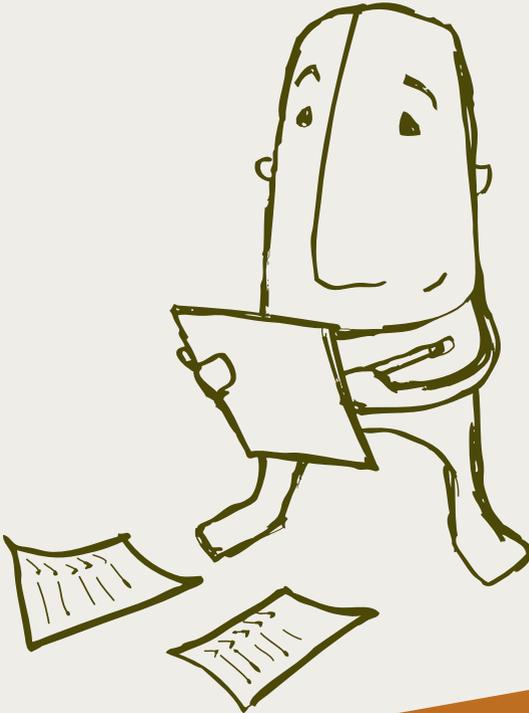


**'Do it Well'**  
Mission Toolkit



# Doing the Groundwork

**BOOKLET 2**

Looks at getting church support, connecting with people overseas, recruiting teams, and practical planning issues.

## 'Do It Well' at a Glance

### Stage 1: Exploration

- Do you know what the Bible says about mission?
- Are you clear what short-term mission is about?
- Have you thought about planning, training, support and follow-up?

#### 'Do it Well' Booklet 1

##### Thinking of Going



### Stage 2: Preparation

- Building church support
- Building connections with people overseas
- Recruiting team leaders and members
- Practical planning

#### 'Do it Well' Booklet 2

##### Doing the Groundwork



### Stage 3: The Team

- Team-building
- Team training
- Supporting your team
- Travelling and working overseas

#### 'Do it Well' Booklet 3

##### Ready, Steady, Go

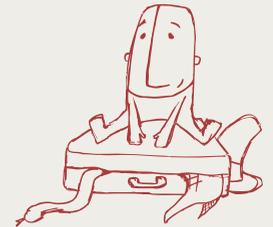


### Stage 4: Home Again

- Returning to your own culture
- Reporting back
- Continuing your mission involvement

#### 'Do it Well' Booklet 4

##### Finishing Well



### At Any Stage:

- Need extra help and inspiration?
- Want to know who to contact?

#### 'Do it Well' Booklet 5

##### Resources & Links



"The Mission Involvement Committee of the Board of Mission Overseas acknowledges with gratitude the considerable time, energy and thought given by Dr Deborah Ford in gathering and writing the material contained in this toolkit, and for the helpful advice and guidance given by the members of the Toolkit Working Group."

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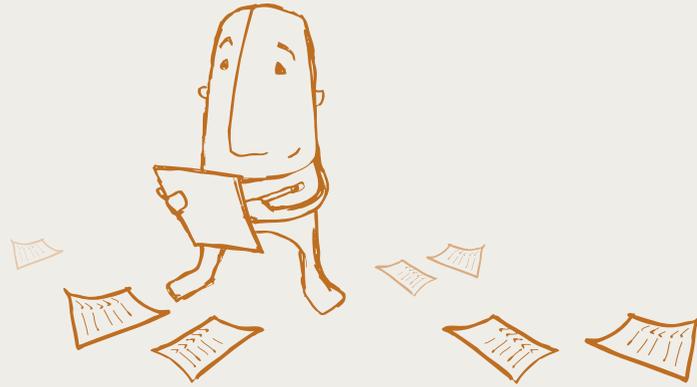
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[www.hbddesign.com](http://www.hbddesign.com)

## Drawing up that 'to-do' list

Now that you've decided that God's calling your congregation to send a short-term mission team overseas, there'll be plenty of things to think about and lots to add to that 'to-do' list. This booklet, the second in the **'Do It Well'** series of guidelines for those sending and going on overseas mission teams, looks at five key 'must-do' areas:

1. **Developing a sending congregation:** raising the prayerful and practical home support that your team will need.
2. **Establishing a partnership overseas:** identifying a suitable host, information-gathering, building relationships and developing a viable partnership in mission.
3. **Planning together:** drawing up a team programme and working through the logistics: communication; internal travel; accommodation; equipment; work and ministry issues; security and medical care; finance; decision-making, and so on!
4. **Forming your team:** selecting team leaders; publicising the team; recruiting team members.
5. **Getting down to details:** drawing up a time-table; assigning responsibilities; fund-raising; organising travel and documents; dealing with preliminary health matters; carrying out a risk assessment.



Of course, building up relationships with senders and hosts, recruiting a team and sorting out the practical details isn't the end of the story. For help and guidance on team-building, spiritual welfare, cross-cultural orientation and ministry and health and safety while your team is overseas, see **'Do It Well' Booklet 3, 'Ready, Steady, Go'**.

And remember that, as well as going out, your team will be coming home eventually! **'Do It Well' Booklet 4, 'Finishing Well'**, guides you through proactive planning for your return, including debriefing and reporting-back, plus on-going mission involvement and developing your partnership with your hosts.

### *Mission as partnership*

As you begin to make arrangements for your mission trip, it's vital to remember from the start that there's more to a mission trip than plans – there are people!

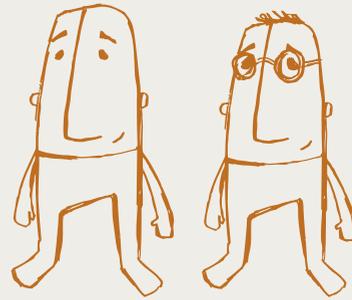
Equally, short-term mission isn't only about 'those who go.' It's a *partnership* between those who go, those who send them and those who host them. It has knock-on implications for both sending and receiving churches and God is the one who creates and cements all these relationships.



*"I need to start getting organised, and see how my friends and church can support me and my team."*

There's more to a mission trip than plans - there are people involved! Remember, short-term mission is a partnership between those who go, those who send them and those who host them.

# 1. Developing a sending congregation



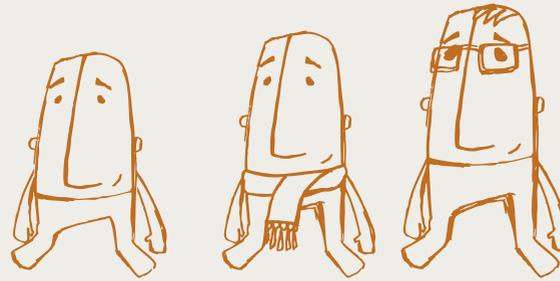
Romans 10:13 -15 clearly indicates that missionaries cannot 'go' unless they are 'sent'.

