

National Lutheran Principals Conference

LCA MI & ALWS presentation

N	<p>Thanks for inviting us to speak with you today.</p> <p>We represent two parts of the Lutheran Church of Australia which have been engaged in service learning for a number of years now.</p> <p>People are often confused about what we do. Simply put,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LCA Mission International is an arm of the LCA which shares the good news of Jesus Christ, in word and actions.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Lutheran World Service is an agency of the LCA which helps end suffering by welcoming, respecting and bringing hope to those fleeing from, or hurt by, disaster, poverty and oppression. <p>Our roles in the Church are different but we work closely together because we both share the love of Christ in what we do. We show it and we tell it.</p> <p>We are similar because at the heart of who we are and what we do is faith in Christ.</p> <p>At the core of this faith is Christ's sacrificial love for others. .</p> <p>In different ways we both support work which brings the hope, joy, comfort and the peace of Jesus Christ to a broken world.</p> <p>And in different ways we provide blessings and relationships which last forever – reconciliation and long term solutions to break the poverty cycle.</p>
N	<p>We are distinctly Lutheran though we recognise we cannot do this alone as a church in Australia. And so we work through partners around the globe to make this happen.</p> <p>Through these partnerships, LCA Mission International proclaims Jesus, and provides opportunities to learn and grow in schooling, theology and pastoral support. We do this in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and more recently in Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and the wider Mekong region. And we do this in partnership with over 9 million Lutheran Christians in churches around the globe!</p>
C	<p>Through partnerships, Australian Lutheran World Service walks with people to develop their confidence, skills and knowledge to respond to challenges which come their way, such as poverty, oppression or disasters. We do this in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Cambodia, Nepal, Burundi, Mozambique, South Sudan and Kenya, and wherever we have the ability to respond to crises. And we do this in partnership with churches and Lutheran World Federation – the world's largest faith based partner to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.</p> <p>Together, LCA Mission International and Australian Lutheran World Service are part of something huge, inspiring and exciting.</p>

N There are of course other parts of the church which can help your school with service learning opportunities here and overseas and we encourage you to look at those also,

and beyond the church there are hundreds more.

Or some schools and churches decide to go it alone. We're not here to tell you ours is the only way to go about it, but what we've seen and learned over time is that it needs to be done carefully. So whatever you do - when you're deciding on what best suits your school - we ask that you do two things:

Think critically and choose wisely.

This is best illustrated in an example which is relevant to our work but could be applied anywhere:

C As a principal, you want to get your school involved in a service learning activity. The idea is to encourage the kids and staff to raise \$5,000 to send a shipping container of school supplies for children in Cambodia. Money's raised through clever school activities to pay for the container and freight, and people donate books, pens, pencils, posters, stickers and t-shirts to fill it. A wonderfully exciting opportunity which brings the school together. The container's filled and sent to Cambodia.

But when it arrives, port officials email to say the paperwork's wrong and while you organise the right paperwork, the container incurs port holding fees which end up being more expensive than what the goods inside the container are worth.

Eventually the container's released, and transported to a village by truck (which comes at another cost) where the materials are distributed amongst the children. The moment's euphoric – it's just like Christmas.

Two years later, you embark on a service learning trip with some teachers and students to visit the impact your donation's made.

Everyone's shattered. The books are gone, pencils broken, pens dried up, and t-shirts worn through. They lasted about a month and then life went back to normal. The kids didn't learn anything new, there was no springboard into a new life, and the container was a distant memory. You learn also that some of the poorest and most disadvantaged children who couldn't attend school missed out completely.

Down the road you meet a woman whose only income for the family used to be selling pencils and books to the school, but went broke the day the container arrived. Another woman further down whose only income was selling t-shirt also went out of business. Both were forced back into severe poverty again that day.

You return to the school and ask yourself these questions:

- Did it engage the school – you bet
- Did the school learn about good development – only by knowing what not to do
- Did it make a difference to those in Cambodia? Did it build people physically or spiritually? – Not at all. In fact, it caused more damage than good.

We refer to this as a Hand Out

Alternatively, you ask others about how your school could make a difference to someone's life overseas. Of the options you're given, the kids decide to raise \$100 so that someone could introduce a Village Bank to a community in Cambodia. Rather than doing it all yourself, you send the money to those already doing it well.

Two years later, you embark on a service learning trip organised by an organisation here in Australia with some teachers and students to visit the impact your donation's made.

You speak with one woman who was able to buy a piglet for the first time because she could take out a loan from the Village Bank.

After 2 years, the pig had itself produced 18 piglets. She sold 9 and kept the others to produce more. She paid back her loan and opened up a small shop, and hoped to start a send her daughter to high school and hopefully onto university. For the first time, someone in her family had the chance to find new employment, develop confidence, understand their rights and break free from poverty. The impact on these children, future generations, their community and possibly the country is infinite.

Down the road you meet more women who also benefited from the training in similar ways.

You return to the school and ask yourself these questions:

- Did it engage the school – you bet
- Did the school learn about good development – definitely
- Did it make a difference to those in Cambodia? Did it build people physically or spiritually?– Without a doubt

We refer to this as a Hand Up

N One is an example of good service learning and one is not. Both engage the kids in Australia but only one makes a lasting difference to the lives of others.

Because the principal asked the school to think critically and choose wisely.

It's hard to always know which way to go. We're very happy to offer guidance. Just let us know.

Thank you