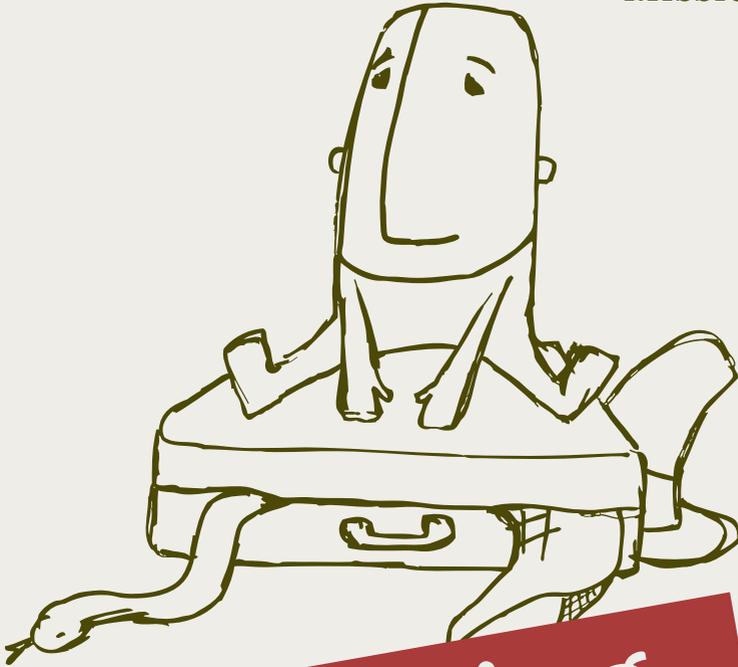


'Do it Well'
Mission Toolkit



**Finishing
Well**

BOOKLET 4

Reminds us that coming home can bring its own challenges, and asks how short-term mission can be turned into long-term mission interest in our congregations.

'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

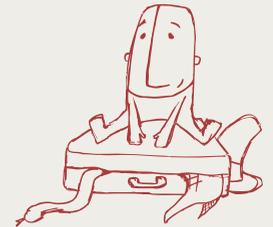


Stage 4: Home Again

- 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."

Email: overseas@presbyterianireland.org

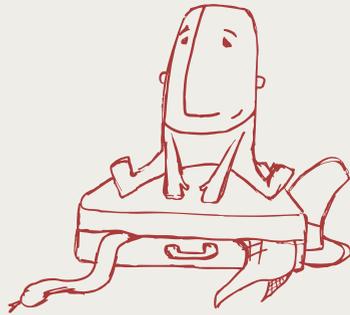
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It's not over until it's over...

Coming home from a short-term mission trip overseas raises both challenges and opportunities for individuals, teams and congregations. To maximise your trip's impact, you will need to think about 'finishing well' – processing, sharing, and building on your short-term experience – before the team goes overseas. This booklet shows you how.

It's good to be home...

All too soon, your two or three weeks overseas fly by, and it's time to come home. You're full of excitement at the thought of seeing folk again and recounting all you've experienced. You see familiar things with new eyes. It's great to walk on carpet, have electricity every time you need it... and oh, the bliss of that first bath, not to mention your own bed...

But sooner or later, the excitement wears thin. Your family and friends and colleagues are glad to see you, but somehow they've changed. Their priorities seem so different from yours. Everyone's in such a rush... And everyone's so preoccupied with money... Church is a bit of a let-down too. Worship seems so staid after what you've just experienced, and apart from a few odd questions, no-one seems that interested in what you got up to in Wherever-It-Was...

Notes:

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

Re-entry

The mission experts call coming home, 'Re-entry' – just like a rocket re-entering the earth's atmosphere from outer space at x thousand miles per hour!

It's said that long-term missionaries find re-adjusting to their home culture as difficult, if not more difficult, than adjusting to their host culture in the first place! It obviously depends how long you've been away, and how different the culture you worked in was, but bear in mind that coming home, even for short-term teams, can produce some unexpected reactions. Exposure to a different culture can challenge your perceptions of what's important, and this is natural and good. You may find, however, that 'home' doesn't feel quite the same for quite a while.

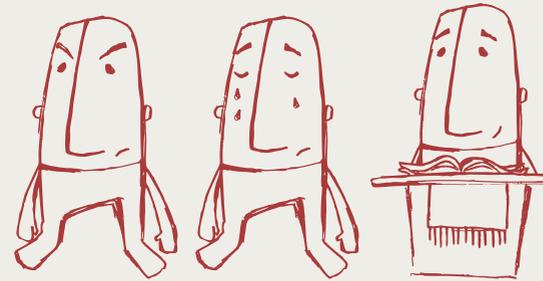
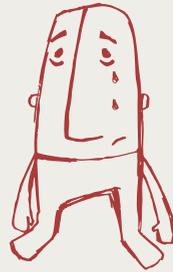
Thought!

"What an amazing trip! I wonder how I can get my church interested in long-term mission?"

The excitement and joy of being home has worn off and you are beginning to realise that things are somehow different, people around you are different and even you yourself are different.

This booklet seeks to answer some of the questions you may have, while helping you and your congregation see how you can turn your short overseas mission experience into a long-term involvement overseas.

1. Some possible challenges¹



- **Materialism:** If you've just come back from a developing country and witnessed considerable poverty, the sheer scale of abundance and choice here, and the materialistic values of our consumer society, can hit you very hard.
- **Restlessness:** After a very busy few weeks with something going on every minute, coming back to your normal routine can seem very mundane. You may find it hard to settle or find that you have a lot of time on your hands and don't know what to do with yourself.
- **Loneliness:** Believe it or not, you may actually miss those 12 sweaty people you've just spent the past 24 hours in a mini-bus with... On your short-term team, you've been united by a common purpose and clear goals. You've just had a very intense time of close fellowship, corporate effort, spiritual challenge and, hopefully, good craic. By comparison, weak tea and biscuits after the Sunday service might seem just a little bit flat.
- **Frustration and Anger:** Once the first five minutes are over, people may not be nearly as interested in hearing about your trip, and the great needs and opportunities you've seen, as you'd expected. In fact, people here can seem very parochial and self-centred...
- **Pride:** It's also easy to become arrogant and superior after a successful mission trip, as Jesus' own disciples

Notes:

showed (Luke 10:17-20). Don't assume that because you were in Timbuktu for two weeks, you know all about Africa, the Muslim world, mission, or what your own congregation could and should do better (You don't!)