A 'sender' is someone who is committed to enabling others to go out in mission. Acts 13 and 14 remind us that even Paul and Barnabas needed to have a church full of senders behind them: people to recognise God's call; to encourage them in their first tentative missionary steps; to commission them; to support and pray for them while they were away; and to listen to and follow them up once they'd returned.

Your congregational short-term mission team will have similar needs! Bear in mind too that:

- Overseas teams do not just happen overnight, but need a considerable input in terms of time and planning – ideally, over a period of at least 10 to 12 months.
- As well as the actual leaders, key leaders or members of the congregation will also be needed to 'champion' the trip, take responsibility for 'sending' the team, and, as things develop, to present the opportunities and needs of the team's visit to the congregation at large on a regular basis.
- People will also be needed with patience, enthusiasm, and sensitivity for the cross-cultural relating and planning phases.

Notes:



For these reasons, a small group should be formed to help investigate and develop a partnership and to assist in the programme-planning process.

While this group will take on a significant responsibility for making the trip happen, it's important to promote the trip from the beginning as something in which every church member and organisation should be involved, whether or not they actually travel overseas.

After all, 'sending' encompasses all kinds of practical and logistical help: sourcing materials and donating resources; helping to pack; fund-raising; providing transport; encouraging; emotional support. People will be needed who will communicate with the team while they're away, and who will keep an eye on relatives while they're gone. Regular updates will need to be given to the church at large, and emails circulated or blog entries publicised. Some senders may like to take on the role of 'debriefing' short-term team participants: in other words, helping them to think through and process their overseas experience and encouraging them to continue their Christian discipleship and mission involvement once they're home. Young people, particularly, might benefit from on-going mentoring.

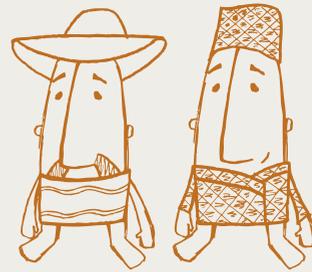
Most importantly, before, during and after the trip, everyone will need to pray!

Thought!

*Overseas teams do not just happen overnight, but need considerable input of both time and detailed planning - ideally over a period of at least 10 to 12 months.*

*It's important to make it clear from the beginning that every church member and organisation should be involved whether or not they actually travel overseas.*

## 2. Establishing a partnership overseas



### 2.1 Identifying potential locations & hosts

When thinking about where you might go and with whom you might partner, it's best to begin right where you are, by looking at your own congregation.

As an interesting practical exercise, invite the members of the congregation to mark their overseas links on a world map. The number of connections that already exist may surprise you! <sup>1</sup>

Also, ask yourselves the following questions:

- Are there any churches, countries, people or mission agencies that your congregation already has an interest in?
- Are there any particular needs, contexts, types of work or ministry that your congregation might strongly identify with?
- Is there anyone from your congregation already working overseas – either in a Christian or a secular context?
- Is there anyone from overseas who is a member of the congregation, or who lives within your parish?
- Does anyone in your congregation regularly travel overseas – for example, as a student, or on business?
- What languages are spoken within your congregation?

Notes:



- Are there any ideas from or overseas contacts associated with your wider local community? For example, is there a civic twinning programme, a link through organisations like Rotary International or the local Chamber of Commerce, or local school, sporting or musical exchanges? <sup>2</sup>

When thinking about sending a team, it's also important to think about the best sort of hosts for you – a mission agency, expatriate missionaries, a national church, individual national Christians or a local congregation?

If sending an overseas team is new to you, it might be best to start off by enquiring with PCI's Board of Mission Overseas (BMO), or a reputable mission agency, which can provide you with suggestions, initial contacts and advice, or even organise and tailor the trip according to your situation.

For further information, see:

Presbyterian Mission Overseas:  
[www.pcimissionoverseas.org](http://www.pcimissionoverseas.org)

Mission Agencies Partnership:  
[www.mapmission.org](http://www.mapmission.org) [Northern Ireland]

Irish Mission Agencies Partnership:  
[www.imap.ie](http://www.imap.ie) [Republic of Ireland]

Thought!

*When thinking about where you might go and with whom you might partner, it's best to begin right where you are, by looking at your own congregation.*

Take time to do some in depth research. Find out what interests, links or involvements your members may already have overseas.

## 2. Establishing a partnership overseas

### 2.2 Talking together

Jesus' mission was 'not to be served but to serve.' Mission is a two-way thing but, in practice, many short-term teams give very little prominence to their hosts, even though it's the hosts who make the team's overseas visit possible. It's the hosts who know the local people, the culture, the language and the needs of the host ministry best. *The hosts should therefore play an integral role in the design and planning of your mission team from the very beginning.* It's their work, their mission, and you've come simply to support and serve them. Your team should always be tailored to their needs and to their long-term vision.

From this starting-point, team leaders and hosts will need to agree together on specific aims and objectives for the visit, the type of ministry to which the team can best contribute (remember that listening, learning and observing are also important) and the type of team that's needed. That means you'll need to spend a lot of time just getting to know each other.

In particular,

- If you are considering sending a team to a project or partnership which is already established, you might want to ask about the history of the project, how well established the relationship is, how long the potential hosts have been involved, and what experience they've already had of receiving teams.



Notes:

- It's worth establishing at an early stage whether or not the hosts see the relationship as a 'two-way' thing. Would they be sufficiently informed and resourced to host you? Is there potential for an on-going relationship?
- While it might sound obvious, remember that you'll need a basic compatibility in terms of your understanding of the Christian faith and a shared concern for outreach.

### 2.3 Building relationships

Mutual trust, confidence and understanding need to be developed before you take a team, and you will need to be able to communicate openly and honestly with your hosts overseas.

#### The following tips might help: <sup>3</sup>

- *Information-gathering:* Just as with mission at home, there needs to be considerable thinking and planning, sensitive to the needs of the likely 'target audience', if the Gospel is to be communicated effectively in word and deed. Find out all you can about the potential partner and the location, before and after making contact – history, geography, culture, politics and religion, current issues, church context and situation.

Thought!

*Many short-term mission teams give little prominence to their overseas hosts even though they make the team's visit possible, and know the local people, language, culture and ministry needs.*

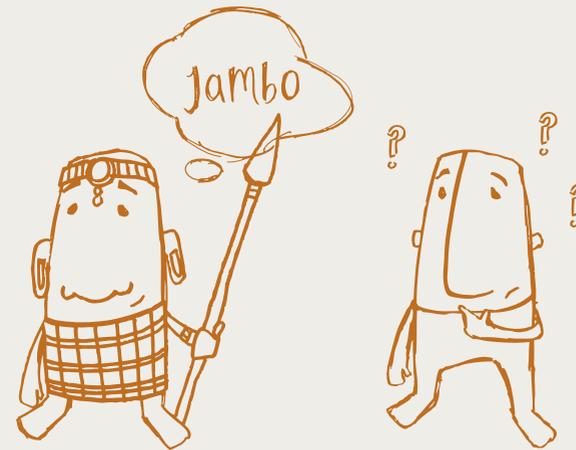
*It is vital that your hosts play an integral role in the design and planning of your mission team right from the very beginning.*

## 2. Establishing a partnership overseas

### 2.3 Building relationships

Look at mission and current affairs websites, as well as newspapers and magazine articles. Speak to people who have already visited, or who have been to similar areas. Find out if there are any missionaries recently returned or on home assignment whom you could consult, or whether there is anyone from the region currently living or studying here.

