



...alive and growing

Yes, re-konnect is very much alive and growing!

For 5 days in August, the Slack Top Centre near Hebden Bridge was alive and full to capacity with 20 TCKs aged between 6 and 13. The group enjoyed getting to know each other, sharing experiences of life overseas and in the UK and applying the story of Ruth and Naomi to their lives.

Over the past 4 years we have seen the number of kids attending re-konnect steadily increase. Kids just come once so a total of 72 have been helped in their re-entry to the UK. They've come from 31 countries and 22 mission agencies. Each year kids have attended from all over England and some from N Ireland. This was the first year we didn't have anyone from Scotland.

In thinking and praying about how re-konnect can grow to meet the needs of more TCKs we feel multiplying the camps is the way forward. We hope 2006 will see the launch of a re-konnect in N Ireland. We are currently working to get a team of people there ready to take on this challenge.

We were pleased that re-konnect plus, for TCKs aged 15 plus happened at Hebden Bridge in July. We trust even more will attend next year. Xenos, a camp designed for MKs aged 13 -16 also took place twice this year at All Nations. [Kids can return more than once to the Xenos camps.] We are encouraged to be working in co-operation with others in providing opportunities for TCKs, of all ages, to connect with others and sense support as they adjust to life in the UK.

In 2001 with less than a week's notice, Pete 16, bravely came as our first "young leader". 2005 saw us with 4 well prepared young TCK leaders aged 15-20. Three had served in this way before. It has been very exciting and such a blessing and encouragement to watch our "young leaders" grow and develop in their own understanding of what it means to be a TCK. They have also taken an increasing role in leading sessions and relating to the kids throughout the week's fun and activities. They serve alongside 5 older adults giving a high ratio of leaders to kids. Perhaps 2006 will see a girl returning as a young leader who first came as a camper!

Re-konnect 2006 will definitely take place near Hebden Bridge again - but please note it is scheduled for October half-term . We hope very much there will be a summer re-konnect in N Ireland.

Families, or sometimes mission agencies, pay for kids to attend re-konnect. This is only half the real cost of the holiday but each year we have seen God provide the rest of the funding. This year was no different with gifts from a couple of Trusts and from a number of individuals. We even had a small sailing dinghy donated, the proceeds of which went to re-konnect! The loan of St Annes Baptist Church minibus each year has significantly reduced our running costs.

For details of all the MK/TCK Camps for 2006 please contact info@globalconnections.co.uk or daveandjanetbrown@gmail.com

What did the parents think about re-konnect...?

We were delighted that A went to camp and had the opportunity to be with other TCK's and to talk about the Philippines with her contemporaries who have lived a similar life. Since we have been in the UK A has been reluctant to talk about the PH. She has given the impression that everything in UK is wonderful. Being at camp has made her more open about talking about the Philippines and I am tremendously grateful to you for this.

The overall effect of the week spiritually was extremely positive. J said he felt closer to God than he had for several years. He loves being in groups and God really did speak to him. We have seen a lasting change. He especially valued the older teenagers' input. I think the main benefit for us was that it gave J some space away from us with other kids at a time when we were spending a lot of time together. It has also given him some vocabulary to describe his experience and a knowledge that he is not alone. He is settling into school like a duck to water, so I guess re-konnect helped with that!

It has also been quite significant for us as parents to get away and have time to reflect on how "re"-settlement was/is going for the children.

The kids were very enthusiastic about the week when we picked them up and still talk about things that happened. Although I am not sure that re-entry is something my kids are struggling with at the moment I like it that they have met up again with children that are in similar situations to them. When necessary we have the possibility to talk about it again and remind them that yes they might be a bit different from others around them but actually there are children who are in a similar position like them. We can remind them of Ruth and talk about her life. I think the week has helped them to think about their identity. It was wonderful to give our children into the hands of committed Christians who have helped them to do this and to learn more about God's involvement in their lives.

When we asked them what they had done, clearly this teaching (*from the book of Ruth*) had made an impact on them and they could relate it to their lives

Generally we think it was just a really good time.. a chance to let off steam and be with other kids who have had similar experiences. Somehow I think the letting off steam bit after living in a small rented flat + doing Mission Ed visits etc was really important. Our two are finding that even the fun in England is terribly organized and restricted. I think they liked the ruggedness of Yorkshire, and the bit they really raved about was the early morning walk down to the Craggs.

And what did the kids think...?

It helped us to know that other people feel the same as us.

The food was nice but Emma (*cook*) was even nicer!

Brilliant!

Ruth wasn't boring (!!)

Gill was very good at sticking plasters!

It was fun and I liked meeting people who had had similar experiences to us.

We enjoyed WOW (**W**indow **O**n the **W**orld). It was interesting and a good way to show/tell about your life.

We are not on our own or strange.

I enjoyed going to the river, catching frogs and getting wet!

THANKYOU to everyone who prayed and/or gave to make re-konnect such an important event in the lives of 20 TCKs this summer.