- **Spiritual Attack/Depression:** This can arise as a result of any of the challenges above. It's normal to experience a bit of a 'downer' after an intense time of spiritual activity and service – but be aware that the devil is more than happy to jump on the bandwagon!

2. How to cope

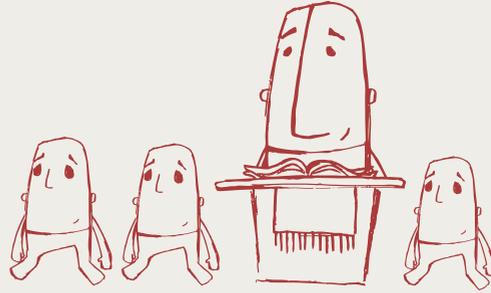
- Expect some feelings of reverse culture shock, such as a new consciousness of materialism, the shift from a simpler, slower pace of life back to the 'rat-race,' or an apparent lack of interest in overseas work from fellow-Christians, and be ready for some degree of emotional and spiritual reaction.²
- Make sure you have a team debriefing session to help you evaluate and process your experience overseas as a group and individually if need be. (See below.)
- Get involved in your usual activities, fellowship and ministry as soon as you return. Remember, too, to make time for family and friends!
- Make time to share your story with people, particularly with folk from your home congregation, but make sure

Thought!

This page highlights some of the challenges you may face as you 'process' and 'come to terms with' your short-term mission experience overseas.

Read on to learn how to cope with these challenges.

2. How to cope³

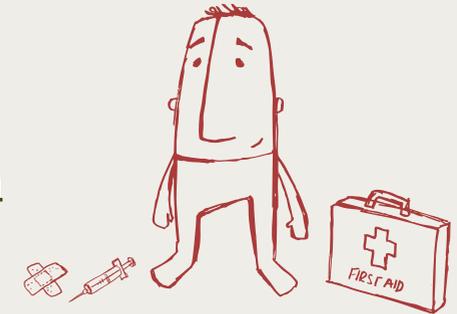


you do it at an appropriate time, and bear in mind that people may not want as much detail (or be as interested) as you might think.

- Don't be tempted to scold your home congregation and friends for their narrow outlook, weak prayer and inadequate commitment to God's work overseas - it's a sure-fire way to turn them off, rather than turn them on to mission! See below for some useful tips on how to share your story positively.
- Remember to thank all those who supported you – not just the 'high-profile' ones. The Sunday School kids who raised money for you and that pensioner who promised to pray for you every day also matter! Don't forget to provide feedback for the local community, businesses and schools, if they have helped you in any way.
- Communicate with those you met overseas and keep in touch with them.
- Pray for the people and the ministries you left behind.
- Meet up from time to time with like-minded folk who know what you're experiencing – members of your team, a retired missionary, perhaps, a trusted Christian friend. You might like to attend a mission conference or event.
- Pray about, and do something about, your future involvement in mission. God may not want us all to serve overseas long-term, but He certainly does want us all to be active in His mission, wherever we live and whatever it is we're called to. See below for some ideas on how to take things further.

Notes:

3. Physical health



It's important to continue to keep an eye on your physical health once you've returned, as well as while you're overseas.

- Remember to continue to take your anti-malarials. Any fevers and flu-like illnesses for up to a year after return should be investigated to rule out malaria.
- If you have any problems, see a doctor promptly and advise them that you were overseas.
- Don't give blood for at least six months.
- Try to get plenty of rest after your return. If possible, try not to return to work the day after you get back!
- Be aware of reverse culture shock and its symptoms, and go easy on yourself. Seek further sources of help, if necessary. There's only one thing worse than not preparing – and that's not debriefing.

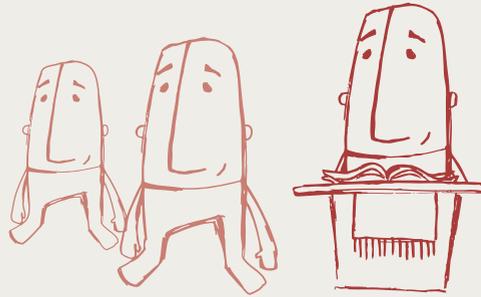
Debriefing is a crucial means of helping you to readjust following short-term service overseas.

Thought!

Even after only a short time overseas it is quite normal to experience reverse culture on your return and to feel some degree of emotional and spiritual reaction. Following the steps outlined here will help you to readjust and make the most of your new experiences.

You will find it particularly helpful to meet with people who understand how you're feeling.

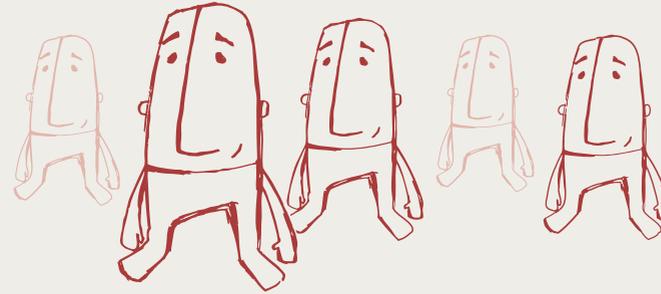
4. Debriefing⁴



4.1 What is it?

- Many people are frightened off by the term 'debriefing' because it all sounds a bit formal, heavy and intimidating. It's not meant to be like that at all!
- The opportunity you've had to be part of a short-term mission team overseas is likely to have challenged and changed you in many ways. The old cliché "It was a life-changing experience" is, in this case, often true.
- But often it's difficult to think through what's happened and to know how to respond to how you feel, especially when you're coping with reverse culture shock and coming 'back to porridge' as well.
- A 'debriefing' is quite simply an opportunity for you to talk about your team trip overseas to knowledgeable, caring and trusted individuals, so that you can better understand and process what you've seen and experienced and be helped to integrate it into your life and Christian discipleship now you're back at home.
- Debriefing is a bit more than simply giving a factual report. As well as the facts, you'll be encouraged to express your views and feelings, to share about both the good bits and the bad bits, and to provide useful feedback as to how things might be done better in future.