- **Information-sharing:** Share information with your partner about your respective congregations or situations – history, background, present membership, the parish setting, the strengths and weakness of each community. Find out what being a Christian means in each context, and how you both share your faith. Exchange photos, share prayer needs and pray for one another.
- **Communicating with folk overseas:** Bear in mind that while we are used to email and other 'instant' means of communication, this may be more difficult for folk overseas who may not have email in their home and who may have to travel some distance to retrieve messages. Remember too that communicating in a second or third language may not be easy. Telephone (be aware of the time difference!) and text are probably the best means to use. Be patient when communicating, and don't give up too quickly!



Notes:

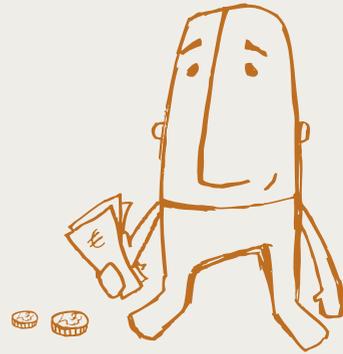
- **Sensitivities:** Try to be culturally and politically sensitive and give careful thought to who might read, see or hear your communications. This is especially important in areas where there are restrictions on political or religious freedom. Again, BMO or a 'connected' mission agency should be able to advise you.
- **Cultural barriers:** Remember, too, that even though you may all speak English, you're likely to have very different views of the world and of each other. Booklet 4, 'Ready, Steady, Go', looks in more detail at cross-cultural communication, but as a general principle, it's good to know that while Westerners tend to home in on efficiency and 'getting things done', for non-Westerners it's relationships that really matter.
- **Expectations:** People from very different backgrounds entering into a new relationship will inevitably have differing expectations. It's important that both you and your overseas partner clarify and understand your respective aims, hopes and expectations for the team's visit. Set some goals and work out how you might achieve them, and be as simple and practical as possible to start with. Write down your expectations, objectives and outcomes in a document which everyone can use and refer back to during the team's visit. Both partners should work out what they hope to receive as well as what they hope to give.



*Establishing a partnership overseas will take time and patience. The process should include sharing information, communicating regularly, being aware of and sensitive to differences in cultures and also expectations.*

It's always well worthwhile speaking to someone who has lived in the country you are planning to go to, who can listen to your plans, answer any questions and give valuable advice.

## 2. Establishing a partnership overseas



### 2.3 Building relationships

- **Mutuality:** It's particularly important to identify the expectations of both partners with regard to money and ownership. Westerners can often be tempted to assume a dominant role because of their access to technology, know-how and material resources, while financially weaker partners can be tempted to simply fall into the role of recipient. Set measurable financial objectives, and be sure you've agreed before you start exactly who will pay for what. Try to share ownership, and don't let money become the sole focus of the trip. Remember that "wealth is more than money"<sup>4</sup> – gifts, abilities, experience, hospitality, enthusiasm, vitality and challenge are all part of the 'wealth' you have to share together.



## 3. Planning



### 3. Planning together

Once a relationship has been developed with your hosts and the general context and aims and objectives of the trip start to become clear, it's time to get down to discussing some practicalities together.

#### 3.1 Timing

When will you go, and how long for? From your end, you may well be limited by what suits potential participants in terms of holidays or time off, especially if they are teachers, students or, perhaps, limited to the 'Twelfth Fortnight' in July (if they live in Northern Ireland).

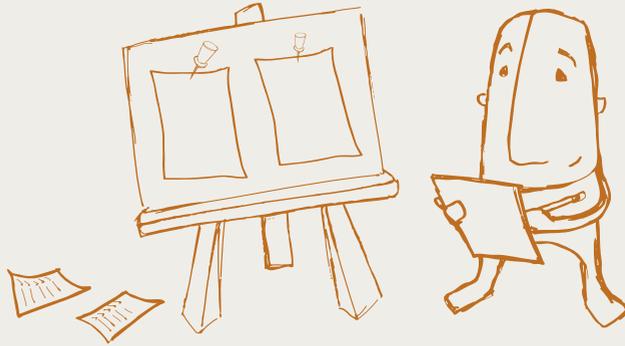
It's equally important, though, that the timing suits your hosts! You'll need to check whether your preferred dates overlap with holidays, difficult seasons climatically or significant dates overseas.<sup>5</sup> You'll also need to be sensitive to your hosts' regular work schedules and family needs. Bear in mind also that you may want to plan the trip so that it includes at least two Sundays in your hosts' church.



*If you plan to engage in some specific activities overseas, make sure you aren't so busy 'doing' that you have no time to relate to local people and experience the cultural differences.*

*The value of seeing, listening, learning, and forming relationships cannot be underestimated.*

## 3. Planning



### 3.2 Identifying possible mission 'Activities'

Is this purely a 'seeing, experiencing and learning' trip, or will there also be opportunities for some specific activity, such as practical work, evangelism, children's clubs, training leaders, teaching, or several different types of ministry? Will such work offer opportunities to work alongside and get to know local Christians? Again, remember the value of listening, learning, and forming relationships.

### 3.3 Programme planning

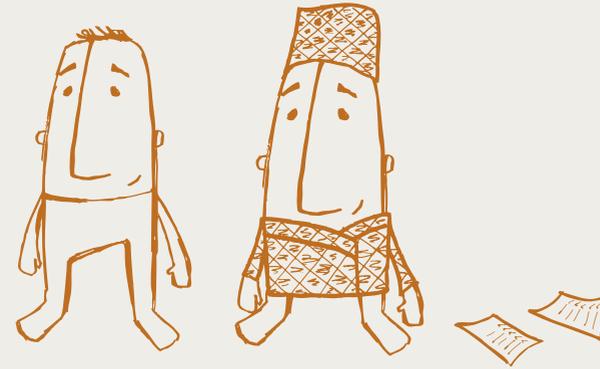
Senders and hosts will need to work out a mutually-agreed programme and daily schedule for the trip. Remember to factor in a day or two at the beginning for orientation, and a day or two at the end for 'recovery' and 'reflection', as well as a chance to do some 'fun stuff.'

The team should also have at least one day off per week, in addition to time spent at church services (which may well take up most of Sunday, or its equivalent).

