

UFM Worldwide: Commitment to Best Practice (Short-Term Mission)

Section 1: Aims and Objectives

To ensure:

- A biblically based, long-term vision for all partners
- A purposeful project that has measurable goals

UFM Worldwide exists to support churches in making disciples of all nations.

a. All short-term mission programmes have clear aims and objectives. These are realistic, measurable and reflect the long-term objectives of all the partners.

We place a high priority on identifying measurable goals with our partners, with a particular focus on the sending church and the long-term nature and benefit of short-term mission trips.

b. The aims of all projects clearly reflect that this is distinctive Christian mission.

Since 1931 we've had the privilege of helping churches to identify, train, send and support workers for cross-cultural mission.

UFM Mission Partners are committed to making disciples of all nations (cf Matthew 28:19), taking the gospel to the least reached, and supporting under-resourced churches around the world.

c. The benefits to and responsibilities of all the partners are clearly identified and stated in the programme outlines / summaries.

d. There is clear evidence of consultation between the senders and hosts in establishing the aims and objectives of all short-term programmes.

Each programme (both for individuals and teams) is developed in consultation with UFM hosts, whilst taking into account the skills and previous experience of the applicant.

Placements for individuals: Once applications have gone through initial enquiry, we put the applicants in touch with the potential host mission partners. This provides plenty of opportunity to answer questions, discuss areas for development etc.

Team placements: A team leader is assigned at the outset, and they will consult / partner with the host mission partner and liaise between the host and team.

e. Projects will be sensitive to, and developed around, the context and environment into which participants will be received.

In all cases, we aim to give our Short-Term Mission Partners an authentic experience of the local church, community, and culture whilst developing a programme that will challenge and extend their experience and provide effective support to the hosts.

Short-Term Mission Partners are sent to serve and support the hosts' ministry, as well as for learning and experience of cross-cultural mission.

f. The participant is developed and disciplined throughout their experience.

From initial enquiry through to debrief, the participant is supported by the UFM Short-Term Mission Coordinator, and other UFM pastoral care workers. They will be mentored by the host mission partner throughout their trip. The sending church retains the primary role of caregiving.

g. Where a short-term mission programme is organised by a sender that is not the participant's home church, appropriate support from the participant's local Christian community is sought.

The primary conversation for the Mission Partner is with leaders of their sending church. Where this is not their home church, for example if they are a university student, there will be clear communication between, and guidance for, all parties involved. We would expect all relevant church leaders to be included.

Section 2: Publicity & Selection

To ensure:

- Clear communication of aims and objectives
- Appropriate matching of people to projects
- Adequate briefing and equipping of all partners

Our literature is available on paper and on the website. It is under regular review and is periodically updated to incorporate feedback from previous Short-Term Mission Partners.

a. Publicity materials accurately describe the programmes without omission of what might be considered the 'harsh reality' of circumstances with the host, and are targeted appropriately, and used with integrity.

All publicity materials describe cross-cultural mission opportunities clearly and with appropriate information. Descriptions have been formulated with input from long-term UFM Mission Partners who host short-term participants.

b. All forms of communication with participants will clearly represent the ethos and vision of the sender, and will define the purpose of the programme in terms of service, discipleship and vocation.

All publicity documents and statements highlight the primacy of the local church in identifying and sending mission partners. Each short-term programme is explained with reference to length of trip, and a sense of the goal and expectations.

c. The application process is clearly communicated to the participant, and includes full disclosure of timescales, financial responsibilities and time commitments.

Application forms for each short-term programme include statements of faith and financial expectations. The process is explained in detail during the initial enquiry stage.

- d. The selection process is based on clearly defined selection criteria and all screening is transparent and reflects the nature of the programme being applied for.
- e. Placement decisions are clear and transparent, will be made with integrity, and will be communicated to all involved (including when changes are made).

Application forms and references are seen by the Short-Term Mission Coordinator and Head of Personnel, and shared with the potential host mission partner. Placements are considered and confirmed in consultation with the sending church.

- f. Those not selected, are given clear feedback on why their application was not approved and will be offered short-term pastoral support if needed.

If an applicant is not selected, they would be offered a face-to-face meeting with the Short-Term Mission Coordinator, a Women's Pastoral Worker (if appropriate), and their church leader. They would explain and discuss the situation and what next steps are suitable. This would also occur if a home church were not willing to send the applicant.

