

Statement of Findings

Response Team

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Attention

GEM Canada Board Chairperson
GEM Canada CEO
Dan Snyder

With copy to

EMCC's Board Appointed Team Lead
Hillcrest School's Superintendent and Student Protection Officer
SHARE President
GEM US Director of HR
Interviewed Witnesses

Introduction

This Statement of Findings (SOF) is in response to historical reports of harm by Dan Snyder prior to his service with Greater Europe Mission (GEM). The reports are from former students during Dan's service at Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria, while employed by the mission body of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC).

Dan was employed by EMCC and seconded to Hillcrest from 1984 to 1998. Dan met his wife-to-be, Janet, at Hillcrest, in the early 1990s and married in 1995. Between 1998 and 2005, Dan worked as the business manager and treasurer for EMCC's Nigeria field. From 2006 onward, Dan was seconded to SHARE Education Services (SHARE), which involved a move to Hungary, and subsequently their application to serve under GEM. They were appointed in 2007 to serve with GEM, continuing their secondment with SHARE in Hungary. In 2020, Dan and Janet announced their intent to retire from employment status with GEM in summer of 2021.

GEM received reports of historical harm on May 26, 2021 prior to the anticipated retirement date. GEM Canada placed Dan on indefinite administrative leave on May 27, 2021 pending the results in this SOF.

The reports of harm come from Dan's time while working at Hillcrest as a Middle School Math teacher, specifically 1986 to 1992.

The response team from GEM included Tim Smith (Director of HR, GEM US) and Doug Barkman (CEO, GEM Canada). Tim is a licensed counsellor, and both Tim and Doug are certified by the Child Safety Protection Network.

As an historical case preceding Dan's time with GEM, the initial scope of our response was regarding Dan's time with GEM (Canada). This ranged from his application and references, through to his employment and church involvement in Hungary. Our expectation at this stage was that the school where the incidents occurred and Dan's employer at that time would pursue a thorough response to the reports, and we would include their SOFs in ours.

The response team contacted both organizations to gain a clearer view of their response procedures.

Due to a lack of clear evidence that a thorough process would be pursued in a proactive manner by either Hillcrest or EMCC, we expanded our scope to include interviews with the reporting individuals, to ensure that those reporting harm had a full opportunity to speak, be heard, and to see if the reporting individuals had the supports they needed to process their experiences.

This process included interviews with four individuals who reported historical harm. An additional three written reports were brought to the response team's attention. These reports were considered for context, but no interview was available with these individuals. The response team also interviewed Dan, and received statements from Dan's field supervision in Hungary with GEM.

This SOF will include the initial scope findings, and then go on to identify the findings through interviews with the former Hillcrest students about Dan during his time with EMCC and Hillcrest, before culminating in the presentation of recommendations.

Initial Scope

It is not uncommon for abusive behaviour to perpetuate for years. Despite the reports of harm predating Dan's time with GEM, we sought to determine whether we might find more reports during his time with GEM.

The response team began by looking at the circumstances surrounding the Snyders' move from EMCC to GEM in 2007. In examining the application materials and references, we found that there were no indications during the vetting process of behavioural issues, conduct complaints, or flags about personal space, etc.

The response team connected with EMCC and confirmed that their departure from EMCC was the result of changes that meant the EMCC could no longer be their sending agency for their work in Hungary. We found that this was a reasonable and unrelated reason for changing organizations.

The response team connected with Hillcrest and confirmed that there were no personnel files demonstrating any behavioural issues that EMCC or subsequently GEM would have benefited in having during the vetting process. We found that, although this is not an indication that nothing

happened, this is an indication that the vetting process was not held incomplete from available information.

The response team connected with Dan's supervisor in SHARE and received a report from SHARE president Pamela Anderson. According to their reports, Dan did have contact with minors, but not alone due to SHARE policies. At SHARE conferences, Dan would have had access to minors, and was even the Child Protection Officer (CPO) for a number of these events. Dan's typical responsibility was to be at the check-in desk in spacious venues (conference centres) to answer general and finance questions. When acting as CPO, he would walk from testing room to testing room to monitor, looking in through required open doors, to see that nothing inappropriate was happening. Although the report indicated that he would look in through open doors, it does bear to reason that he may have at times entered a testing room when sightlines required it.

Pamela reported that Dan expressed difficulties with authority figures within SHARE, male and female. She also shared a story of concern regarding defying police authority over a train ticket. She said that she personally experienced Dan demonstrating a quick temper, especially when his competence or knowledge were questioned.