Also make sure you allow enough exposure to the local culture, such as eating local meals, taking local transport, and seeing local life, as well as church involvement and 'tourist' sights.

*While bearing in mind that you are there primarily to serve your host church, try to work out an overall programme that would most stretch and benefit the*

Notes:



*participants, and that would give them opportunities to see a mix of contexts: urban and rural; rich and poor; 'front-line' and 'back-stage' ministries; and to meet with both expatriate missionaries and local Christians. When planning your daily programme, bear in mind the time needed for: travel, the team and ministry preparation, as well as time for individual devotions, personal space, and laundry! Remember, too, that a different climate and culture often mean that life is lived at a much slower pace, particularly if you're doing any kind of manual work. You therefore need to adjust your expectations accordingly!*

### 3.4 On-field orientation

While you'll try to learn as much as possible before you go, you'll want to ask your hosts to give you an introduction to your partner church (or mission) once you've arrived. Some cultural orientation and a few question-and-answer sessions with missionaries and local church leaders would be very helpful. A little language-learning is always fun too!

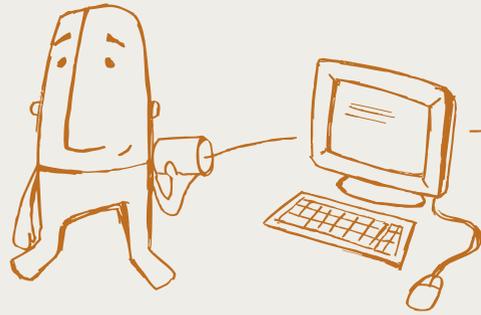
Remember, too, that while you will need orientation to your hosts' culture, national hosts might be equally nervous about hosting you. They may be concerned, for example, about what you will eat and whether you can cope and therefore might need some orientation to your culture!

Thought!

*A different climate and culture often mean that life is lived at a much slower pace, particularly if you're doing manual work, so adjust your expectations accordingly!*

*Be sure to plan for time off for the team to relax, and to encounter a mix of people and cultural experiences.*

## 3. Planning



### 3.5 Logistics <sup>6</sup>

A reliable *phone-line* and *access to email* while overseas would be helpful. Your hosts may also need to provide a letter of invitation and a street address for visa applications or to enable your team members to complete landing or disembarkation cards on arrival in the country.

In addition to international travel, plans will have to be made for *internal transport*. Do you need to hire vehicles? What about drivers and insurance?

*Accommodation* will need to be reasonably near your work or project location and in a secure area (check whether extra security measures, such as padlocks or watchmen, will be required). As far as possible, you should ensure where the team stays has a clean water supply, hygienic toilet facilities and a supply of mosquito nets, if needed.

*Food* – will this be provided, or will you be shopping and cooking for yourselves, in which case you might need some local help? While the team should be encouraged to accept local hospitality and try local cuisine, it's essential for the health and well-being of the team to have safe drinking water and a hygienic cooking area.

Notes:

Be aware of local *health and security risks* and the availability of *medical facilities*. *Be sure to undertake a detailed risk assessment for both general and work contexts*. See the section on risk assessment at the end of this booklet.

*Work or Ministry* – What about working conditions, and availability, cost and quality of materials, tools, or resources? Will you need to bring things out from Ireland, (note that shipping and customs charges can be very costly), or can you purchase what you need locally? Can you employ local tradesmen or workers?

*Assistance* - what can the hosts contribute in terms of educating, supervising and assisting the team? Do you need local guides or translators? Do volunteer helpers or workers need to be recruited?

*Time out* – is there anywhere close by for recreation, or will you want to travel further?

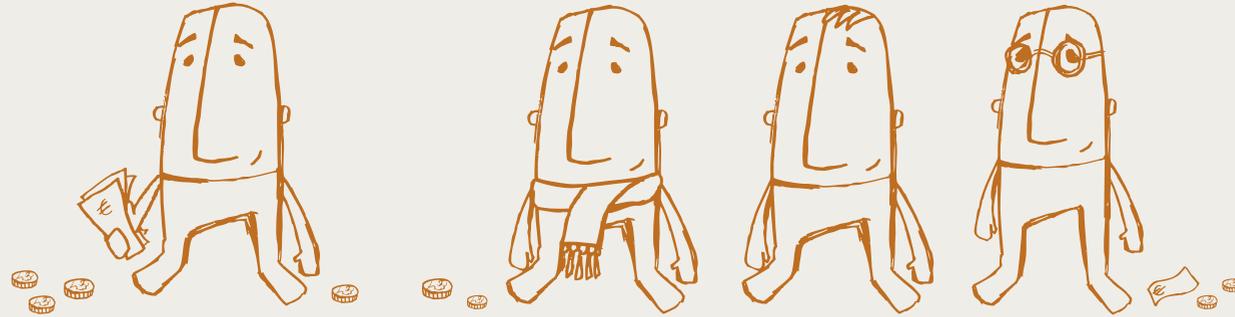


Thought!

*Good financial planning is vital. Whilst it can be difficult to estimate some costs precisely, it is nonetheless important to draw up as accurate a budget as is possible.*

You will also need to decide how cash is to be handled and how you will ensure its security.

## 3. Planning



### 3.6 Finance

You'll have to consult with your hosts and sort out how much it's all likely to cost. Make sure you clarify in advance exactly who will pay for what.

In working out your budget, you'll need to consider most, if not all, of the following:

- Publicity
- Communication costs with hosts and senders
- Team orientation
- Air tickets
- Local travel
- Internal overseas travel
- Visa fees (if applicable)
- Personal insurance
- Vaccinations and anti-malarial medication (if required)
- Food and accommodation
- Ministry resources, tools or work materials
- Customs charges for importing specialist equipment
- Shipping costs for items sent out in advance
- Additional labour or supervision
- Local drivers or guides
- Personal spending money
- Outings, shopping, safaris, etc.
- Gifts for hosts and supporters
- Team T-shirts
- Reunion costs.

Notes:

Don't forget to add in a 10% allowance for contingencies!

If you plan to transfer cash overseas before the trip, try to ensure that the money is transferred to a group, rather than to any one individual.

Expect some accountability, such as receipts or photos of a finished project or purchase. Try to avoid becoming an 'open cheque-book', as this can encourage an unhealthy dependency and at the same time discourage local enthusiasm and initiative.

If you are planning to offer services or activities to the local community as part of the team's programme, decide together with your hosts whether you are going to give them for free, or whether you will want to charge a small amount. Charging a fee, even if it's only a nominal amount, may well add 'more value' in the eyes of the recipients and thereby encourage local ownership.