Notes:



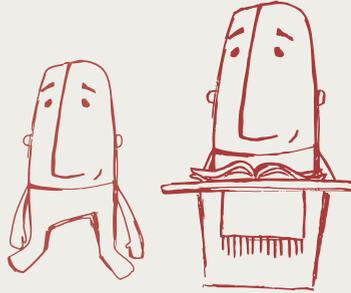
- Note that debriefing is actually a Biblical idea! After He sent disciples in pairs on their first short-term mission, Jesus welcomed their feedback. (Luke 10:17-24). On another occasion not long after the Crucifixion, the risen Jesus met two of His disciples on the Emmaus Road and asked them what had been happening. This was hardly because He needed to know the facts! Rather, His question gave them the chance to tell their story and express their feelings, helping them to put things into context and move forward (Luke 24:13-24).
- A 'debriefing' was also practised by Paul and Barnabas with the congregation in Antioch which had sent them out on their first short-term mission trip. On arriving back, "They gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples." (Acts 14:27-28)

Thought!

Debriefing is an opportunity for you to talk about your team trip overseas - to better understand and process what you've seen and experienced, and be helped to reintegrate into your life and Christian discipleship once you are back home.

Debriefing is a must for anyone who has been involved in a period of service overseas.

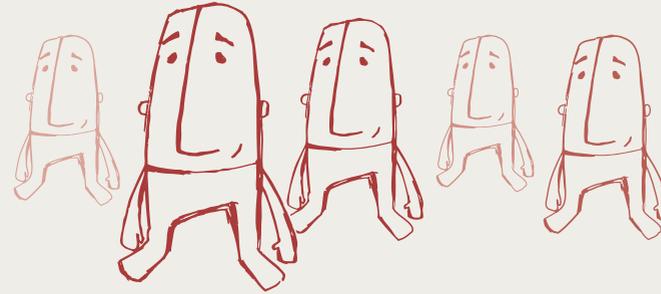
4. Debriefing



4.2 Some guidelines for debriefing

- The aim of a debriefing is to help your team to learn and grow from your experience, offering a safe place to process any negative aspects, providing support and healing, if necessary, and helping you think about your future service and ministry.
- The debriefing should allow for: telling the team story; looking back; expressing both facts and feelings; learning; reflections on the support received from 'home'; looking forward and building on the experience. Team members should be able to talk freely about both the good and bad aspects of their experience.
- Ideally, a debriefing should be done within three weeks of the team's return home.
- It should last about two and a half hours (or more if the team has more than 15 members).
- The debriefing should be conducted by no more than three people. Those who conduct the debrief must be trusted individuals and good listeners with knowledge of the team, the location the team has been serving in, and the ministry the team has been involved with. They must also be in a position to follow-up things as necessary.

Notes:



- Team debriefing has many advantages, in that a group can 'normalise' each other, piece together more information about what happened, and help to dismantle wrong beliefs (e.g. "I must be the only person who feels this way!"). Team members can support and encourage one another.
- At the same time, some people may not want to discuss personal feelings or negative aspects in a group situation.
- Make sure that people are offered an individual debrief, should they want it, and offer opportunities and sources for further help and support to all participants.
- If debriefing as a team, ask people not to interrupt others, to show respect, and to honour confidentiality.
- Team leaders should have their own debriefing session in addition to the team session.

Thought!

Debriefing should be conducted by two or three trustworthy people, who have been trained in the process, are good listeners and who know the team, where it has been and what it has been doing.

Team members should be debriefed together, shortly after returning home.



4. Debriefing

4.3 A possible team debriefing outline

- Prayer and praise
- Introduction – the purpose of debriefing, confidentiality, etc.
- Icebreakers (see below)
- What's your overall evaluation of the trip? How did your expectations compare to reality?
- What was the best bit? What did you enjoy most?
- What was the funniest bit?
- What was the hardest bit?
- What surprised you the most?
- How did the logistics, programme and ministry work out?
- How were relationships – in the team; with missionaries; with local people?
- How did you feel congregational support went? How could it be improved?
- What would you do differently?
- In what ways did your team training prepare (or not prepare) you for what you experienced overseas?
- What's it been like coming back home? How do you feel about things now?
- What about reporting back? What do you really want to communicate about what you've experienced and learnt? Have people been interested in your story? What have they said?



- What impact has the trip had on your faith and personal growth? Are there any verses or experiences you would like to share?
- How will you as individuals use this experience in the future and not forget it? How will you stay involved? Any specific goals?
- Any thoughts on how might things be taken forward – as a team? As a congregation?
- Any other concerns or questions, or anything else you would like to talk about?
- Suggestions for further help, reading and involvement.
- Closing prayer and worship.

4.4 Some further ideas/icebreakers

- Ask everyone to bring a favourite object or photo representing their time overseas and talk about it for a few minutes.
- Ask the team the following question: "If a book was published about your time overseas, which section of the bookshop would it be sold in?"
- Adventure?
- Mystery?
- Self-help?
- Tragedy?
- Relationships?
- Fiction?

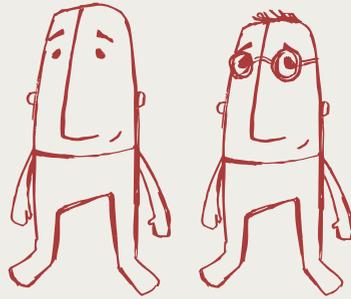


If you have any questions on Debriefing, or, as leaders, you would like to be trained in the process, please contact the Mission Overseas Office in Church House.

