

reconnect report 2011



reconnect is now in its 10th year—so there have been many reconnect reports written and sent out...maybe you feel you have “*heard it all before*”

Over the years we have made laminated flags for all the countries children have come from- we now have 59, with 6 added this year (Jordan, Morocco, Guinea, Gambia, Kazakhstan and Vietnam).

We started reconnect in 2002, with just 16 children attending. Over the years we have seen it increase, with “reconnect NI” for children in Northern Ireland launched in 2006 (although this has floundered a little in the past couple of years) and in 2009 we increased to 2 weeks of reconnect each summer. This year we saw 39 lively TCKs aged 6 -12 attending over the 2 weeks.

Each year we have seen God provide us with the kids and the team to work with them...even if there have been a few last minute additions to both at times!

In this report we thought it would be good to let the kids tell you all about reconnect, what they have learned and why we should be encouraging others to come to reconnect. So, in their own words...

“reconnect is...”

absolutely brilliant
a time to get together and talk about
where we had lived and what it's
like there and get together and
pray
a time to make new friends
a great way to know you are not the
only one coming from overseas
a great way to be with people like
you
awesome
great for learning about different
countries, cultures and
experiences

“kids you should come to reconnect 2012 because...”

it's fun, it's action packed and it's a chance to learn more
it's great fun, it's time to get close to God, you can talk about your
experiences with people who understand you and you can make
loads of new friends
it's a great new experience and lots of fun action packed games
It's an opportunity to meet other people who have travelled around the
world and maybe experienced the same difficulties as you. There
are loads of games and bible stories.
it is really fun and we do so much!!!!
it is the best camp ever.
it is very helpful to get to know other children who have been through
the same things
there are so many things you can do and its the best camp in the UK.
it is a great way to reconnect back into English life!

What would you say to someone who is worried about coming next year because they have never stayed away from home before?

you find that everyone is friendly and you're
never left out.
bring something that you really like, like a teddy
bear
you'll soon forget your worries
everybody is friendly there's no need to worry
you have lots of friends and it doesn't matter
because you have a leader to talk to
it is fun.. You fit in by the first day
they feed us well

During reconnect, each TCK creates a 60 cm long personal time line. They come with dates of moves between countries and significant events such as birth of sibling, holiday, visit of grandparents, an accident, evacuation and so on. One 10 year old highlighted May 2011 because she became a Christian. When she was telling her small group, the leader invited others to describe steps in their faith journey. That conversation had such an impact on one girl that on her first day at home after reconnect she shared with her parents her realisation that she was not a Christian but wanted to be! We were just a tiny link in the chain but thrilled to partner with parents in nurturing the spiritual growth of their TCKs.

At **reconnect** TCKs learn it is perfectly normal to have multiple feelings in times of transition and not uncommon for them to be conflicting. We ask “What feelings have you got about being back in your passport country?” rather than “Are you glad to be back home?” We also reinforce the fact that feelings just *are*, but what we do with them can be either healthy or unhealthy. Our group of 6 -12 year olds generated these personal de-stressors following discussion about how they can help themselves, what they can ask others to do and what they can ask God to do.

<p>When I feel sad I can...</p> <p>go to my mum and dad read my favourite book/ bible talk to a friend make up happy stories talk to God</p>	<p>When I feel scared I can...</p> <p>cuddle up to my parents pray to God and He will help me remember God is always there distract myself hug my teddy</p>	<p>When I feel lonely I can...</p> <p>talk to my sister/brother go to my best friend talk to God talk to my toys tell my mum and dad</p>	<p>When I feel angry I can...</p> <p>breathe/ count slowly calm myself down let my mum hug me read the bible scream into my pillow go to my bedroom alone jump on my bed</p>
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Wow! These are 6-12 year-olds talking!

reconnect may be for kids, but it impacts whole families too...this is some of what parents have said to us:

Thanks for such a fantastic week. C and E had an amazing time, a great mixture of crafts, sports, as well as the Bible studies and WOW times. C said he really enjoyed those sessions in particular.

Thank you for the valuable input you have had in our children's lives. They loved the camp and benefited enormously from their time with you all.

C loves her reconnect tee shirt and she has had to wash it but as soon as it was dry it was back on again!

Many thanks for the amazing week and the work you do with mish kids. Both C and A have come away with a real sense of God's purpose in their lives and how important Uganda is to us as a family.

P and D really enjoyed the camp - thanks so much. It looked as though it was really well organised and balanced, and I couldn't have wished for anything better. I will certainly recommend it to anyone I come across. You are obviously gifted at what you do, so you might not see it as hard work, but I was very impressed.

Many, many thanks for the great week you all gave to E. she seems to have loved every minute of it. It was good for her to be able to talk about Guinea - and the week clearly brought some deep emotions back to the surface. Good, also, for her to make some new friends - and especially friends who do not contribute to the peer pressure she so often lives with in Birmingham

Reconnect seems to have had such a positive impact on H. She now wants to find the story of Ruth in her bible. She knows where it is and likes us to read alternate verses. She knows some of it off by heart so you must have taught her some sections. We are so pleased she is wanting to read the bible for herself. She really seems to have made her faith her own. It is just magical for us as parents to see. We are so thankful.

She definitely has been helped by being with others who are TCKs and who were interested in her life in Kyrgyzstan . In school the children would just say "Where did you say you lived? Pakistan????? H used to get very angry about that. Increasingly she is able to hold both the positive and the negative aspects of our time there. Before she was very negative.

Only space stops us from including more comments.

And what of reconnect 2012...? A big question mark as there are still many details to sort for next year.

The timing might be slightly different because we do not want to clash with the Olympics, the location *may* change because of changes at the Slack Top Centre, the teams most certainly will have some changes.

Do please pray with us about these changes - especially the make up of two teams for next year and the need to take the long view for the future. Janet Chapman, Gill Buckle and Dave & Janet Brown are now 10 years older than when reconnect started (and that shows at the pre-breakfast football or the 7am scramble down to the river...) Tom & Alix Stockwell have led week 2 of reconnect for the past 3 years, but may be unable to continue as main leaders, so we really do need God to provide us with the right people to continue this ministry - not just in 2012, but beyond. OMF and ZM have generously allowed JanetC and Dave to be involved with reconnect as part of their mission commitment. Maybe other mission agencies would be willing to make such a commitment to the care of TCKs through reconnect - why not ask yours?

contact reconnect <reconnect@gmail.com> for further details, enquiries or offers of help
see the Global Connections or OSCAR websites for details as they emerge for reconnect 2012
www.globalconnections.co.uk and www.oscar.org.uk