### 3.7 Decision-making and leadership

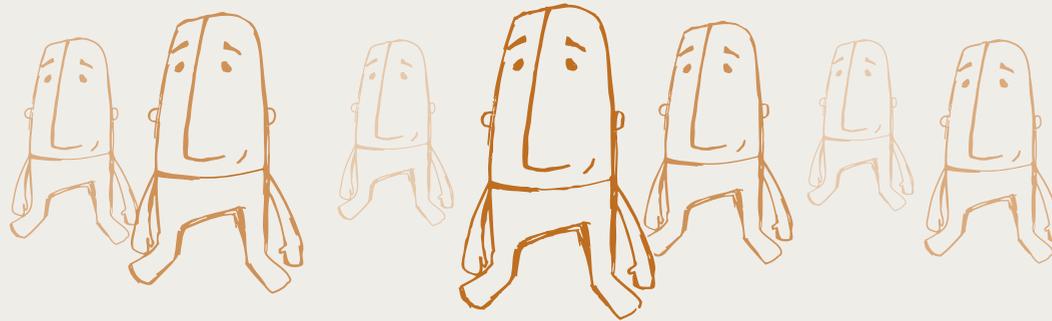
You and your hosts will need to decide who will be responsible for what. In particular, you need to agree who will supervise the team's work or ministry while overseas. Will it be someone from Ireland, who can communicate effectively with the team, or a missionary or national, who knows more about the local culture, resources, conditions and techniques, or will it be both working together? You will also need to work out in advance and, where applicable, agree with your hosts, how problems – practical, spiritual, relational – will be reported and resolved.

Thought!

*Take care if transferring money overseas; it's preferable to send it to a group rather than an individual.*

Try to avoid becoming an 'open cheque-book'. This can encourage an unhealthy dependency while also discouraging local enthusiasm and initiative.

## 4. Forming your team



### 4.1 Selecting your team leader(s)

Careful thought needs to be given as to who will lead the team from the 'home' end, although, in practice, leadership while overseas may well be shared with your missionary or national hosts. As well as obvious criteria, such as a mature, committed Christian faith and leadership skills and gifts, a potential team leader should have experience in discipling other Christians, gifts and skills relevant to the intended ministry, and, ideally, cross-cultural experience and interest.

Bear in mind that leading a short-term mission team is a complex task, incorporating a number of different roles:

- Taking authority and making decisions.
- Organising meetings and ensuring regular communication with team members, senders and hosts.
- Co-ordinating and organising travel.
- Planning a budget and keeping tabs on finances.
- Taking responsibility for logistics, risk assessment, health and safety issues, and the daily programme while overseas.
- Organising and supervising practical work and ministry.
- Team-building, spiritual growth, cross-cultural and pastoral issues.
- Evaluation and debriefing
- On-going communication and mentoring once back home.

Notes:

Probably no one person should be expected to fulfil all these roles! It is best to share leadership, and to subdivide some aspects of the work among suitably gifted team members once the team has been formed.

### 4.2 Recruiting team members

Once a viable partnership has been established, a draft programme has been agreed and initial feasibility and logistics have been explored, it's time to think about recruiting your team.

Before you start publicising the trip, it would be good to think through who you want to go on the team. You should already have consulted with your hosts about the age, gifts and experience best suited to the context and nature of the ministry the team will be involved with. The following questions might be useful as you work out team membership requirements together:

- In advertising and recruiting for the team, will it be a case of taking 'all comers,' or will you have defined selection criteria?
- If so, how will you interview and select?
- Do all the team members need to be Christians?
- Do all the team members need to be members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland?
- Are there certain skills and gifts needed, or can anyone contribute?
- What about health and fitness requirements?

Thought!

*Careful thought needs to be given as to who will lead the team as heading up a short-term mission team is a complex task, incorporating a number of different roles.*

*Before starting to recruit your team members, it is wise to draw up suitable selection criteria that reflect the team's objectives, where it is going and the mix of skills required.*

## 4. Forming your team

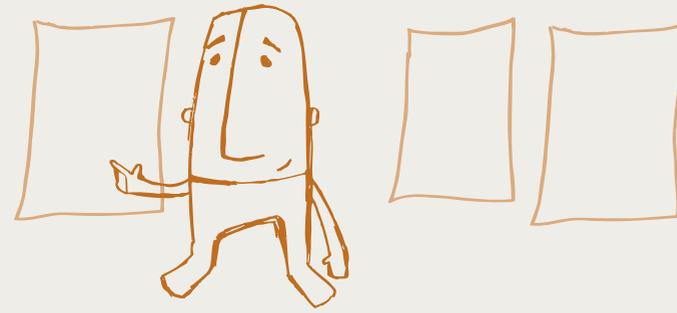


- What about lower (and upper) age-limits? Remember that there may be insurance implications in accepting people with pre-existent health conditions and from younger or older age ranges.

You may want to suggest other personal criteria, such as:

- A love for people.
- An interest in cross-cultural mission.
- An ability to work and live with others in a team, in less than ideal conditions .
- An ability to submit to both your own and host leaders.
- Flexibility and adaptability.
- A willingness to learn about and face up to cross-cultural issues.<sup>7</sup>
- A sense of humour!

Once you are clear about the location and work and have some idea of your recruitment and selection criteria, you will need to publicise the trip both verbally and in written form (probably using posters, church announcements, a PowerPoint® presentation, etc.). Bearing in mind that most teams take several months to organise, you should begin your publicity well in advance, just as soon as the team trip looks feasible and the main logistical details are known.



**Whatever the media used, your publicity should state clearly:**

- The hosts and venue
- Some description of the history of the partnership and/or project
- The aims and objectives of the trip
- An idea of the general programme
- The type of participants needed
- An indication of how and when team members will be selected
- Travel and accommodation details
- Potential dates
- Potential costs

**Remember to cover the vital questions:**

- *Why?* ▪ *What?* ▪ *Where?* ▪ *When?* ▪ *Who?*
- *How?* ▪ *How Much?*

Try to include information about the type of work or ministry the team expects to be engaged in, the living conditions, personal criteria and expectations for team members, such that potential applicants can quickly and easily rule themselves either 'in' or 'out'.

If you are planning a youth team, a separate letter for parents or guardians should be drafted.



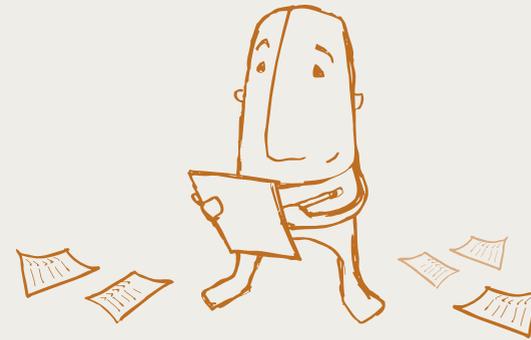
*Good, clear publicity is vital if you are to communicate the team's purpose and objectives, and attract applicants with the skills, experience and personal characteristics required.*

Be creative! Use verbal, written and visual materials as appropriate. In this age of instant 'news' don't forget to consider using 'channels' such as the web, Facebook and Twitter.

