



Empowering local partners

“Among the 150+ CPMs we are aware of worldwide, only a very small minority have been catalyzed directly by an outsider. The majority develop when the outside CPM catalyzer(s) vision-casts and trains the near / same culture local partner/believer(s), and together they vision-cast, train, and live out these biblical truths.”

-CPM Trainer Stan Parks

BY **KAY PARKS**

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Kay and her family served in SEAsia for over 20 years, where she ministered to women in her neighborhood and worked in her local church to increase awareness of and prayer for UPGs. She and her husband then began learning and applying CPM principles. For the past few years she has been training and coaching local believers and international workers. She and her husband serve with Act Beyond.

One joy of overseas ministry is the local partners with whom we get to work. It's not only wonderful to walk and work beside them, but absolutely critical!

One of my local partners was Flora. She and her husband are local church planters in the area. Flora and I made it a habit together to find people to talk to (i.e. searching for Persons of Peace). We would pray before going out and along the way. Whenever possible we would visit

women we already knew and share with them. We would also go into the community to meet new women, looking for those wanting to engage in spiritual conversations.

If I found someone interested in the gospel while on my own, I would invite Flora to go with me the next time I met that person. I never wanted anyone in my adopted country to confuse following Jesus with American Christianity. So having Flora with me was a lifeline in my

ministry. (Not to mention that she was so much fun to know and work with!)

The Good, the Bad, and the Messy

We didn't always feel successful in our ministry. While we found many women who would engage in spiritual conversations, we almost never found those who wanted to meet again with their family and friends. We did find one woman who loved to hear stories from our Holy Book and was always enthusiastic when we visited her. But was she a Person of Peace? Probably not. This woman worked for a local family while her own family lived far away. She never invited others to join us when we shared stories. In the end she moved to another town to work. There went our one open person!

Due to our perceived lack of success we both felt discouraged at times! In fact, if we defined success only as finding a Person of Peace and starting a Discovery Group with that person and her *oikos* (household/community), we weren't successful at all! But I'd like to expand the definition of success a bit: In training we learned that when we work with our local partners (and when they work with others) we are to MEWL—Model, Equip, Watch and Letter (keeping in touch even after leaving). By this my measure of success I feel a bit better about my efforts.

When Flora and I met together, I modeled for her ways to share (as she did with me). At times I had to push her to do the talking so I could “watch” as she shared and I could encourage her in the process. This also lent itself to “equipping”—giving helpful thoughts and praying for her as she shared and later talking about what we were learning along the way. When I consider success in these terms I feel more encouraged about our work there.

Recently my husband and I returned to visit the town where we had lived. Imagine my great joy at finding that Flora and her husband have continued sharing with others in their town, praying for them, demonstrating Christ's love and even seeing some Discovery Groups started. Another local worker has moved to this area, and she and Flora now go out together to share. Flora is now MEWLing (so to speak) and passing on what she has learned.

Truth be told, I often felt like a CPM flunkie.

One thing both Flora and I learned was to just keep doing what we were trained to do. We kept going out, looking for Persons of Peace among women we knew and women we were meeting. We continued to pray. We continued to meet with other women to train and encourage them. Did we feel successful? Not really. But did we give up? Never. Not an option.

Truth be told, I often felt like a CPM failure, and was so thankful others were modeling, equipping, watching and lettering Flora as well. Maybe they would have more success going out with her! But as I look back at my time with Flora I am very thankful. While we never found a Person of Peace, I can see how powerful it was to work with local partners, encourage them, and model for them to never give up. I found great joy going back to visit and hearing how the work has continued. To see Flora continue on and to know other local workers are being raised up encourages my heart in ways I cannot express.

A Reproducing Disciple-Maker Left Behind?

My husband has often said, “It's not what you can do to start a movement, but what needs to be done.” I believe that praying for and empowering local leaders is the greatest thing any of us can do as we serve to see movements started. So as my husband and I move to a new area I will do my best to model, equip, watch, and letter with other workers. I hope to continually model prayer, training, sharing the gospel and empowering local women to do the same. The words of the Apostle Paul ring true in my heart when I think about the local partners I left behind: “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil 1:3-6) Amen and Amen! 