

Guiding principles in mobilising a large city church in integral mission

At the outset of a church initiative

1. Develop projects in areas where individuals within the church have a significant vision and commitment already. Tapping into people's passion helps to encourage a motivated and enthusiastic response.
2. Form a core team to take responsibility for a project. Do not rely on either one enthusiastic individual or on the church pastor. By forming a core team of 6-10 people to initiate and manage the project, any initiative becomes much more sustainable.
3. The church should aim to take financial responsibility for the project for the first 1-2 years, before seeking external funding. This helps to build a strong sense of ownership and involvement within the congregation. It may also help to ensure that the church initiative grows at a slower pace and allows for learning and the gaining of experience. Once the church owns the project and has gained experience, it will be in a better place to seek and utilise external funding.
4. The core team should be encouraged to make use of specialist support. Within a large city church there are likely to be people with relevant professional skills and experience that can help to guide the development of the church initiative. There may also be other churches and Christian organisations with experience who could advise and help the core group. Learning from others is key to helping ensure a church initiative will be effective in the long term.

Once the church initiatives begin to grow

1. Initially, committed volunteers may run a project, but as it grows there may be a need to appoint full-time staff. If possible, try to appoint staff from the church membership who have been actively involved in the project as volunteers. This helps to ensure continuity and ongoing church engagement.
2. Many large city churches have satellite congregations. If a number of these are running projects, or if the main city church is running a number of projects, it is important to ensure that there is good co-ordination and co-operation. The sharing of lessons and experience and collaboration on key advocacy issues can add value to each project's work.
3. Some churches may look to set up a church-based NGO to help support its projects (click here for an example). If they do so, it is important that the NGO is closely linked to the church. This can be done by having key members of the church's leadership on the board of trustees, and by encouraging volunteers and staff, where possible, to be recruited from the church membership.

Authors: Arthur Thangiah and Tulo Raistrick