## 5. Getting down to details

### 5.1 Senders' & hosts' planning checklist

- Partnership.
- Purpose and Long-term Plans.
- Aims and Objectives of the Team's Visit.
- Project and Timing.
- Programme Planning.
- Team Recruitment.
- Team Orientation, Training, Discipling & Pastoral Care.
- Orientation of Host Community to the Team's Culture.
- Publicity and Communications.
- International Travel.
- Internal Travel.
- Accommodation and Food.
- Medical Facilities, Security Measures & Risk Assessment.
- Work or Ministry: Supervision, Resources, Logistics.
- Local Assistance.
- Recreation Plans.
- Finance: Budget and Fund-raising.
- Decision-making and Leadership.
- Reporting back, Debriefing & Review.
- Ongoing Mission Involvement & Developing Partnership(s).



### 5.2 Team planning timetable<sup>8</sup>

#### Up to 12 months ahead

- Investigate possible projects and/or hosts; decide on a partner and location; clarify together purpose, expectations and approach, type of work, length of time, tentative dates.
- Discuss team requirements – skills, age, fitness, and numbers.
- Undertake risk assessment (including liaison with sending church and families) – for further details on this, see section 5.7 below.
- Establish criteria for team leadership.

#### Up to 9 months ahead

- Agree outline proposal with host.
- Investigate air travel, including group discounts, and when to book.
- Clarify visa needs.
- Investigate and reserve low-cost accommodation options.
- Draft budget.
- Begin advertising the trip to potential participants and sending congregation.
- Hold an information meeting for potential applicants.
- If you're sending a youth team, draft letter to parents (or guardians), and hold a parents' meeting.
- Circulate application forms, if used.
- Recruit and select the team.



*To ensure nothing is overlooked, you should draw up your own planning checklist with a timeline indicating what needs to be done and when. The next few pages provide a broad blueprint of what you will probably need to consider.*

Remember to consult your hosts and include their views in the detailed plans you draw up.

## 5. Getting down to details

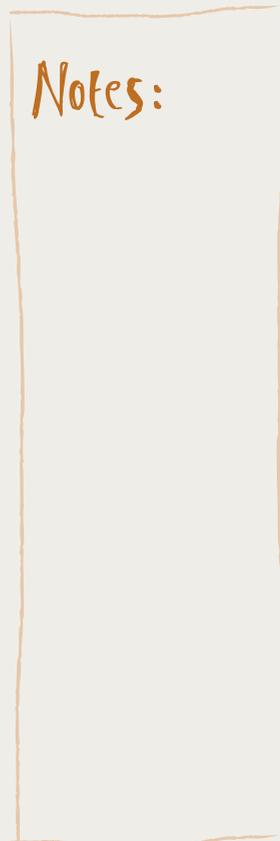
- Request a deposit and completed application form.
- Arrange child protection checks and appropriate training for team.
- Arrange medical forms for team members.
- Finalise emergency plans and confirm contacts.
- Apply for passports (if not already issued).
- Check immunisation suggestions and requirements.
- Begin regular team meetings.
- Start fund-raising.

### Up to 6 months ahead

- Communicate trip dates, arrival and departure plans to hosts.
- Work out tentative mission itinerary and mission schedule with hosts.
- Appoint various roles within the team, e.g. treasurer, preachers, children's ministry leader, worship leader, manual work leader, etc.
- Begin visa application process (if needed).
- Buy tickets and travel insurance (check what's covered).
- Book accommodation and internal travel (if needed).
- Begin immunisation process.

### Up to 3 months ahead

- Finalise itinerary and mission schedule.
- Raise 50% of funds.
- Work on ministry preparation.



### Up to 2 months ahead

- Gather props, tools and resources.
- Check baggage regulations.
- Think about packing: draw up a kit list and begin to gather essentials.
- Obtain team first aid kit.
- Buy gifts for hosts.
- Plan and practise testimonies, drama, musical items, and sermons.
- Organise commissioning service.

### Up to 2 weeks ahead

- Photocopy important documents, such as your passports, visas, insurance policies and emergency contacts and leave with sending church base.
- Organise transportation to the airport.
- Make sure each participant has: airline ticket; passport and visas; insurance; vaccinations and anti-malarial medication if needed.
- Notify hosts of exact time of arrival.
- Send freight ahead if necessary (have a packing party!).

### 3 days ahead

- Call the airline to confirm flights.
- Be sure to do this on your return also.



*Use your commonsense and adapt the lists on this and subsequent pages to your team's particular plan or requirements.*

*The leader, or someone with good project/time-management skills, should be assigned to keep track of progress to ensure that actions or decisions are taken on time and nothing is overlooked.*

## 5. Getting down to details

### *Your overseas visit!*

#### **Return**

- Individual evaluation by hosts, senders, team participants.
- Report back to sending congregation.
- Wider deputation.

#### **1 month after trip**

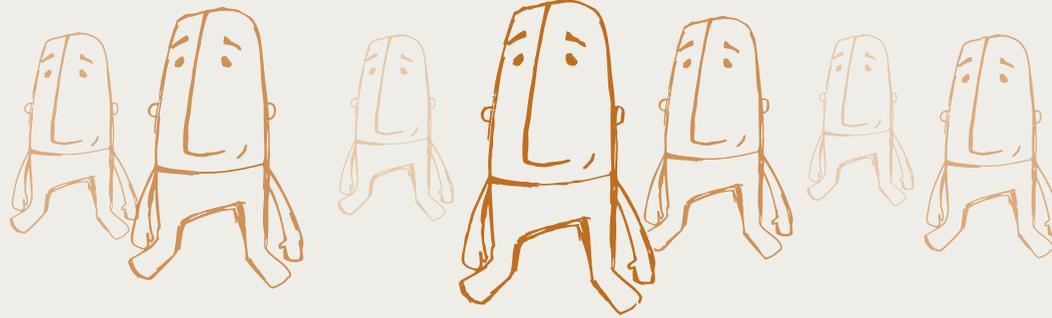
- Debrief team, to cover: challenges, rewards, difficulties, re-entry, learning points, and the future.
- Hold a specialised debrief for team leaders.
- Conduct evaluation by hosts, senders and participants: difficulties, improvements, future relationships.

#### **3 months after trip**

- Revisit initial evaluation and future goals, both congregational and personal.

### **5.3 Team leader's responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the senders – in practice those acting on behalf of the congregation – Minister, Session, Mission Committee, etc. – to first identify and determine the project and its location, giving consideration to: key contacts; partnership potential; aims and objectives; team tasks and roles; timing; supervision; local involvement; health and safety; risk assessment; logistics. (See **Booklet 1, 'Thinking of Going'**, for more details)



Depending on when he or she is appointed, it may be appropriate for the team leader to be involved in discussion and decision-making relating to some or all of the matters listed above.

