Guidelines for Churches Hosting Volunteers

Before Requesting Volunteer Teams

Identify needs (perhaps with help from Global Ministries).

- Complete a Project Profile sheet or clearly define project needs and objectives
- Attach photographs of project where possible.
- Assign a site project manager
- Include project / design specifications if applicable (approved by church / community professional).
- Set specifications and direct the project technically.
- Arrange for professional electricians, plumbers, etc.

Communication is important.

- Promote project through church (locally, regionally, nationally).
- Develop plan for communicating with team leader (including updates regarding project status).
- Clarify best means of communication (phone, fax, e-mail).

Decide how to schedule teams.

- Accept only number of teams that can be adequately hosted and determine the number of team members per team. Things to consider: scope of project, age, & skills needed.
- Housing availability (depends on season & suitability for particular project implementation).
- Verify that the teams will be adequately funded to pay for complete the work
- No more than one team per time period.
- Assess availability of construction materials.

Plan for adequate accommodations.

- Meals/lodging
- On-site coordinators
- Local travel accommodations
- Adequate Hospital and medical services to accommodate mission
- Identify what tools teams will need (Suggestion: establish a "tool bank" of tools for volunteers to use when they come on mission)

Prepare an anticipated budget.

- Project expenses (itemize in stages, include cost of materials and tools)
- Itemize team expenses (i.e. lodging, food, in-country transportation, coordinating fee, cultural experiences, labor cost, interpreters, cooks, day laborers, guards).
- Each team should bring enough funds to cover the cost of materials needed for their work, costs for lodging, food and transportation.

Before Team Arrives

Maintain clear communication with team leader or designated contact person regarding:

Project details

- Maximum acceptable number of team members
- Nature of work and anticipated tools/skills needed
- Mutually agreed upon dates and expectations
- Define goals regarding relationships and experiences with incoming teams
- Encourage team leader to pre-site the project
- Method(s) of funding and accountability of monies sent

Accommodations

- Provision of letter of formal invitation from sponsoring entity for customs requirements
- Local contact person / phone numbers
- Person to meet team
- Need or availability of interpreter
- Items to bring (sleeping bags, sheets, towels, toiletries, Bibles, etc.)
- Preparation of meals by host or team
- Grocery shopping done by host or team
- Availability of suitable drinking water and cost of bottled water
- Weather
- Type of housing available

Team

- State clearly expectations for team and team leader
- Advise team leader of necessary medical insurance and immunizations
- Required legal documents (passports and copies, visas, work permits, verification of professional credentials, i.e., physician's license)
- Location and number of embassy and consulate
- Sensitivities to religion, culture and local customs (i.e., alcohol, drugs, smoking, dress, behavior, gestures and mores)
- Offer useful translated phrases (i.e., praise and worship phrases)
- History of area and project
- Local regulations with respect to motor vehicles (insurance, drivers license)
- Address of project and phone number of key local leaders

Advise team leader of (expected) costs. Select on method below:

- #1 Request that funds for materials be sent in advance and purchase materials prior to the team arrival.
- #2 Confirm with VIM team that they will bring materials with them or purchase materials upon arrival.

Prepare work site/ministry.

- Have materials on site or arrange to be purchased.
- Confirm work to be done.

When Team Arrives

Meet and welcome team at port of entry (suggestion: use a sign for identification).

- Be prepared to assist with customs officials if needed or permitted.
- Provide adequate transportation to accommodate members, luggage, and supplies to housing.

Inventory tool or materials that are being brought by team.

Consider taking picture of arriving team.

Provide on-site orientation for team.

- Include information about the country and Methodism, how team members can relate effectively with locals, specific "do's" and "don'ts".
- May post schedule of planned activities.

During Team's Visit

Check frequently with team leader that all plans/arrangements are working.

- Attend to the safety/security needs of team.
- Address issues/problems as they arise.

Verify with locals that their plans/arrangements are working.

- Visit site daily.

Offer opportunities for fellowship with team.

- Involve local Christian community in worship and witness, and work with volunteer teams to celebrate the joy of mission and the Christian Experience.
- Encourage daily sharing of reflections.
- Visit other churches or mission sites.
- Host a talent night.

Coordinate and provide culture opportunities with team.

- Enjoy music from host community and team.

Before Departure of Team

Plan for a time of sharing with team.

- Include a time of mutual assessment of experience.
- If inclined, invite the team leader to send a written evaluation at a later date.

Provide team leader with a completed financial report.

Assist with confirmation of travel arrangements.

Plan with team leader, a time for good-byes.

- Include a time of celebrations and/or worship.
- Present appreciation certificates to team members when possible.
- Establish way to stay in touch with visiting team (prayer support, networking, etc.).

Provide transportation to port of departure.

After Team Departs

If requested by team, send a written evaluation to the appropriate office.

- Include: team's work and contributions, update on progress of project, future team needs.