

## Whatever Happened to TOOL

TOOL stands for the Training of Overseas Leaders and was developed to train Wesleyan leaders, beyond their first degree, primarily in theological education.

TOOL is still there, but one of the problems is finances. The cost can be quite high especially if the training is done in another country, as it normally has been done. Historically the cost for someone studying for their masters has been \$15,000-\$20,000 per year. Our goal at GP is that once we start with a student we want to make sure there is enough money in the scholarship to help him/her finish. GP is working on raising finances for the training but that has been difficult because of the cost factor. However there are some other ideas that have developed for the training of leaders at the master's level and beyond.

We believe that the Wesleyan Universities in N. America want to have an international market, they desire to develop ways of training that go beyond the residential model. They are working toward that end even though nothing is officially available at the present time for African leaders.

1) One program that is being developed is satellite schools where extension courses could be taught in different venues with visiting and in-country lecturers. A pilot programme is being developed in Lusaka, Zambia working with Southern Wesleyan University (SWU). The goal is to have 12-20 students working on a masters in Christian Leadership. If the pilot goes well it could be extended to other venues. Dr. Kalembo is still working on the logistics. One of his concerns is that other universities in Zambia are offering similar programs and that competition could cause a problem. They are also looking for a venue in Lusaka for the training.

2) There are some who are working on an online program for training. Global Partners is not directly involved but is willing to work with developers of an online provider so that leaders can be trained at the masters' level. The problem in Africa is the internet and access to the internet. Most systems in Africa don't provide servers that would adequately meet the needs of students for online programs. Some of the Wesleyan Universities are working together to try to provide an online program at the masters' level. The challenge is adequate internet access and training local students how to access that material and do the work. At this point all we can say is that there are people involved in the process of finding a way to provide online training in developing countries. It is a step by step process where certain foundational steps must be laid down such as adequate internet service that will meet the needs of the providers and the recipients of the education. With all the material which must be delivered over the internet, local internet providers need to upgrade before a viable on line program can be provided.

To give you an example, this is what happened to Rev. Fornah from Sierra Leone. Usman began his master's program with a visit to Houghton College in the USA. Houghton and Indiana Wesleyan University worked with him making sure that he was ready. While he was in the USA he had a two day orientation program at IWU to help prepare him for the on-line program. He told me that orientation was very helpful. He then began a two year programme in Ministerial Leadership. While he was in the States things went well for him because he was able to do his assignments through the internet there.

However as soon as he got back home to Sierra Leone the internet became a real challenge. Because of the slow internet and inability of the net to provide what he needed he could not cope with the timing and could not read the books over the internet which he was assigned for class. The problem was the

internet in Sierra Leone. It could not adequately handle the amount of data that he needed to download. Because of those challenges he had to withdraw from the class and is planning to get the books for his next class here in Panama so that in March he can get back into the program. So the main problem with developing a viable online program in parts of Africa is the internet. In some parts of Africa such as South Africa, that shouldn't be a problem but in other parts of Africa the internet continues to be a major obstacle. As the internet continues to develop I would think that as the need arises some servers will also arise and provide for that need.

3) The desire of GP is for those who study at the post 1<sup>st</sup> degree level to study on the continent. Students have studied with assistance from TOOL at WATS (West Africa Theological Seminary), NEGST (Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology), and SATS (South African Theological Seminary).

However one of the big problems GP has encountered is the cost of education at the second degree level and beyond, especially in terms of housing, food and travel. If the cost could be limited to the educational part it might be more feasible for money to be found to help. We would like to encourage potential students to check out in country options to save on the extra costs listed above.

If you do have someone from your church who has a desire for further education beyond the first degree, once your leadership team approves them, we would encourage the student to fill out a TOOL application so that the candidate can be considered. It works much better if the application is on hand with Global Partners and not simply being discussed locally as a potential applicant.

One of the problems some TOOL students have faced is finishing the course in the prescribed time period and the increment in costs above the money originally set aside for that particular student's programme. Some confusion might be eliminated if at the beginning of the contract the student clearly understands the time frame and that if things change such as the program or the cost, the student himself/herself will be responsible for the extra money. TOOL begins with a set amount and tries to ensure that that amount will be there for the student, so if there are unforeseen expenses that creates potential for misunderstanding. It might be helpful for the candidate to understand at the beginning that a certain amount is being offered for the scholarship, if there is an increment in costs that will be the responsibility of the candidate and local national church.

Another issue that each local National Church needs to address is how to use that student once they have completed their degree. The national church needs to carefully consider those potential students for future use in the church as they prepare to ask for TOOL support whatever the method of delivery is.

TOOL is still needed to provide educational support beyond the first degree. At the present time the problem is lack of financial resources and the need for a more adequate internet to meet the needs of online students. But Global Partners is working to help solve those problems.