#### **Once appointed, the team leader should – Prior to the trip:**

- Produce a budget.
- Develop a promotion and publicity strategy.
- Assist with team selection and screening.
- Plan a timetable and itinerary.
- Communicate with team members, senders and hosts regarding team purpose, tasks, and logistics.
- Draw up policies and procedures, including risk assessment and all relevant emergency procedures.
- Agree a team covenant.
- Get to know team-members as individuals.
- Seek to build members into a united team, dealing with any conflicts or disagreements.
- Plan and arrange delivery of the team's training and orientation programme.
- Ensure that the congregation, team members' families and the church leadership are kept regularly informed of progress.
- Liaise on arrangements for a commissioning service.



*The team leader has a key role to play in the organising and leading of your overseas team and, ultimately, its success. But remember that the team's 'senders', including congregational leaders, have an equally important responsibility to support, guide and share in decision-making at every stage.*

Ownership of the team project at every level is vital, most importantly by minister and elders.

## 5. Getting down to details

### During the trip:

- Lead the team.
- Liaise with and maintain good relations with hosts.
- Communicate regularly with 'senders' and congregation back home.
- Monitor the daily schedule in conjunction with hosts and clearly communicate the 'agreed programme' to the whole team.
- Handle day-to-day logistics and problems.
- Motivate and team-build.
- Disciple team members.
- Handle all team funds (this can be delegated to a treasurer as required).
- Monitor health and safety for the whole team.
- Plan and implement emergency procedures as necessary.

### On return:

- Report-back to senders and liaise on arrangements for the team debriefing.
- Review team experience with appropriate bodies (BMO, congregational leaders, etc).

### 5.4 Fund-raising

Obviously an overseas trip will be expensive, and you will have to consider how participants will meet travel and accommodation costs, as well as ministry and personal costs. Think through beforehand how your congregation or group might prefer to approach the funding issue:

Notes:



- Are applicants expected to meet all the costs themselves, or is the church committee/mission committee prepared to help in any way, and if so, whom, and to what extent?

### Options might include:

- Giving a general gift to each team member irrespective of income.
- Offering particular gifts to the unemployed, low-waged or students.
- Partially sponsoring the entire trip, or solely contributing towards 'ministry' costs.
- Is your congregation likely to be happy holding a fund-raising event to help fund the team, their hosts and/or the work they will do? If so, you will have to decide whether the proceeds will go towards helping all participants or just those in particular need, and whether you will give towards team members' personal and travel costs or just towards 'ministry' or 'project' costs.
- Other sources of support and help (schools, charitable grants) may help. The local library is a good place to start your research.
- There may be specific resources or ministries to which the congregation, or various organisations within the congregation, could be encouraged to contribute (for example, buying a Bible or buying a brick). It would be particularly good to encourage the youth group and Sunday school to get involved in something specific.

Thought!

*Fund-raising plans should be properly and fully thought through, agreed with all 'senders' and handled well, otherwise your fund-raising may become a source of friction and disharmony amongst church members.*

Take care to consult widely and make sure everyone understands what the fund-raising is for and that it is fully 'endorsed' by your supporter base.

## 5. Getting down to details

- There may be specific items that you could request congregational members, or even local businesses, schools or those in the wider community, to donate to or sponsor (text-books, old spectacles, sports equipment). This can be a great way of raising your church's profile in the local area – but don't forget to say, "Thank you", and provide feedback afterwards!

### 5.5 Travel and documents

Once team participants have been recruited, travel and documents will need to be organised.

- Try and talk over options and book flights with a reputable travel agent, and as far ahead as possible.
- Online bookings can be much cheaper, but do check the small print carefully.
- Try to book seats together, as a group.
- Each participant will need a valid passport. Remember that children under 16, who are not already included on their parent's passport, now need to have their own passport.

For up-to-date information, see: [www.ukpa.gov.uk](http://www.ukpa.gov.uk) or the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs website: [www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=255](http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=255).

- Ensure that your passport has at least two blank pages left and that it will remain valid for a minimum of six months after the return travel date.
- Check visa requirements with the relevant Embassy or High Commission. Visa application forms can usually

Notes:



be downloaded online from the relevant website and either presented in person or posted. Apply well in advance! Be aware that if you are intending to submit your team members' visa applications in person, the Embassy or Consulate in question might be closed for its country's national holidays, something that might catch you out if you don't check in advance! Alternatively, you can post passports and completed visa forms to the Visa Company which will handle arrangements and return the documents to you by a specified date for a (hefty) charge. ([www.thevisacompany.com](http://www.thevisacompany.com)). Key Travel offers a similar service. ([www.keytravel.co.uk](http://www.keytravel.co.uk)).

- On production of a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), EU residents are eligible for free or reduced-cost medical care while visiting another country within the European Economic Area or Switzerland. To apply for an EHIC in Northern Ireland, visit [www.ehic.uk.com](http://www.ehic.uk.com) or pick up an application form at your local post office. In the Republic of Ireland, you can download an application form at: [www.sspcrs.ie/ehic/e111info.jsp](http://www.sspcrs.ie/ehic/e111info.jsp).
- Note, however, that even with the EHIC card you may still be expected to pay for your medical care and seek reimbursement once back home. The card is NOT a substitute for insurance and will NOT cover you for repatriation. Note also, if travelling as a family, that each individual family member will need their own EHIC card.

Thought!

*Take time to ensure you know exactly what documents are required for entry into the country you are planning to visit and of any restrictions on imports. Apply for visas in good time!*

*Booking air tickets early can yield considerable savings on costs. Be aware that some countries require evidence of your flight bookings before they will issue entry visas.*

## 5. Getting down to details

- All short-term team participants must have adequate insurance cover, which must include a repatriation policy. For suggestions on where to go to obtain travel insurance cover, get in touch with the Mission Overseas Office in Church House.

### 5.6 Preliminary health matters

The team leader should gather together voluntary health information on each team member, including details of any significant medical history, current medication, blood group, and any allergies. Insurance and emergency contact details should also be included. See Booklet 5, 'Resources and Links', for sample forms.

- Older people or those with significant problems should consider having a full medical examination before joining the team.
- A dental check-up is recommended for all team members.
- Team members should be advised to consult their doctor well in advance of departure to obtain advice on and arrange for appropriate immunisations. Some immunisations require several injections several months apart; some combinations of vaccine cannot be given at the same time; and some take time – in some cases up to six months – to give full protection.
- As well as vaccinations for region-specific risks, such as meningococcal meningitis in sub-Saharan Africa, or for ministry-specific risks, such as Hepatitis B

### Notes:

To check on upcoming events, go to:  
[www.pcimissionoverseas.org/events](http://www.pcimissionoverseas.org/events)



for health-workers, make sure that all childhood immunisations are up to date, such as anti-tetanus.

