

Report on “Amar para toda la vida” – Paraguay August 2007

Background

South American Missionary Society (SAMS) have been working in Paraguay for many years. The work of SAMS in Paraguay seeks to reach different levels of society throughout the country; in Asuncion, Concepcion and the Chaco. In Asuncion, there are six local Anglican congregations, four of which are pastored by Paraguayans and the other two are led by SAMS mission partners. St. Andrew's College is a bilingual Anglican school, for children from 3 to 18 yrs old. They seek to provide a Christian education for those in the upper strata of society, with the hope that they will not only make a personal commitment, but that they will also live out their Christian values and effect change in a secular and corrupt society. There is also a teacher training college (FEISA) and an annexe school, which reaches children and parents from a local shanty town area.

Esperanza is a new and exciting project which responds to the needs in the city for Foster care of abandoned and neglected babies. The home works alongside the city's adoption centre and relieves the overcrowding of children's homes.

The work in Concepcion covers an area of 250km, attending to various annexes of the church in the town and in rural country areas. There is a well developed work amongst children and a recently opened drop-in centre for youth.

The work of SAMS began with the planting of the first Anglican church in Maxalaya and there are now many congregations in different Chaco communities. There is also an important translation work led by a mission partner with a team of locals who are presently translating the Old Testament into the Indian language, Enxlet.

Love for Life is a relationships and sexuality education project that is based in Northern Ireland. The work of the project includes tailored schools programmes for young people, teacher training, parents programmes and community and strategic interventions. All of the activity of Love for Life is based on an abstinence centred approach. The schools programmes have previously been adapted for use in a Uganda where a part time Love for Life worker is now employed through a Ugandan partner.

As a result of meetings between SAMS and Love for Life it was agreed to explore the possibility of developing a similar partnership to that in Uganda between SAMS and Love for Life with a view to exploring possible relationships and sexuality education programme delivery in Paraguay.

Visit to Paraguay

A visit to Paraguay was arranged as the first step in possible programme development.

Two SAMS volunteers, Hannah Collins and Alison Crawford, and Dr Richard Barr from Love for Life visited Paraguay between 10th – 17th August 2007.

Both Hannah and Alison had previously worked in Paraguay and Richard had been involved in the development of the Love for Life programmes used in both Ireland and Uganda.

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Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit was twofold;

1. To pilot a prepared programme, “**Amar para toda la vida**”, in a small number of Paraguayan schools to assess programme suitability.
2. To network with Paraguayan SAMS workers and others interested in the development of a relationships and sexuality education project in Paraguay.

Activity during the visit

11th August: Delivery of the “Amar para toda la vida”, programme in San Pablo, a church setting in Concepcion.

Approximately 50 young people and adults were present, including members of an international team working with the church. A local teacher, who had seen the meeting advertised also attended.

12th August: Delivery of the “Amar para toda la vida”, programme in San Andreas, a church setting in Asuncion.

Approximately 60 people were in attendance including the Bishop of Paraguay, John Ellison and some parents.

13th August: Meeting with Principal, Gwen Carlisle and other teachers at St Andrews School in Asuncion. Meeting with Principal of Annex, Victor Santacruz, and the Pastor of San Andres, Agustin Maidana.

Meeting with a group of Catholic leaders (FEDEVIFA) with Anglican pastors, Tony Somervell and Jorge Arevalos. Delivery of a presentation on the work of Love for Life and concerns around the current secular humanistic sex education approach being promoted globally. Those involved expressed major concern as to the way Paraguay was changing and becoming accepting of a contraceptive/condom/abortion centred approach being promoted through global health authorities.

14th August:

Delivery of the “Amar para toda la vida”, programme to children in the Annex school. Approximately 70 children from 12-15 year old were present.

15th August:

A meeting was held with 4 Paraguayan organisations involved in delivering programmes relating to various aspects of relationships and sexuality education.

Manuel Paez-Monges - True Love Waits and AMF Provida

Pablo Monzona - International Ministry for the Family

Maria Lucia Fleitas Arias – IFES

Gayna Dunham Salinas - GDUP/Christian Union

Each person presented their area of work to the others. There was agreement that the process was useful and there was a desire to meet again and discuss further possibilities for collaboration and training.

(Information on each organisation. Further information on each organisations area of work and contact details are included in Appendix 2)

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16th August:

Delivery of the “Amar para toda la vida”, programme in two separate presentations to all pupils in St Andrews College. A total of 130 children and young people were involved in the programme from 11-18 years old. An evaluation was taken from the young people involved. (Appendix 1)

Delivery of the “Amar para toda la vida”, programme to parents in Annex school with some additional materials around effective parenting.

Evaluation

Separate meetings took place with the Bishop John Ellison and Pastor Patrick Butler at the end of the visit to discuss the work done through the visit.

Any available opportunity was taken to discuss the programmes presented to those involved in any way during the delivery of the programmes.

A formal questionnaire evaluation was taken from all the students involved in the “Amar para toda la vida”, programme in St Andrews. (Appendix)

Outcomes

- The “Amar para toda la vida”, programme was well received by young people in schools and church situations in both Asunción and Concepcion. The young people involved said the programme would be useful for other young people in Paraguay.
- Teachers felt the “Amar para toda la vida”, programme was appropriate and helpful for their students.
- Parents involved said that they would appreciate further opportunity to have programme input on parenting issues.
- Excellent networking was accomplished with others working in related areas of relationships and sexuality education.
- Excellent networking was achieved with others concerned about impacting strategically to promote an abstinence centred approach in Paraguay.