SHARE's report is congruent with the potential for other reports of harm to exist, but in examining SHARE's policies and practices we believe that they have done a good job putting measures in place to protect minors during the time when Dan was serving with SHARE. Access existed but was limited and monitored as well as can be reasonably expected, utilizing appropriate facilities and procedures for conferences. Although there were occasions when he operated as an event-based CPO, there is no indication that he used this temporary responsibility to either gain access to or cover up reports of harm.

SHARE's report of Dan's temper under questioning and general approach to authority is concerning and is noted in context.

Regarding Dan's time between 2007 and 2021, we were not able to find any indication of impropriety consistent with the historical reports of harm. However, Dan's level of cooperation with our response to these reports was consistent with SHARE's reports regarding both temper and respect for authority. Upon hearing that EMCC was not pursuing reports any further, Dan announced "I consider the matter closed". Only after Doug reminded him of the repercussions of rejecting our process did he apologize and proceed to participate in the process. Beyond the initial historical reports of harm, this attitude toward what we see as a valuable process and service to the vulnerable people we serve in ministry was noted and considered in our recommendations.

Secondary Scope

GEM doesn't presume to fulfill the responsibilities of EMCC or Hillcrest in our response, but in keeping with our child safety and protection policies, we will pursue and take all reports seriously, regardless of when they occurred. Since these historical reports of harm involved a

contemporary GEM missionary, and since our policy was not satisfied with the responses of the organizations most relevant to the reports, we needed to pursue these reports to satisfy the level of care that our policies hold us accountable to.

GEM doesn't need to publish the names of any individuals who made reports or provided interviews with the response team. It should be enough to know that we have not falsified this or any related process. The individuals have all identified themselves to GEM by name and as former Hillcrest students, during the time when Dan taught grade 7 math at Hillcrest and shared the stories of their experiences with Dan as a teacher and as a chaperone. As the names of individuals is not critical to the presentation of these findings, we will anonymize their reports in the SOF.

Interview #1

This witness was accompanied by her counsellor. She shared that her experience was primarily in 1986 as a grade 7 student. She shared experiences of bra-strap touching and snapping, Dan having students over to his campus housing to watch sexualized films like *Howard the Duck*, and offering students shandy while in his residence.

She indicated that she wasn't alone at his residence, but that there weren't other adults, either.

Interview #2

This witness shared that her experience was primarily in 1989 as a grade 7 student. She reported behaviour in the classroom that made her feel uncomfortable, such as whispering to her with his face close to her head, and then touching and massaging her shoulders. She shared that although it didn't traumatize her, it stuck with her and when she heard the experiences of others, she realized that she wasn't alone in her experience. She shared that it was talked about at school among her peers, that Dan was touchy feeling, would get in her personal space, and that she had the feeling that he was "creepy".

She shared that her initial response to it as a grade 7 child was that she felt he was being genuine when he noticed that she was having trouble with her math, but that she realized later how inappropriate that expression was between an adult and a child.

Interview #3

This witness shared that her experience was primarily in 1988 as a grade 7 student. She shared that although she recalls him offering help to students outside of school, she wasn't one of them. She recalled him rubbing her back and neck, and feeling confused by it. She shared that she saw this with other girls as well, but has no recollection of seeing him do the same with boys.

Peripherally, she shared that she just recently heard of him having students over for sleepovers, but this allegation has not showed up elsewhere.

She also shared a time when Dan playfully cleared a group of girls blocking a classroom door by wedging his way in to their midst, giving one of the girls a bear hug, and pulling her away from the door.

Interview #4

This witness shared that her experience was primarily in 1986 as an 11-year-old grade 7 student. She shared that after struggling with math work, Dan invited her to stay after school. She told her friend, who was playing basketball, to meet up with her afterward to catch the late bus, suggesting her expectation that the work would be done at the school. When she met Dan in his classroom after school, he changed the location to his residence. She recalls feeling increasingly uncomfortable with the scenario, and that it got “really weird” when they reached his residence. She felt uncomfortable, but she shared that because he was a teacher, she suppressed the uncomfortable feeling. When they arrived, he told her to wait in the living room. She shared that “I didn’t understand, we were there, there’s a table, we’ve got the books, why can’t we do the work? We could have already done this back in the classroom.” Before leaving her in the living room, he offered her butter mints (a sweet treat in Nigeria), and then walked to the back of the house. She shared that she recalled wondering why he was offering her treats, since teachers didn’t do that for homework, and definitely not like this, so she ran away and kept running until she reached the basketball courts where her friend was.