- Also, be sure that team members find from their GP what type of anti-malarial medication is appropriate for the country they are going to, if needed. Be sure that each team member knows how important it is to stick to the 'start' and 'end' dates they are given for the course of medication that their doctor prescribes.
- For up-to-date recommendations by specific area, each team member should check with their GP or a recognised travel clinic.
- Some countries may require a valid health/immunisation certificate to be produced on entry, for example, if you have come from an area exposed to yellow-fever. It is therefore advisable for each team member to carry with them a certified copy of their current immunisation record. This is easily obtained from your GP practice.

**Booklet 3, 'Ready, Steady, Go'**, offers detailed team training guidelines on health, safety and security matters and other practical issues while overseas. BMO's annual Overseas Teams' Training (OTT) Day also provides up-to-date advice and training for teams and individuals.

### Thought!

*Team members must be fit to travel and take part in the team's planned programme overseas. Applicants should therefore not be accepted until after they have been examined by their doctor or health professional. At the same time they should seek advice on what vaccinations or medication they may require.*

Failure to obtain a 'clean bill of health' makes it easier to turn down applicants who should not be travelling overseas and would be a 'risk' both to themselves and the rest of the team.

## 5. Getting down to details

### 5.7 Risk assessments and contingency plans<sup>9</sup>

A risk assessment should be carried out for each country and context that the team will be in. Your plan should take into account the general and work contexts, as well as any recreational activities, especially ‘adventure’ activities. Your risk assessment should include the following scenarios:

- Travel delay
- Robbery
- Minor injury (may or may not require medical attention)
- Major injury (may require hospitalisation)
- Fatality
- Response to a serious home event, such as illness or death of a relative

The risk level in each scenario should be ‘acceptable’ - in other words, one in which the chance of harm or injury occurring is slight, or in which any harm or injury that may occur is minor. Contingency plans should then be set in place. These should include:

- In-country contacts – the British or Irish Embassy or Consulate.

Note: UK Foreign Office’s ‘Locate’ service with which you can pre-register: [www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/locate/](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/locate/)

### Notes:

For more details on these training opportunities, go to:

[www.pcmissonoverseas.org/events/](http://www.pcmissonoverseas.org/events/)



In the Republic of Ireland, see:

[www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=275](http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=275)

- Plans for dealing with medical issues: Is there a trained first-aider to hand? Where is the nearest safe emergency treatment centre?
- Evacuation policy.
- Plans for liaising with home contacts and insurance providers in case of an emergency.
- Provision for ‘Critical Incident Debriefing’ as necessary.<sup>10</sup>
- Further information on conducting a risk assessment is available on the PCI Mission Overseas website.

### Thought!

*Assessing the risks your team may face in travelling and spending time in another country is vitally important, as is the preparation of contingency plans in the event of things going wrong, e.g. a serious injury, a traumatic event, etc.*

The Board of Mission Overseas run a number of training programmes each year designed to help team leaders and their members prepare before going. Included in this training are Health & Safety for Work Teams, Personnel Security Overseas and Medical Risks.

## References



<sup>1</sup> This exercise has been adapted from the 'Policy Papers' (Part 1: 'Developing a Policy') produced by Partnership for World Mission, an Anglican body which has produced useful guidelines on forming mission links at local church level. <http://www.pwm-web.org.uk> (accessed 22nd February 2007).

<sup>2</sup> See Robin Blount, 'Guide to Church Twinning,' 'Making a Twinning Agreement, Part One' (n.d.) European Church Partnership: A Way of Belonging to the World Church, <http://www.church-twinning.org/Guide/agreement1.html>. (accessed 31st May 2007).

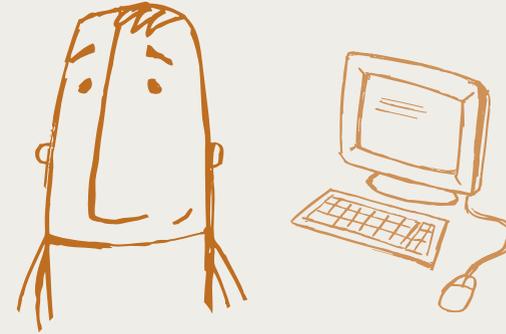
<sup>3</sup> These points have been adapted and developed from 'Developing Diocesan Links,' under the section 'Companion Links,' Partnership for World Mission, [www.pwm-web.org.uk](http://www.pwm-web.org.uk) (accessed 22nd February 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Townsend, Ditch, Stop, Check, Go: A Practical Guide for Cross-Cultural Teamwork (Carlisle: OM Publishing, 1996), 124.

<sup>6</sup> On this whole area, see Townsend, Stop, Check, Go, 124 and 126, and Eaton, Chris, and Kim Hurst, Vacations with a Purpose: A Planning Handbook for Your Short-Term Missions Team (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 52-59.

Notes:



<sup>7</sup> This useful criterion is suggested in the 'Team Member Job Description' for potential applicants to Latin Link's Step short-term mission programme: [www.stepteam.org/Step-Job-Description.pdf](http://www.stepteam.org/Step-Job-Description.pdf). (accessed 11th October 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from 'Short-Term Missions: Suggested Planning Timetable,' [www.globalconnections.co.uk](http://www.globalconnections.co.uk); from the suggested timeline in the STM Network Canada Team Leader's Guide, <http://stmnetwork.ca/documents/STMnetworkTeamLeaderGuide.pdf>; from the 'Travel Checklist for Short-Term Missionary Leaders and Participants,' [www.snu.edu/~hculbert/check.html](http://www.snu.edu/~hculbert/check.html); (all accessed 13th August 2009); and from Eaton and Hurst, Vacations with a Purpose, 201-203.

<sup>9</sup> See the document Roles and Responsibilities, Guidelines and Procedures for YAC Overseas Teams, prepared by the Ministry Opportunities Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, October 2008.

<sup>10</sup> This is a professional debriefing of the whole team within 48 to 72 hours of the occurrence of a traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, violent incident, or traffic accident. It aims to accelerate recovery and to prevent post-traumatic stress. Contact the Mission Overseas Office in Church House for further advice.

Thought!

*Staff in the Mission Overseas Office, Church House, will be glad to answer any questions you may have, or give you further advice.*

Please go to:

[www.pcmissionoverseas.org/contact/](http://www.pcmissionoverseas.org/contact/)

Now you have read this second booklet in the 'Do It Well' Mission Toolkit, please do take time to read the remaining booklets in the series.



# 'Do it Well' Mission Toolkit

The 'Do it Well' Mission Toolkit has been developed as a resource to help ministers, congregational leaders and mission activists who may be considering sending a team overseas to engage in short-term mission.

Each booklet can be read separately, or combined in any order, according to your particular needs. Read them as leaders, or use the material with your teams in preparation and training sessions.

*And don't forget to check for up-to-date information and links on our website:*

**[www.pcimissionoverseas.org](http://www.pcimissionoverseas.org)**

This Mission Toolkit contains five booklets:

- 1. Thinking of Going**
- 2. Doing the Groundwork**
- 3. Ready, Steady, Go**
- 4. Finishing Well**
- 5. Resources & Links**

  
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