

## Planning short term team trips

Planning a team trip is no small undertaking! It makes sense to have a small group of people involved in this, to help cover all the required actions and share the load. This group may be the mission committee, church leadership, a combination of both or a specifically created group altogether.

NB: The following relates to the planning of a team without the involvement of an agency. Should an agency be involved, they are likely to oversee all aspects of logistics which will significantly lift the load from the group and team leader however the church/group will still need to be aware of much of these details.

### 10-12 months prior

- Determine the purpose of a team – why, what, how? How would/does this team trip fit with the mission vision of the church?
- Decide on whether this will be facilitated by the church/group or through an agency. Explore different agency options if that is the path chosen. The **Agency** section of the **MISSION WORLD** website has some benefits listed of going with an agency and links to the Strategic Mission Partners. Many agencies do not have planned trips advertised but are usually very open to working with a church or group to facilitate and lead a team to a specific region.
- Make a decision on team destination(s). Is there a region or people group that the church already has connections with? Would church-supported mission workers value a visit by and assistance from a team from their home church? Has the church been invited to work with a local church overseas...be careful not to invite yourself and go where you are not wanted!
- Who should go? Youth/young adults only, a mixed age range? How many people? A good rule of thumb for a team is 6-12. This number is more manageable for local transport and accommodation. Minimum age should also be considered. Most common is 18+ years although some agencies will work with early teens as long as there is an accompanying adult. Determine any specific criteria for application taking note of medical conditions as well.
- When should the team go and for how long? If you want students and teachers involved, the school/tertiary holidays need to be taken into account. Seasons in the destination should also be considered. Extreme temperatures may not be ideal!
- Consider a budget and what should be included – flights, accommodation, food, transportation, visas, insurances, orientation, agency leader costs (if someone leads the team), project offerings. Other costs that differ person to person, may be passed separately to the individuals i.e. immunisations, personal spending money. Remember that the fewer surprises for people the better☺

### 6-9 months prior

- Make a decision on team leader. This is an important role that needs someone willing and able to take on the responsibility which will include:
  - Take an active part in forming the team including selection and orientation
  - Be the primary channel for communication between the team and the agency (if applicable)
  - Have oversight of the itinerary and ensure all required documentation, bookings and payments are made
  - Ensure orientation sessions are undertaken in advance and debriefing on return
  - Oversight of on-field team briefings and debriefing
- Advertise the trip to the church/group and invite application.
- Select the team members.

- Research the country the team is going to including climate, culture, customs, food, dress, religion.
- Determine how much individual members are required to pay and how much the group/church needs to fundraise.
- Start fundraising and orientation.
- Once team members are selected, book plane tickets. Consider a block booking in advance - these may have a minimum number required for cheaper fares.
- Establish an itinerary.

### **3-6 months**

- Finalise itinerary including accommodation in each location and required transportation if this is able to be booked in advance.
- Arrange a group of pray-ers in support of the team, before, during and after the trip.
- Final payments from team members should be in, along emergency contact details and signed permission forms as applicable.
- Ensure any required passports, visas and immunisations are in hand.
- Schedule a church service to be 'commissioned' if applicable.

### **1 month prior**

- Send final itinerary to all team members.
- Send final packing lists – what to take etc.

### **1-3 months post return**

- Arrange for a team debrief – individual debriefs may also be a good option – and work through 'so what, now what?'
- Ensure thanks are sent to all supporters and people involved in facilitating the team - on-field and in NZ.
- Report back to the church.
- Make clear notes and recommendations for any future teams.