You can check to see if any training on Debriefing is already planned by going to:

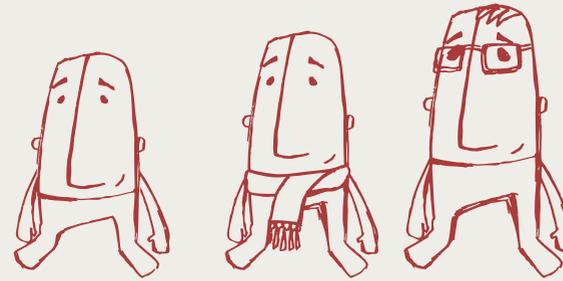
www.pcimissionoverseas.org/events/

4. Debriefing



- Medical?
- Romance?
- Comedy?
- Religion?
- Travel?
- Psychology?
- As a team, or as individuals, write a song, psalm or prayer about your time overseas.
- Put together a team video/photo collection. This could then be sent out to your hosts.
- Use your photos to create a calendar. This could be sold to raise ongoing funds for the folk you worked with and used as a visual prayer reminder throughout the year.
- As individuals, write a letter to yourself, summarizing how you feel about your time overseas and how you plan to build on the experience. Set some specific goals. The team leader/debriefer can then post the letter back to you six months later.

Note: BMO has introduced “Debriefing for Senders” seminars in which congregational leaders and members can obtain further useful ideas and advice in preparation for debriefing short-term mission teams and other mission personnel.



4.5 A team reunion

If your team has the time, it might be good to make the debriefing session part of a day or weekend away together, and put it in the context of meals, social time, and praise and worship.

- Be sure to have some ‘fun times’ (share funny stories, show the ‘unofficial’ team video...), as well as time to pray, reflect and just chat.
- Share verses, songs or experiences that have meant a lot to you as individuals or as a team.
- Write down all the positive aspects of your experience, so that you don’t forget them.
- You might want to include a session on ‘how to tell your story’ and organise the team’s taking of a church service, prayer-meeting, etc.
- You might also want to include a session on ‘how to stay involved.’



Consider making your team’s debriefing part of a reunion weekend or day away, where it can be carried out in the context of sharing food and fun together, as well as in worship and prayer.

5. Evaluation: Senders & hosts



As well as a debriefing session, it would be useful for your team to fill out a written evaluation of the team experience, so that you have a reference point for the future. Sample evaluation forms for team members and team leaders are included in **Booklet 5, 'Resources and Links'**.

You may also want to think about what tips and comments you would pass on to future teams going to the same or a similar ministry or location. For this, see the form entitled Things You Wish You'd Known Before You Went, also in **'Resources and Links'**.

However, as emphasised throughout this 'Do It Well' series, short-term mission isn't just about the team who go; it's also about those who partner with them at home and overseas. For real partnership and meaningful evaluation of the trip, you'll also need to allow senders and hosts a chance to 'tell their story' and air their views and feelings on how things went.

5.1 Senders

Senders will need to get together with the team/team leaders to evaluate the following aspects of the trip:

- Planning
- Fundraising
- Logistical support
- Communication

Notes:

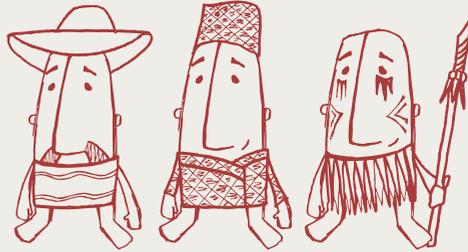
- Prayer support
- Ownership of the project by the congregation
- Communication with the team – while they were overseas and once they were home
- Debriefing and re-entry support. The congregation may also like to engage in a 'debriefing exercise' by thinking through the following questions:
 - What have you learnt as a congregation?
 - What new insights have you discovered: About yourselves as a congregation? About mission?
 - What would you do differently?
 - How has God surprised you?
 - How, as a congregation, are you going to build on this short-term mission experience?
 - How are you going to maintain the partnership created with missionaries and national Christians?
 - How has your cross-cultural involvement affected your vision for local ministry and outreach?
 - What specific goals for the future can you identify?

Thought!

It's important that your team, your senders and your hosts are asked to reflect on your short-term mission trip overseas and for each to evaluate the experience from their perspective.

Remember! Short-term mission overseas isn't just about the team that goes; it's also about those who partner with them at home and overseas.

5. Evaluation: Senders & hosts



5.2 Hosts

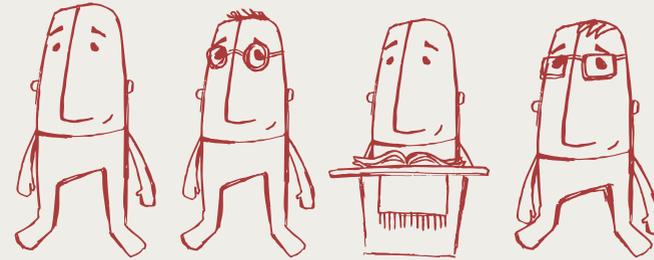
As partners in the team experience, your hosts' feelings and views must be sought in any meaningful debriefing and evaluation exercise.

You will need to get in contact with your hosts at some stage soon after the trip to work out 'what worked' and 'what didn't work,' to identify problems and issues, to assess what could be done differently in future, and to consider how the partnership might be developed further.

You may want to ask them to consider the following:

- What can they identify in terms of the team's a) strengths and b) weaknesses?
- How well did they think the team a) worked together b) responded cross-culturally?
- How well did they think the team coped with the assigned ministry? What worked and what didn't?
- How did the logistics work?
- Any particular problems or issues?
- What could be done differently?
- Did the partnership work?
- What do the hosts and community feel they have received? Was the community and ministry better off because of the team's visit, and if so, in what ways?
- What do the hosts and community feel they have they given?

