

Education in Mission: Why It's Important

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Why is education in mission important? What does education look like on the mission field? How is education inspiring more missions? I hope to share a little bit about these topics by relating to you my experiences as one who has been educated on the mission field and as one hoping to go back as a teacher in the future.

The first question to answer is “Why is education in mission important?” The first call to missions answers this. In Matthew 28:18–20 Jesus tells us, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” We are called to teach all nations to obey everything He has commanded us. Education is inherently part of mission. There are many roles education can take on the mission field, from teaching someone how to use more effective farming practices to teaching orphans how to read and write. I grew up on the mission field as a missionary kid and have witnessed many forms of education as mission.

When I was five years old, my family moved to South Asia. Not long after, I was enrolled in the local missionary kid school. This school is what allowed my parents to stay in Bangladesh to continue serving there. Without it, their ministry would have been cut short, or worse, not even begun. I was strongly influenced in my Christian beliefs and immersed in the Word of God daily. I am in debt to the teachers who accepted the call to come and work in the small and little-known country. The school enabled the parents of over two hundred children to stay in ministry, while also bringing their children up in a positive environment.

My dad's ministry, which will remain unnamed, began as an education initiative using drama and the arts to communicate the love of God alongside holistic messages about healthy living, family building, and moral teaching. It has now moved into other media ventures and is involved in teaching communities how to use drama to communicate messages to people, especially those who are illiterate.

My education in missionary schools greatly influenced me to be a missionary myself. When I was in tenth grade, I changed schools to one in Thailand, where I could attend with over five hundred other students and kids my own age. Before I left the country, I was one of two students in ninth grade. This decision to go to boarding school was extremely influential in my life. It was in Thailand that I began

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to use education as mission myself. Through a class called Sports Leadership, I was taught how to teach young kids how to play a variety of sports and swim. I was part of a team that planned a ministry trip to a refugee camp on the border of Burma. We also planned a rugby tournament for elementary students and taught local elementary kids how to play volleyball. These experiences led me on the path that I have taken in attaining a Recreation, Park, and Leisure Studies major, a Youth Studies minor, and now a pursuit of a Master of Arts in Teaching.

One of the most impactful experiences in these formative years of my life was the trip we took to visit the refugee school. On this trip, we led worship, devotions, and group games and lived life, if only for a short time, with kids from five to nineteen who had virtually nothing. They slept in a long thatched hut, wore the same clothes every day, ate two meals a day at most and yet were still happy. The one prized possession among all of the kids was a beat-up old guitar that would not stay in tune. We learned a lot about planning lessons, preparation, intercultural communication, and group games, but we left with so much more. We were able to minister to these kids for a short time, but the memory of my time with them continues to teach me to be thankful for what I have, and to fight for those who have nothing.

The dream that I have had since my first years in college is to start a camp in Thailand that can serve on a variety of platforms: a version of the “summer camp” that is widespread in America, a retreat center for missionaries and conference center for organizations, and tourist attractions such as a high-ropes course and guided adventure tours. All of this dream is secondary to the overall goal of community outreach, which will be spearheaded by students of the same school I attended and funded by the profits from tourism and conferences. The family structure in Thailand is in rough shape, and many young people find themselves without a job or training. It is my hope and prayer that a young adult mentorship program through the camp could attract some of these young people with adventure, connect them with a job, and change them through the Word of God.

I currently work at World Mission Prayer League as the Young Adult Coordinator, a Lutheran-based praying and sending organization. It is through this ministry that I am able to engage with young people, educate, and advocate *for* missions. Using education as mission has been so important in my own life, but inspiring and educating others about world mission is what will impact future generations. In Romans 10:14 it says, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”