She shared that she felt like she couldn’t share it with anyone, because if she’d shared it with her dorm/house mother, they would say that the missionaries were people there to serve God, so who is a little girl to say something about an adult like that. And if she would say it to her parents, she may have been taken out of the school, but that would mean being taken away from her friends, so she felt a responsibility to just take care of it by herself.

She shared that the non-missionary kids (non-MKs) were treated differently compared to how the MKs were treated.

Publicly shared report (no interview) #1

Grade 7 and 8 math teacher, incidents in 1991-1992. This witness shared that Dan would rub her back and snap her bra strap during math class, and recalled feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable by this.

Publicly shared report (no interview) #2

Grade 7 math teacher and Grade 9 trip chaperone, incidents in 1988-89. This witness shared that Dan was tickling her while they were in a pool together and that he proceeded to touch her breast.

Publicly shared report (no interview) #3

Grade 7 and 8 math teacher, incidents in 1990-1992. This witness shared that Dan would rub her back and stroke her hair while assisting with classwork. Shared that Dan insisted on not calling her by name, preferring nicknames instead even when being told repeatedly to use her given name, feeling belittled and uncomfortable.

Dan Snyder's Interview

Dan described his transition from teacher to EMCC's treasurer and business manager for the Nigeria field as having happened when Hillcrest hired a national teacher to cover his furlough and kept the temporary teacher on after he returned due to a budgetary decision.

Dan also noted that his only discipline was being asked to get additional courses while on furlough, which he shared that he did. He was not able to recall the kind of courses that were required.

Dan noted that although there weren't allegations raised against him while at Hillcrest, there was an instance when the superintendent called him in to address what he described as a practice of touching students on the shoulder. The superintendent said that it would be good if he discontinued the practice, which he said that he did. He could not recall when that conversation took place.

Dan noted, in response to reports of offering children alcohol, that he has "never used alcohol and wouldn't tell anyone else to use alcohol". He also noted, regarding bra straps, that he had touched girls on the shoulder but not pulled at their straps.

Regarding reports of having children over to his residence, Dan shared that when he had kids come over to his home, it would usually be 4 at a time and he always made sure that there was another staff member present, either a neighbour or, later in the 1990s, Janet. He also shared that they never watched movies.

This was inconsistent with multiple reports, and those practices for child safety and protection would have been quite progressive in the 1980s.

Dan later went on to say that when children came from the hostels, they often came alone, and that there were no other adults, which contradicted his claims that kids came over in groups and that there was another staff member present.

The interview supported a general awareness of the potential for misinterpretation of misinformed and inappropriate behaviours, but did not acknowledge inappropriate touch or behaviour.

Letter from former Hillcrest Board Member to Hillcrest

Diane Ray served on the Hillcrest Board of Governors from 1979 through 1991. She shared in a letter to Hillcrest that the daughter of missionary colleagues of theirs received inappropriate attention from Dan during the late 1980s. The parents were upset and warned their daughter to stay away from him. Diane shared that they never received full details about the behaviour or whether or not it was reported, but that she also never received a report at the board level.

Hillcrest's response, even though the original letter was about Dan, only addressed a separate and unrelated abuse case, and then went on to discuss what's being done today for child protection on campus.

Summary of Information Gathering for the Secondary Scope

Although outside our initial relevant scope, it became apparent how important and valuable this process would be. We heard indirectly and directly from seven women, and received an indirect report from a board member of what may or may not have been an overlapping experience. These 7+ reports took place between 1986 and 1992, and shared a clear record of consistent behaviour as experienced by multiple young girls.

Reports involve everything from inappropriate touch performed casually in public settings to concerning private behaviour involving children, all in the role as a Christian authority meant to care and assist in the development of children. The power differential in their relationship, the cavalier use of access to children, the use of his own private residence as a site for interacting with minors in the absence of other adults, is all at its base deeply concerning, even without reports of impropriety.

While it was clear from reporting individuals that Dan did not progress to a level of sexual conduct with children, there is a high degree of sexualized behaviour consistent in reports. Touching bras or snapping the straps, which may have been given a light pass in its day, normalizes a dangerous behaviour. It produces a crack in the armour of a young girl's understanding of what is okay and what is not okay, at a pivotal stage of development for these children. It opens the door for vulnerability to other abuses, and it creates shame by producing a situation where a child is forced to either say something against an adult Christian authority, or carry a secret. The weight of secrets in abusive situations is heavy.

Overall Summary of Findings

Our findings strongly suggest that Dan's behaviour during his years at Hillcrest while in the employ of EMCC was inappropriate and should have been enough to remove him from his role to prevent further access and potential harm. The volume and consistency of reports should not be ignored.