Notes:



- What has been learnt through this experience of partnering together?
- How might the partnership be developed and followed up? ⁵

But while it is important that all partners review the team's contribution, remember that a Western-style evaluation may be very different to the way your hosts' culture views and assesses things!

You may want to consult with missionaries and national leaders further about how best to honestly and realistically evaluate the team's visit and the strength of the partnership.

6. Telling Your Story

Mission isn't just a matter of what you do 'over there.' As Ros Johnson stresses, the impact on your family and friends, on the members of your church at home and on the wider local community is also "a form of mission." ⁶

In fact, one of the most important ministries you can have in a short-term mission experience overseas is towards your friends and supporters and congregations back at home. ⁷

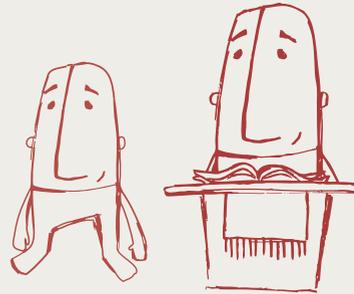
Going overseas to serve God is a wonderful privilege, and for the past few weeks you have been representing your congregation and acting as their "eyes and ears and hearts" ⁸ in a very different culture and context.

Thought!

You will want: to know 'what worked' and 'what didn't work' for your hosts; to identify problems and issues; to consider what might be done differently in future and how your partnership might develop.

Just remember that a 'Western approach' to evaluation may be very different to the way your hosts' culture views and assesses things!

6. Telling your story

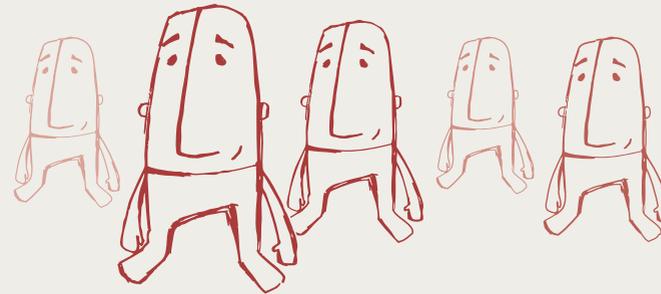


Now you need to act as stewards of your short-term mission experience. Like Peter back in Jerusalem and Paul and Barnabas back at Antioch, (Acts 11:4 and Acts 14:27), it's essential to communicate what you have seen, heard and learnt back to the church at large.

6.1 Reporting back

Be sure to arrange some method of reporting the highlights of your team trip to your congregation, such as a special Sunday service or midweek meeting, preferably within a month or so of the trip. You might want to include:

- Worship songs and readings with a mission theme
- Stories of some of the people that you met and how God challenged you through their experiences and lives
- Testimonies and interviews with team members talking about what they learnt and what God did in and through the team
- Pictures, DVDs or PowerPoint® illustrations
- Thanks for the congregation's prayers and support, with a clear indication that their input in sending and supporting the team was vital for the team's 'success'.⁹
- Intercession for mission. Do remember to pray for long-term missionaries, as well as focusing on your own short-term team efforts!



- Suggestions for future congregational involvement.

In parallel, use an 'appropriate children's talk and song for Sunday School and Bible Class teaching.

Make sure that a written report is provided for the Session or Mission Committee, your prayer partners and financial supporters. This should include a financial statement, together with stories of people helped and photos of finished projects, buildings, etc., to show accountability. Your report should describe not only the results of the team's ministry but also the personal impact of the trip on the life of team members, and it should give an idea of lessons learnt and suggestions for future congregational involvement. Preparation of this could be done as part of your debriefing weekend.

Don't forget to thank individual supporters on a personal basis. Present them with a card, photo or small gift as appropriate.

You Could Also:

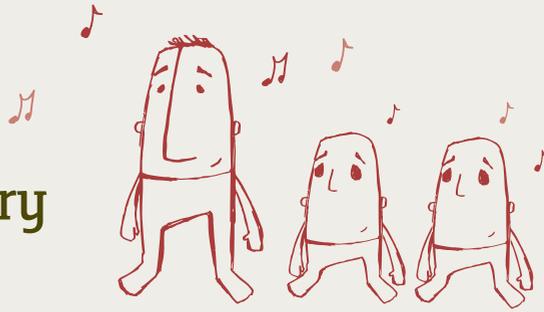
- Volunteer to take slots or full sessions in Sunday School, Youth Group, house-groups, organisations, etc.
- Invite church members for a meal using food from the country in which you served. Show your video, give a short talk, put photos, objects and posters round the walls, teach songs and greetings, play games or host a country-orientated quiz.



You must think about how you are going to 'tell your story'; how you are going to communicate with the church at home what you have seen, heard and learnt.

Reporting back is a Biblical principle!

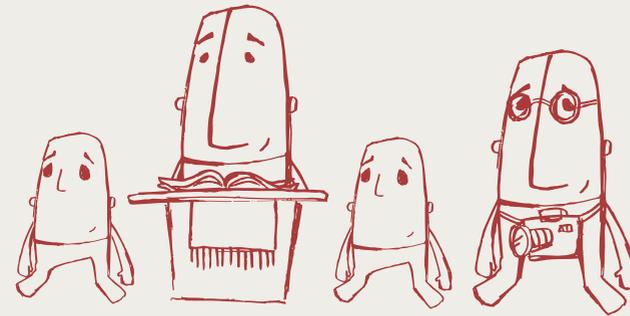
6. Telling your story



- Post prayer topics or information 'bytes' around the walls or stress them at strategic intervals in your programme. Conclude with thanks and prayer.¹⁰
- Similarly, host a senders' or relatives' night, thanking them for their support and service. Hold a praise and prayer time together, thanking God for the work which has been done and praying for the ongoing work in the area, the missionaries, nationals, God's work in the life of the team, and any other long-term missionaries or nationals that you support.¹¹
- Put together articles and stories that could be used in the congregational magazine or website, or sent to the local newspaper.
- Visit local schools or community groups, especially if they have given you support.