- g. The home church is involved in the selection process (as appropriate).

A reference from the home / sending church is required with each application form.

- h. There is clear evidence that all relevant preparatory information (between selection and formal orientation) is provided to the participant as early as possible.

There will be open and ongoing dialogue between relevant partners, especially between the Short-Term Mission Coordinator and individual applicant - including an initial conversation (usually on Zoom).

Section 3: Orientation & Placements

To ensure:

- Adequate briefing and equipping of all partners

Each Short-Term Mission Partner will receive orientation from UFM. The nature of orientation will depend on the programme. For instance, it can happen online or in person.

Team orientation is flexible depending on who is leading the team, geographical spread etc.

- a. Orientation prior to the project and induction at the start of the project is given to all participants. This should include all procedures outlined in 5(e); for example:

- Project brief, location and tasks
- Structures and lines of accountability
- Biblical mandate
- Job descriptions
- Child and vulnerable adult safeguarding measures
- Health and safety, security and issues arising from the risk assessment
- Team dynamics and conflict resolution

- Finances, legal liability and insurance
- Cultural considerations
- Guidelines on behaviour and relationships
- Communication policy with home
- Expectations regarding debriefing

Orientation will include an overview and reminder of UFM; its vision, purpose, and mission statements. This will typically include Bible context and encouragement, as well as an explanation of financial expectations, and support that is provided by UFM. They are encouraged to form a support team of pray-ers and those who give financially.

UFM will make sure that the mission partner is aware of their role and how it fits within the long-term mission ethos.

Each mission partner completes a risk assessment with their host and has a relevant DBS check performed. There is online safeguarding training available for the mission context.

In addition, orientation will include some aspect of cultural preparation and personal spiritual wellbeing.

- b. When a team is being placed, there are clear processes for the selection, screening, training, responsibilities and support for team leaders. This takes account of both the nature of the team and the type and location of the placement.

Team Leaders are usually UFM staff or mission partners who have previous experience of leading teams. Hosts are normally UFM Long-Term mission partners.

- c. Responsibilities of all partners regarding practicalities, job descriptions and supervision are made clear and agreed prior to placement.

The Short-Term Mission Coordinator meets personally with the Short-Term Mission Partner to outline the full process of practicalities and expectations of their placement. This is followed up during Orientation, and discussed between the mission partner and their host.

Section 4: Legal Issues

To ensure:

- Diligent handling of all legal issues relating to short-term programmes

UFM aims to be compliant with all relevant legislation and safeguarding guidelines.

- a. Where participants are working with vulnerable groups including children, 'fit person' checks are made: Enhanced DBS checks or other regional equivalent.

We require everyone who will be working with children and/or vulnerable adults to undertake an enhanced DBS. Candidates are encouraged to sign up to the Online Update Service with DBS to facilitate swift checks to be made in the future.

- b. Any participant under 18 years of age, is required to provide documented parental consent.
- c. Senders clearly define their lower age limit and who is responsible for underage participants. Specialist legal advice and insurance cover is sought for groups including participants under 18 years old.
Typically, individual Short-Term Mission Partners will be over 18. Occasionally, and with full agreement of host and team leader, a Short-Term Team will allow someone under 18 to join them. The Team Leader will connect with the parents / guardians.
- d. Waivers and disclaimers are not used, unless on the explicit direction of legal advice (details provided where applicable).
Details will be given of any waivers or disclaimers.
- e. Compliance with the Package Travel Regulations, including promotional material, use of contracts / booking conditions and appropriate insurance cover is clearly demonstrated (if applicable).
- f. Requirements of the ATOL regulations are implemented, if organising flights.
UFM holds a group travel insurance policy (currently with Banner Insurance) which includes medical insurance as part of the cover. It is a requirement that all our Short-Term Mission Partners are added to this policy (or equivalent) for the duration of the placement, and the cost is included in the overall placement costs.