The reported behaviour should also have been enough to prevent his subsequent work with SHARE and GEM. In the absence of disciplinary records for his behaviour, there was no way for the vetting processes of either SHARE or GEM to make such decisions. The vetting procedures considered reference questions related to interactions with members of the opposite sex, with authority, and with submission. No references gave any cause for hesitation or further inquiry.

Throughout the reports we received, a pattern of access and normalcy in this type of behaviour was described at the school, with missionaries being elevated to a place of rare questioning and men given unmonitored access to children. Within this environment, Dan is still responsible for his behaviour and the choices he made.

Recommendations – Introduction

Recommendations by the Response Team are simply that – recommendations. We will make recommendations to Dan, to GEM, and given the nature of how this response process unfolded, we will also make recommendations to Hillcrest and EMCC. We are not attempting to go outside our lane in these recommendations. We simply have been given the opportunity through hearing the experiences of Hillcrest alumni to better understand their experiences, which has the potential to benefit both Hillcrest and EMCC as they seek to continually improve their own practices, care for vulnerable people involved in their ministries, and respect those who have experienced harm connected to their ministries.

Recommendations – GEM

We recommend that GEM Canada either formally adopt a shared Child Safety and Protection policy of its own or with its US or international counterparts. Although GEM Canada chose to submit to the Child Safety and Protection policy of its US counterpart, this process has demonstrated the potential for GEM Canada to have bypassed a policy-driven accountability.

We recommend that GEM Canada consider training someone other than its CEO in CSPN response, to provide additional accountability. In this case, the CEO (Doug) is deferring decision-making on these recommendations to the GEM Canada Board Chairperson. Distinct policy would allow for a clear organizational process that reflects the structure of GEM Canada, without allowing for the potential of the CEO to quiet or dismiss claims of historical abuse.

We recommend that GEM should consider adopting an international policy to ensure that all its operating countries are held to a consistently high standard of response, with subsections for structurally-affected procedures in each centre.

We recommend that GEM not offer Dan Snyder Associate status. During the response process, Dan exhibited an unhealthy attitude and at one point excused himself from the process on his own terms. Although he re-engaged with the process after Doug explained to him what he was doing, his natural response to a reasonable and valuable process fell short of the compassion and sensitivity we would expect of a representative of Christ.

Additionally, as Dan's ministry with GEM was through SHARE, Associate status would likely involve receipting ministry expenses connected to work with SHARE. Although there is no indication that Dan has abused his access to children with SHARE, it is fair to say that GEM would not have knowingly allowed access to children in the past, given these findings. Given his attitude toward leadership and this process of accountability, it is not advisable to engage in this particular risk/reward scenario.

Recommendations – EMCC

EMCC's current policy on responding to historical reports of harm meant that the organization exited its response process early because of insufficient data.

We recommend that EMCC refine its process to better recognize the nature of historical reports of harm, and to pursue truth as it relates to their missionaries and ministries in a proactive manner. Specifically, we recommend that there not be a minimum number of claims required, and that EMCC recognize data shared due to social media and similar platforms as relevant.

Recommendations – Hillcrest

Although Hillcrest has pointed to its current protection of students through its modern child safety and protection policies, it has been clear that its alumni have not felt adequately received by those policies. Given the likelihood of other historical cases, the school has a responsibility to do all it possibly can to seek and restore confidence in its response process.

We recommend that Hillcrest own the responsibility of the experiences that its alumni have had within the school. We do not get the luxury of taking credit for good things only to point to the personnel-supplying employers for bad things. Mission organizations place a high degree of trust in the receiving field to not only care for their members, but to also hold them accountable in partnership with the mission employers. There are no records of reports held by the school, delivered to their Board of Directors, or to the mission employers, so it seems appropriate for the school to take a degree of responsibility for what took place on its campus during this time. If alumni aren't responding well to the efforts that they've taken, it would be worth examining why that might be, and exploring ways to recover from that failed trust with the alumni themselves.

We recommend that Hillcrest provide a channel and opportunity for Dan to issue an apology.

Recommendations – Dan Snyder

We recommend that Dan share these findings with Janet, and that they pursue Christian couples counselling with someone who has experience working with cases of historical harm. GEM Canada can help recommend counsellors to this end.

We recommend that Dan work with Hillcrest and EMCC to offer an apology. GEM Canada is not in a position to make this possible, but believe that it is a valuable part of healing for all parties involved. Forgiveness is given freely, but must be sought.

We recommend that Dan openly engage his current pastor in this conversation as he seeks to establish himself in his new location in retirement.