6.2 Some tips for telling your story

- Prepare standard short responses/talks lasting one minute, five minutes, and twenty minutes that emphasise key points and challenges in a personal, interesting way.
- Be sure to stick to the time you'd planned, or were allotted, for your talk or presentation – especially if you have one short slot in Sunday worship or have been invited to speak by invitation somewhere! Prepare with notes and practise beforehand to make sure you know how long things will take. Remember that you don't need to tell people everything and that 'less' is often 'more'.



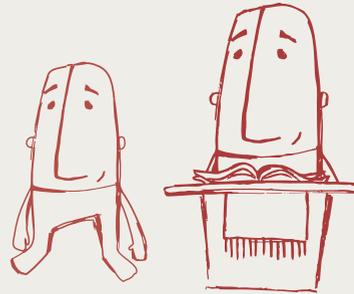
- When planning what you will say, remember that mission is all about relationships, and that people are predominantly interested in people! Use your talk to tell the story of those whom you met, and what God has been doing in their lives. Think who and what would particularly interest your specific audience, and tailor your talk accordingly.
- Edit any photos or video very carefully - keep only clear, good-quality shots that 'say something.' Bear in mind that cropping can improve the image or focus, that creating two photos out of one can create more interesting and clearer image detail, and that software can improve original photos. Organise your photos so that they 'tell a story,' supporting what you want to say.
- Try to think of an interesting or unusual 'opener' that will grab people's attention, and be as colourful and graphic as possible. It's good to set the scene by including a bit of background information, but don't overwhelm people with too many statistics, and don't turn your presentation into a geography or history lesson. Avoid giving a travelogue, a list of the peculiarities of the culture, or the intricate details of your building and plumbing efforts!
- While it's right to challenge people with the needs you've seen, try to avoid too much emotion or trying to take your audience on guilt trips.



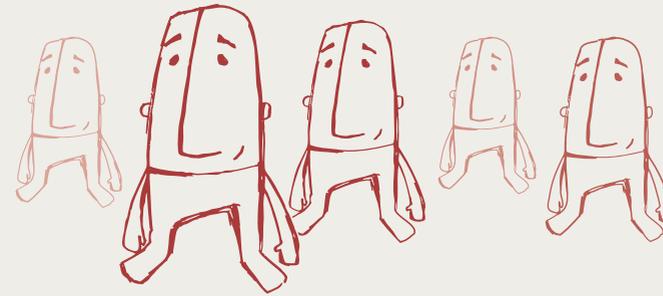
There are countless ways to 'Tell your Story'! Use your imagination, be creative and, where possible, encourage all the team members to share in the task.

Remember you don't have to stand up in front of a big crowd and speak. Writing an article, preparing a PowerPoint®, acting out a drama, etc - are some 'other' ways that can be used.

6. Telling your story



- Also avoid exaggeration – don't condemn the people as a whole because one person was difficult, or say that the whole country was corrupt because one official asked for a bribe. Tell both sides of the story – poverty and wealth; people who've never heard the Gospel and growing, flourishing churches; and carefully choose your photos or illustrations to match.
- Likewise, share difficulties and failures as well as good times and successes. Be honest and let people see your human-ness, but be sensitive, and don't air any 'dirty laundry' in public. Try and avoid a 'martyrdom syndrome', such as how uncomfortable the beds were, the terrible things you were given to eat, or how many times you got bitten! Be thankful, and give all the praise and glory to God.
- When talking about some of the challenges, don't demean the local people, culture or church. Tim Dearborn suggests a good rule of thumb: Would someone from your host country feel "respected, honoured, and affirmed" ¹² by what you say? Would you be happy to have one of the people you worked with hear you talk about your experience in church, or sit beside you as you pass your photos round, or watch your PowerPoint® presentation? Would they consider your portrayal of their culture, life, church and country fair?
- Try and include some humour as well as challenge, but avoid 'in-house' or 'in-team' jokes unless you are very clear about your audience.



- Remember the 'So what?' at the end. Your aim is not to entertain people, nor simply to illustrate your short-term mission team experience and to say what a great time you had, but it should be to challenge and encourage them to consider what God may be calling them to do in terms of world mission. What one or two practical steps could you encourage people to take as a result of your talk or presentation? What further sources of help or information could you provide for them?
- Remember that it's no use preparing a brilliant presentation if people can't hear or see it! When you talk to a group, speak loudly, slowly and clearly. Check with someone beforehand that you are audible and that your presentation is visible from the back of the room.
- Finally, be encouraged! As someone 'like them' who 'tells it like it is,' you are likely to be far more effective in terms of encouraging your family, friends, colleagues and congregation into mission involvement than any long-term missionary, minister, mission board or mission agency!



Be interesting, aim to grab peoples' attention but avoid exaggeration or excessive emotion. Be honest, tell both sides of the story - good and not so good, and share difficulties or failures.

Your aim is not to entertain, nor simply to tell your story, but it should be to encourage and challenge your listeners to consider what God may be calling them to do in world mission.

7. Maintaining contact with your hosts

It's also important to continue to maintain contact with missionary and national hosts once you've returned home. Here, reports are given to the congregation, thank-you letters are written to senders and supporters, and videos and PowerPoint® presentations are compiled. Perhaps you could also consider sending your hosts a DVD or CD of your photos, or of the service your team took in church, or a written copy of your team report, as well as personal thank-you letters.¹³

Keeping up contact will also help to maintain ongoing prayer and a sense of personal connection between your team, its hosts overseas, and your congregation.

8. Taking It Further

Your short-term team trip is over, at least for this year, but it doesn't mean that your involvement in and responsibility for world mission have come to an end.

Here are some practical suggestions for taking things further.

8.1 As a team¹⁴

- Periodically remind the congregation of the work in the country you visited, particularly if you hope to develop a long-term partnership.
- Keep in touch with and pray for those you met and worked with overseas.
- Arrange a Skype session or phone-call with your missionary or national host leader. Ask for updates from the location and share stories of change from



Notes:

the team. This could be done in the church service if appropriate.

