**With thanks to Chai HwaSook** of WEC Korea for this information.

*It is vital to keep up to date with the latest developments on university admission. As with all countries, education systems and policies change regularly. This information is up to date for 2008, but parents and students considering university a few years from now should seek all current information. You can contact the Chais on [wiko\\_mk@yahoo.co.kr](mailto:wiko_mk@yahoo.co.kr) or indirectly via our e-mail at [SteveGill@mkea.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:SteveGill@mkea.freeseve.co.uk)*

*\* Handong University is a private Christian-run university that has built a good reputation in recent years. They have been sympathetic towards applications from mission agency families and students. Handong International School is a boarding school specifically for Korean MKs and the teaching is in a mixture of English and Korean. The students may progress from the school to Handong University, but this is not always the case. The school and the university share the same campus, and occasionally families mix the two up in their thinking. Most Koreans though now know about both institutions; this information is mainly for others working alongside Koreans.*

**Educare** is produced by WEC International – Reaching the unreached for Jesus