

## **Discussion Paper on Mission Trip Logistics**

### **A Brief Outline of Logistical Considerations for Church Mission Trips**

(Various aspects may differ depending on the size and nature of teams as well as whether these are lay or staff led efforts).

#### **1. Identifying team leadership**

For example, having a pool of potential leaders who have been identified and trained. These leaders will have clearly defined responsibilities. A team leader's guide is available for the leader. Fairfax Community Church has a Leader's manual for reference.

#### **2. Consultation with host partners**

- Determining where the team will serve and in what capacity.
- Determine the size of the team and needed skill sets.
- Know what needs are at partner's location.
- Find out anticipated service roles.
- Host-end logistics: Determine ground costs (food/accommodation, local transportation, etc.) and any additional costs. Daily budget in country?
- Any side trips planned?
- Security situation assessment and any special measures needed to ensure safety of the team.
- Obtain schedule for duration of trip (subject to change of course!).
- Housing details.

#### **3. Selection and preparation of team members.**

- Application process – forms to complete? Include Personality test.
- Team selection. What are the criteria for who gets to be on the team? What is the right size for a team in the context of the proposed trip?
- How well do team participants change/go with the flow?
- Personal interview prior to selection. Spend time with each applicant and know where they are in their spiritual walk.
- Orientation – schedule team meetings prior to trip. What is an appropriate number of meetings?
- Plan Team-building moments through local projects prior to trip.
- Cultural and country context information communicated to team.
- Food, language, other in-country information.
- Expectations for post-trip de-brief.
- Determine any special needs/requests that need to be communicated to hosts (food allergies, etc.).

#### 4. Trip logistics

- Set trip dates.
- Establish trip costs (subsidized or completely funded by team members?).
- Giving options communicated to team. Provide giving options? (Online, checks to church, PayPal, Go Fund Me, etc.)
- Provide fund raising resources (sample letter, info on where and how donors can contribute).
- Schedule for trip payments. How much is needed when?
- Ensure that team members are raising funds in a timely manner.
- Send funding updates to team members to let them know who has given what.
- Encourage “thank you” communications with donors.
- Flight arrangements.
- Arrange transit accommodations if required.
- If needed prior to arrival, obtain visas.
- Any “shots” needed.
- “What to pack?” list.
- Get needed information. Passport numbers, date of birth, etc.
- Insurance coverage purchased.
- Emergency contacts for team members (phone numbers and email).
- Code of Conduct to be signed agreeing to abide by any necessary considerations.
- Liability waiver signed by team members.
- Background check for anything that could deal with children.
- Schedule pre-trip Team Meetings. Unlearn and relearn what is a Healthy Team.
- Ensure needed copies of key documents in the hands of team leader (travel details including airline ticket numbers, copies of passports).
- Make sure team members with personal medicines have supporting documentation.
- A great stateside training aid is HEART Village in Lake Wales, FL – [www.heartvillage.org](http://www.heartvillage.org).
- Departure details (where and what time to show up at the airport).
- Ensure all team members have itinerary & proper identification (passport).
- Set the bar prior to trip: It’s not about ME it’s about US/THEM.

#### 5. On the Ground

The team leader will:

1. Contact designated home church staff or member to let them know of safe arrival.
2. Ensure all bags are accounted for and assist anyone who has missing luggage.
3. Coordinate meeting between host leadership and team as soon as feasible following arrival.
4. Help ensure smooth “settling in” process.
5. Brief team. Manage expectations. Help people navigate unexpected change in plans.
6. Be prepared to share your “Elevator Testimony”.
7. Confer with partners daily and inform team of schedule changes or other things they need to know about.
8. Set up daily team meetings for devotions and team sharing (and set up a reasonable time for people to be on the internet if available).

9. Have a designated document capture person on the trip (i.e. photos, videos, blogging).
10. Keep “the herd” together and moving in the desired direction.
11. Keep track of team during flight layovers on return trip.
12. Notify designated church staff or member when the team is on the ground stateside.
13. Post-trip processing meeting – don’t let experience fade with your suntan.
14. Submit a trip report. (Fairfax Comm. has an outline for a suggested trip report format).