- Miss lunch for a day and use the time to pray for the country and ministry with which you were involved.
- Create a team photo album or DVD and send it to your hosts.
- Get together to write all those letters and send all those photos that you'd promised to the folk you met.
- Gather together a thank-you parcel or Christmas parcel for your hosts.
- If possible, assist with preparing or sending another short-term team, or organise and host a visit or team from your partners overseas.

8.2 As an individual

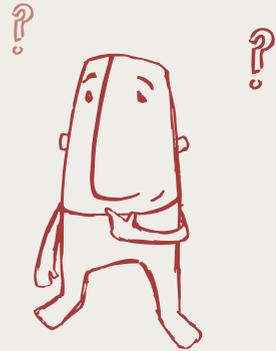
- Keep in personal contact with those you have met overseas. Pray for their country and work regularly. Use Prayerline, Points for Prayer, other mission agency prayer guides, Operation World, etc. See OMF's helpful guide on praying for missionaries, downloadable at http://www.omf.org/omf/uk/get_involved/. As a result of your trip, you should be able to pray much more specifically and with much more understanding for folk overseas than if you hadn't gone!
- Get informed! Read mission books, and start subscribing to a mission agency magazine or two. See Booklet 5, 'Resources and Links,' to get started.

Thought!

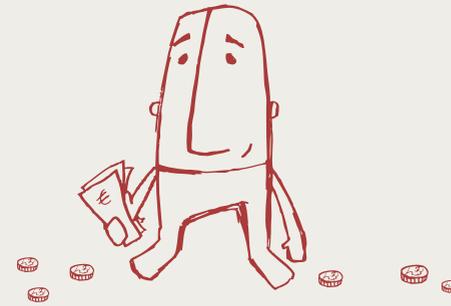
Keeping up contact with your hosts overseas will help you maintain an ongoing prayer focus for them, as well as a sense of 'connectedness' between them, your team, and your congregation.

You should develop a plan for this to happen, including appointing someone (one of your team members probably) to be your congregation's 'key contact' with your overseas partners.

8. Taking it further



- Attend a mission conference or event, particularly one which offers opportunities to hear from Christian leaders from other parts of the world.
See www.pcmisionoverseas.org or www.map.org.uk or www.map.ie for local mission-related events.
- Volunteer to join your congregational mission committee – or set one up!
- Consider volunteer work for the BMO or other mission agency. You could: help maintain a missionary residence; help with mailing; take meetings; offer hospitality to overseas visitors; welcome overseas students; publicise prayer requests and special events, etc. The list is as varied as your gifts.
- Give careful consideration to the idea of longer-term mission service overseas.
- More generally, think about how you use your money: what you buy, where it comes from, and how it is made – through ‘fair-trade’ means or by exploited workers, perhaps in a factory ‘sweat-shop’? Remember that in today’s ‘global village’ your consumer choices can have a direct impact on the lives of those with whom you worked overseas.
- Similarly, think about how you care for the environment (switching off lights, recycling, etc.) – again your actions here can have major consequences for Christian brothers and sisters overseas.



- You might like to consider engaging in advocacy – petitioning on behalf of persecuted Christians, environmental issues, aid for the developing world, etc.

See these websites for ideas and information:

- Christian Aid, www.christianaid.org
- Tearfund, www.tearfund.co.uk
- Barnabas Fund, www.barnabasfund.org
- Open Doors, www.opendoorsuk.org
- Release International, ww.releaseinternational.org

8.3 As a congregation

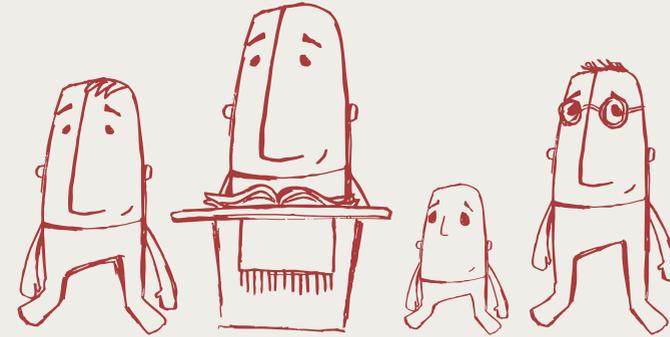
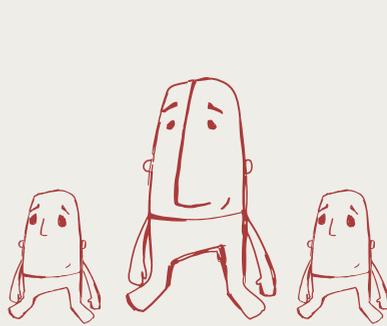
- Make sure your congregational mission plan has a global as well as a local dimension.
- Don't be tempted to think that your commitment to world mission is completed now that you've sent out a short-term mission team. Seek to build on this experience and integrate it into a long-term strategy for sending, receiving and supporting in mission. Review your mission committee's strategy and goals regularly. See <http://www.globalconnections.co.uk> for help, or consult some of the books listed in Booklet 5, 'Resources and Links.'
- If you make world mission part of your congregation's normal programme, people might just begin to see world mission as 'normal' too! ¹⁵



Individuals should try to keep in contact with those they met or worked alongside overseas and to continue to pray for their country, work, church and families.

They should also aim to 'move on' after their experience overseas, considering about how they can further develop their world mission involvement.

