

PLAN – Vision Trips

Having made a connection with a new ministry partner, it is important to plan a vision trip to the missions location prior to taking a team of missions participants. A vision trip is an excellent opportunity to meet your ministry partner, domestic or global (DMP or GMP), in their home setting, and can be the foundation for your new ministry partnership. You will need to figure out when you want to take your vision trip(s), as well as decide on who will go (typically between 5-8 people). Many of the questions asked during the vision trip about the planning of the mission trip will also need to be asked of the vision trip planning – i.e. When to go? Where to stay? etc. During a vision trip, you are also able to discuss the needs of the ministry partner and how your church can be of assistance through a partnership. A vision trip is also a good time to continue to flesh out the details of the Partnership Agreement, which lists the goals and measures of a ministry partnership.

While on the vision trip, it is important to have a plan of things to discuss, sites to visit, and questions to ask. Each vision trip will vary by church, but it can be helpful to divide the tasks between the vision trip members in terms of being tasked with asking certain questions, figuring out specific details for when a full team is on site, etc.

Be sure that everything is in line with the Partnership Agreement between your church/community and your ministry partner. Below is a sample checklist of items to investigate while planning for, and being on, a vision trip.:

General Information:

1. Who is the leader of the mission team (with contact information)?
2. Who is the primary contact once in country?
3. What is the purpose of the ministry partnership?
4. Who will be involved in this partnership, and how often?
5. What is the minimum and maximum number to go?
6. Is there a possibility for a 3-5 year commitment to this area/ministry? Be specific.
7. What age of team members would be best?
8. What are the "needs" of this specific area?
9. Do we have resources to meet some of those needs? Which ones?

Ministry Needs:

1. When will teams come? For how long?
2. Ministry tools? What needs to be brought from the USA and what is in country?
3. What does each department of the church need from a ministry partnership?
4. How would the on-site contact person be involved with the team?
5. With whom would the team be directly serving?
6. If possible, provide an idea of what you anticipate the daily schedule to be.

7. Are there items the team can bring (such as tracts, school supplies, tools, etc.) to enhance the ministry?
8. What lessons can we learn from our host partners and/or Christians in their community?

Logistics:

1. What accommodations/transportation are readily available?
2. Does the transportation company have a good driving record? Are their drivers insured?
3. Where will teams sleep?
4. Where will teams eat? What about potable water?
5. Do teams need a translator? Who will it be?
6. Should there be medical personnel or other specialized staff? What kind of insurance do we need to buy?
7. Is there a medical facility nearby? If not, where is the nearest?
8. Is it safe? Are there areas that are considered unsafe?
9. What kind of preparations and safety precautions are in place?
10. What immunizations are required for your country (Check with the U.S. State Department: www.state.gov)
11. What about cell phones, currency exchange, and internet availability/usage?
12. What is the estimated cost of the trip?

For more information regarding vision trips, check out these resources:

- *A Guide to Short Term Missions* by H. Leon Greene
- *Stop. Check. Go.* by Ditch Townsend
- *Short Term Mission* by Brian Howell
- *Building Strategic Partnerships* by Daniel Rickitt
- *Equipped for Adventure* by Scott Kirby
- *Cross Cultural Partnerships: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Mission* by Mary Lederleitner
- *Help! We're Going on a Short-Term Trip* by CultureLink
- *Stuff You Need to Know About Doing Missions in Your Church* handbook by David Mays
- "Short-Term Mission Trips: What the Long-Term Personnel Really Think About Them" by Dr. Dennis Horton