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Future Possibilities

A team to visit Paraguay next summer;

1. To work in public and private schools delivering “Amar para toda la vida” to young people.
2. To deliver programmes to parents and teachers associated with the churches visited.
3. To consolidate networking opportunities with others involved in programme delivery and strategic influence in the area of relationships and sexuality education who share the abstinence centred approach.

B.

In the longer term there remains the possibility of exploring ways to fund a Paraguayan worker to progress development of “Amar para toda la vida”, and related work in Paraguay.

C.

There is obvious potential for the evolving model to be adapted and developed in other South American countries.

Conclusion

The pilot visit to Paraguay in August 2007 was successful in confirming that the “Amar para toda la vida”, programme is suitable for use in Paraguayan schools. The response from young people, teachers, parents and church leaders was even more favourable than expected. Additionally the visit surpassed expectations by confirming that a partnership between SAMS and Love for Life could not only successfully deliver programmes to young people, teachers and parents but could act as a catalyst to impact strategically in the area of relationships and sexuality education by networking and supporting individuals and organisations committed to an abstinence centred approach and who are concerned about the progression towards the Paraguayan adoption of global health policies that are condom/contraception/abortion centred.

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APPENDIX 1 – Pupil Evaluation in St Andrews College

Q1. Did you find the presentation helpful?

(The young people were asked to score the presentation on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being very unhelpful and 10 very helpful) - 112 responses

Possible Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of pupils giving this response	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	16	29	61
% of pupils giving this response	0	0	0	0.9	0.9	0.9	2.7	14.3	25.9	54.5
Average Response of pupils	9.24									

Q2. Did you learn anything new today?

(The young people were asked to score their response with 1 being nothing new to 10 being a lot of new things) – 112 responses

Possible Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of pupils giving this response	2	6	2	1	5	6	14	19	21	36
% of pupils giving this response	1.8	5.4	1.8	0.9	4.5	5.4	12.5	17.0	18.8	32.1
Average Response of pupils	7.89									

Sample of comments from pupils

- About new infections, the illnesses
- Percentage of people that live with HIV
- STIs, that many ways of prevention aren't true
- Disease that could be transmitted, how sex should be and how to say no
- I learnt new illnesses and how to prevent them
- Pregnancy can occur any day of the month
- Even our thoughts lead us to who we are going to be
- Having sex too early is not good

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Q3. Will the presentation you received influence your future choices?

(The young people were asked to score their response with 1 being definitely not to 10 being definitely yes) – 112 responses (2 blanks)

Possible Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of pupils giving this response	2	0	0	2	4	6	9	9	18	60
% of pupils giving this response	1.8	0	0	1.8	3.6	5.4	8.0	8.0	16.1	53.6
Average Response of pupils	8.75									

Sample of comments from pupils

- Yes, this really showed me the consequences
- Yes, I will think twice in future
- Very good programme that can help people very much, is very useful
- It will help me a lot and make me take good decisions
- Yes, because it makes me think of all the risks there are
- I am sure I will not have sex until I'm married
- Yes, this showed me how some people's lives have been ruined
- I don't know My hormones will change me

Q4. Do you think that other young people in Paraguay would benefit from receiving this presentation in their school?

(The young people were asked to score their response with 1 being definitely no to 10 being definitely yes) – 112 responses (3 blanks)

Possible Response	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of pupils giving this response	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	9	16	79
% of pupils giving this response	0	0	0	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.8	8.0	14.3	70.5
Average Response of pupils	9.50									

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Q5. Were there any other topics that should have been included in the programme?

Child development and pornography

Abortion

Anal sex

Teen drinking

How God feels about the use of contraceptives

Masturbation, Friends pressure

Mixing contraceptive methods makes sex safer?

Condoms and ejaculating outside of the vagina makes sex safe?

Q6. Have you any questions or further comments?

What if you use 2 condoms 1 on top of the other?

At the moment of truth we just want to feel love and care, feel wanted and needed like we need them

Are Paraguayan people more promiscuous?

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APPENDIX 2 - Groups who met with LFL team on 15th August

NAME: Manuel Paez-Monges

Organisations: True Love Waits and AMF Provida

We met Manuel at the meeting with the Catholic leaders and Anglican Pastors (FEDEVIFA). Manuel and six University students deliver the 'True Love Waits' programme in schools in Asuncion. He is passionate and determined that the government and Catholic Church would encourage the promotion of waiting until marriage before having sexual relations. The talks and AMF programme promote family, morals and encourage young people to get an education before they have children. The group are totally self funded as he feels the government bodies consider them to be bringing forth religious views. Manuel is training to be a lawyer and works for the government as well as his father. It was suggested that he should meet with Government even if they reject the approach his organisations take; he had prepared a paper on the current situation in Paraguay. He was also going to try and meet with the Catholic Archbishop and bring his presentation and programme to more schools.

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E-mail: - amfprovida@gmail.com

NAME: Pablo Monzona

Organisation: International Ministry for the Family

He and his church run a programme called 'Uno' meaning 'One'. It is a pre-marriage course for people who are going out or getting married.

Cellphone: - +595971197015 Work: - +59521204924

E-mail: - uno@tigo.com.py

NAME: Maria Lucia Fleitas Arias

ORGANISATION: IFES

A student who is doing her thesis on street children. Involved with IFES and is concerned about the spread of HIV in Paraguay. She showed an HIV/AIDS video that she intends to use with university students.

Cellphone: - +595981608644

E-mail: - maluflei@yahoo.es

NAME: Gayna Dunham Salinas

ORGANISATION: GDUP/Christian Union

An American lady working in Paraguay supporting Christian Unions. Works mostly with university students and groups of young people.

E-mail: dgkjs@hotmail.com