8. Taking it further



- Pray for mission on a regular basis, not just at the missionary prayer meeting. Include world mission issues in your regular Sunday intercessions and mid-weeks.
- Introduce a mission component into your regular discipleship strategy – the enquirers or new communicants' classes, the house-groups, the Sunday School and Youth Fellowship.
- Raise awareness of 'world issues' as well as purely 'missionary' issues – the concerns raised by our TV screens and daily papers, world music, sport, fair trade issues, political issues, environmental issues.
- What about that business trip, student exchange or holiday destination? Encourage your members to find out about the mission context of their visit, and to investigate the local religious scene. Could they attend a church and encourage the local Christians while they are there? Is there a missionary they could contact and visit? Or some literature in the local language that they could take out? Contact the Bible Society for advice and help: www.bsni.co.uk/ or www.biblesociety.ie.
- Learn to think mission, not just on special occasions or the annual 'Mission Sunday', but in your regular teaching, preaching and Bible study. Don't just focus on obvious 'missionary passages' in Scripture, but start reading the whole of the Bible as the story of God's mission, His heart to draw all nations to Himself. Look out for little phrases – "the world," "the nations," "the peoples" – and see just how often they turn up! ¹⁶

Notes:

- Investigate opportunities as a congregation for cross-cultural involvement in your own local area, such as teaching English and offering practical help to immigrants. See the organisation Embrace Northern Ireland, www.embraceni.co.uk, the Migrant Rights Centre at <http://www.mrci.ie> or the Irish Refugee Council at <http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie> for help and advice.
- Throughout Ireland, North and South, local universities and colleges have many international students who could benefit from Christian friendship and hospitality. OMF and Friends International offer training and opportunities for cross-cultural witness and ministry. The BMO's Leadership Development Committee offers opportunities to support leaders-in-training from our partner churches studying at Union Theological College or Belfast Bible College.
- Last, but certainly not least, allow your experience overseas to refresh and revitalise you for local evangelism and mission!

Remember that a successful short-term mission experience is one that brings about a long-term commitment to mission in your individual and congregational lives!

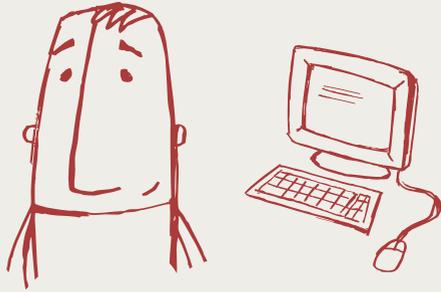
"The journey from mission tourist to global citizen continues long after you return home. You are in this for eternity!" ¹⁷

Thought!

Make sure your congregational mission plan has a global as well as local dimension. Seek to build on your team's overseas experience and integrate it into a long-term strategy for sending, receiving and supporting mission

Make world mission part of your congregation's normal programme and people might just begin to see world mission as 'normal' too!

References



- ¹ On the challenges of 're-entry' and how to cope, see further: Kirby, Scott, *Equipped for Adventure: A Practical Guide to Short-Term Mission Trips* (Birmingham, Alabama: New Hope Publishers, 2006), 179-184; Knell, Marion, *Burn Up or Splash Down: Surviving the Culture Shock of Re-entry* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Publishing, 2006), 22-27; Townsend, Ditch, *Stop, Check, Go: A Practical Guide for Cross-Cultural Teamwork* (Carlisle: OM Publishing, 1996), 90-93, and *What to Know Before You Go*, National Youth Ministries Department of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, (n.d.), 64-66, <http://www.paoc.org> (accessed 18th January 2008).
- ² Adapted from *What to Know Before You Go*, 65.
- ³ Material developed from Dr. Maureen Stevenson, seminar on 'Team Health,' BMO Overseas Teams' Training Day, Hill Hall Presbyterian Church, April 2009.
- ⁴ Material on Debriefing, *Some Guidelines for Debriefing, Debriefing Outlines and Further Ideas and Icebreakers* developed from Dr. Debbie Hawker, Facilitator, BMO Training Day on 'Debriefing for Senders,' Muckamore Presbyterian Church, June 2009; from Miss Helen Johnston, 'Debriefing and Telling Your Story,' a seminar given at BMO Overseas Teams' Training Day, Muckamore Presbyterian Church, March 2008; from 'PCI-BMO Teams' Debriefing Guidelines,' (n.d.) and from the BMO's 'Internal Debriefing Guide' (July 2004).

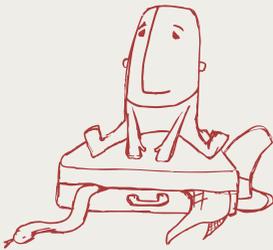
Notes:

- ⁵ On evaluation by all partners, see further Peterson, Roger, Gordon Aeschlimann, and R. Wayne Sneed, *Maximum Impact Short-Term Mission: The God-Commanded Repetitive Deployment of Swift, Temporary, Non-Professional Missionaries* (Minneapolis: Bethany Press International, 2003), 194.
- ⁶ Johnson, Ros, 'Cutting Out the Middleman: Mission and Local Church Involvement in a Globalised Postmodern World,' in Tiplady, Richard, ed., *One World or Many? The impact of Globalisation Upon Mission*. (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2003), 239-250), 247.
- ⁷ Dearborn, Tim, *Short-Term Missions Workbook: From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 66.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.
- ⁹ See The Next Mile, 'Reporting Home,' *The Next Mile Leader's Resource CD*, <http://www.thenextmile.org>.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, '20 Mile-Markers.'
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Dearborn, *Short-Term Missions Workbook*, 67.
- ¹³ See The Next Mile, 'Serving Your Missionary Host,' *The Next Mile Leader's Resource CD*, <http://www.thenextmile.org>.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, '20 Mile-Markers.'
- ¹⁵ See Bryan Knell's articles entitled 'Changing Global Mission Culture in the UK Church' (2004), and 'Wake Up to the World' (2005), for a challenging discussion of this and subsequent points: <http://www.globalconnections.co.uk/resources/missionissues/topic/UKchurch/churchmission>.
- ¹⁶ See Christopher J. Wright's *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006), for a detailed treatment of this theme.
- ¹⁷ Dearborn, *Short-Term Missions Workbook*, 97.



A successful short-term overseas mission experience is one that brings about a long-term commitment to world mission in individual lives, and in the life of your congregation!

"The journey from mission tourist to global citizen continues long after your return home. You are in this for eternity!"



'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

Also in this five part Mission Toolkit series:

Thinking of Going
Doing the Groundwork
Ready, Steady, Go
Finishing Well
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