Section 5: Field Management and Pastoral Care

To ensure

- Aims and objectives are met for all partners
 - Care and development of the participant is provided for
Pastoral care is a crucial part of a short-term mission trip. UFM will ensure that all parties are involved in the wellbeing of the Short-Term Mission Partner.
- a. Systems and processes are in place to review task aims and objectives with participants, and to emphasise the ongoing responsibilities and expectations.
- b. Suitably skilled and experienced supervisors are in place to support participants and maintain clear lines of authority, supervision, communication, responsibility and accountability.
- c. Pastoral care and support structures are established and implemented.
When on placement there is a responsibility of care with the Team Leaders / Hosts. All Short-Term Mission Partners should know who they can talk to. There is provision for communication and pastoral support if needed with the UFM Office / Personnel Department (during office hours) and Head of Personnel (who can be contacted at any time). Communication between the UK Office / Team Leader / participant and host takes place throughout the placement.

- d. Opportunities for personal and spiritual development of the participant are provided. Again, this is a crucial part of a short-term mission trip. Expectations and opportunities will be discussed at each step of the application and orientation process, with a focus on ongoing spiritual growth and future involvement in long-term mission.
- e. Appropriate policies and procedures are established, communicated and implemented. These would include:
- Healthcare, medical contingencies, security and evacuation
 - Identifying and managing risks
 - Stress management and conflict resolution
 - Misconduct, discipline, and grievances
- Team leaders / hosts are asked to complete a risk assessment prior to the placement commencing (a template is provided by the Home Office) and risks / hazards will be communicated to the individuals. Foreign Office advice is sought if needed during the planning stage.*
- In a conflict / crisis situation, regular contact is maintained with those in the situation by phone, email or Zoom (whichever is most appropriate/accessible). If there are other organisations working in the same area, contact is made with them. Insurance companies are alerted when necessary.*

Section 6: Post-assignment Support, Evaluation and Programme Development

To ensure:

- Participants are supported post-assignment
 - Systems are in place to allow all partners to give feedback
 - Feedback received is assessed without prejudice and used proactively to enhance future programmes
- The Short-Term Mission Partner will complete a feedback form. This is used for debriefing and improving future short-term mission opportunities.*
- a. Debriefing and support for the participant is seen as an integral part of the short-term programme and the process involves all partners.
- Each Short-Term Mission Partner will have a debrief session, usually with the Short-Term Mission Coordinator or Team Leader. The nature of debriefing will depend on the programme. For instance, it can happen online or in person.*
- b. Post-assignment preparation, including placement appraisal, begins before the end of the project.
- The debrief process and expectation is raised at Orientation. We want the Short-Term Mission Partner to be reflecting on their short-term experience even while on the trip.*

c. Debriefing and support of team leaders is seen as an integral part of the short-term programme.

The Short-Term Mission Coordinator will discuss the trip with the team leader on their return. This will have the aim of developing future trips as well as the team leader's growth.

d. Senders assist participants through post-assignment readjustment.

e. Advice and guidance are offered to participants to find the next step in their Christian life following the programme. Where appropriate, this is done in liaison with the participant's home church.

The sending church will be offered a post-trip conversation with a UFM staff member to discuss future connections.

f. An evaluation of aims, responsibilities and procedures is undertaken, inviting comment from all partners. Culturally appropriate ways of providing feedback are sought from the host.

g. The results of evaluations are communicated to relevant managers, for the improvement of future projects.

Feedback forms are shown to the Head of Personnel as part of a continual review process.

Section 7: Responding to the Challenges of Short-Term Mission in Today's Culture and Climate Change

To ensure:

- The church or agency adopts a considered and responsible approach to climate change
- Participants are encouraged to consider UK based programmes
- Overseas programmes focus on 'listening and learning', over and above 'showing and doing'

a. The reason(s) for continuing to run overseas / international short-term mission programmes are clearly communicated in all promotional material.

The biblical mandate for, and teaching on, cross-cultural mission is clear in all UFM publications.

b. The sender can demonstrate balance in their short-term programmes between overseas and UK based. If UK based programmes are not currently offered, the sender is able to articulate why.

The sending of Short-Term Mission Partners is driven primarily by sending churches, who will be in support of both UK based and overseas cross-cultural mission. UFM is able to offer placements both in the UK and overseas.

c. Where applicable, the sender is able to demonstrate an awareness of carbon off-setting, and can evidence the steps taken to offset international travel required as part of their programmes.

Individual decisions about offsetting can be taken by sending churches and participants.

d. The sender can practically demonstrate that their programmes focus on 'listening and learning', over and above 'showing and doing'.

Each Short-Term Mission Partner is encouraged (and expected) to serve rather than 'solve.'

We talk in UFM about short-term mission being more about learning than doing; more about testing gifts than telling others how to do it!