



Global Connections Code of Best Practice for Short-Term Mission 2010



Introduction

The Global Connections Code of Best Practice in Short-Term Mission is designed to apply to all gap year, individual placements, electives and team trips of up to two years duration, organised by UK mission agencies, churches and other Christian organisations. Though formed initially with cross-cultural contexts in mind, it can apply to both UK and overseas situations, both same-culture and cross-cultural.

It is a Code of Best Practice. Our motivation is based on our desire that God is glorified in all that we do. We also recognise our responsibility towards all participants and partners in our programmes, that we serve them to the highest standards possible. The Code does not necessarily indicate current achievement, but rather our aspirations towards high standards in short-term mission practice. It is recognised that not every situation permits a literal application of every element of the Code. Nonetheless some minimum accomplishments are implied in the Code.

Core Values within the Code

Importance of partnership

The partners in a short-term mission programme are:

- Participant(s)
- Senders (church and/or agency)
- Hosts (church, individual and/or agency)

Under God, all partners have a significant contribution to make.

There are also other interested parties involved. These include the participant's family, friends and local Christian community (home church, Christian Union, and/or other). They need to be recognised and included as appropriate.

Commitment to excellence

The code affirms the need for standards in short-term mission and provides a means of demonstrating a commitment to excellence.

Biblical mandate

A distinctive element of short-term mission programmes is an emphasis on Biblical principles and the mandate to be involved in mission.

Biblical attitudes

It is recognised that the attitudes of all involved are important and that they need to be grounded in Biblical truth and spiritual integrity.

Discipleship of participant

In recognising the potential impact of short-term mission trips on the participant's faith and personal development, the need for positive discipleship is affirmed.

Facilitating senders

Although the code seeks to outline best practice in all areas of short-term mission, it is specifically designed to help senders explore ways of improving what they do.

Long-term vision

This value recognises that short-term mission activity needs to fit into the long-term aims of the project and so affirm the long-term objectives and activities of the hosts.

Section 1: aims and objectives

To encourage

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

- 1.1 A short-term mission programme will have clear aims and objectives. These will be realistic, measurable and reflect the long-term objectives of the partners. The projects aims should clearly reflect that this is distinctive Christian mission.
- 1.2 The benefits to and responsibilities of all the partners should be clearly identified.
- 1.3 Through consultation between the senders and hosts, there should be shared ownership of the short-term programme. Care should be taken not to undermine the hosts' ownership of the longer-term project.
- 1.4 Projects will be appropriately contextualised.
- 1.5 There will be a commitment to disciple and develop the participant through the experience.
- 1.6 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 will be sought.



with thanks to OMF

Section 2: publicity, selection and orientation

To ensure

- clear communication of aims and expectations
- appropriate matching of people to projects
- adequate briefing and equipping of all partners

- 2.1 Publicity materials will be accurate and truthful. They will be targeted appropriately, and used with integrity.
- 2.2 All forms of communication will clearly represent the ethos and vision of the senders, and will define the purpose of the programme in terms of service, discipleship and vocation.
- 2.3 The application process, including timescale and financial responsibilities, will be clear and thorough.
- 2.4 A suitable, transparent selection process will be established, including selection criteria and screening. A pastoral element will be included, regardless of the outcome of selection.
- 2.5 Church involvement in the selection process will be sought, as appropriate.
- 2.6 Preparatory information (between selection and formal orientation) will be provided as early and as fully as possible.
- 2.7 Orientation prior to the project and induction at the start of the project will be given to all participants. This should include all procedures outlined in 3.5 and for example:
 - Project brief, location and tasks
 - Structures and lines of accountability
 - Biblical mandate
 - Job descriptions
 - Child protection
 - Health and safety, security and issues arising from the risk assessment
 - Team dynamics and conflict resolution
 - Finances, legal liability and insurance
 - Cultural issues
 - Guidelines on behaviour and relationships
 - Communication policy with home
 - Expectations regarding debriefing
- 2.8 Responsibilities of all partners regarding practicalities, job descriptions and supervision will be made clear and agreed prior to placement.
- 2.9 Placement decisions will be clear and transparent, will be made with integrity, and will be communicated to all involved (including when changes are made).
- 2.10 Where participants are working with or coming into contact with children and vulnerable adults, 'fit person' checks are to be made: CRB checks and also, when they are introduced, the ISA VBS in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and in Scotland the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.
- 2.11 Any participant under 18 needs to have parental consent. Senders need to clearly define their lower age limit and who is responsible for underage participants. Groups with under 18 year old participants need to seek legal and insurance advice.
- 2.12 Adequate and appropriate insurance should be in place for both participants and projects and the use of waivers and disclaimers will be avoided.

Section 3: field management and pastoral care

To ensure

- the aims and objectives are met for all partners
- the care and development of the participant is provided for

- 3.1 Clear task aims and objectives will be re-emphasised (See 2.8). The ongoing responsibilities and expectations of the participant will be reviewed.
- 3.2 Suitable supervisors will be in place and there will be clear lines of authority, supervision, communication, responsibility and accountability.
- 3.3 Pastoral care and support structures will be established and implemented.
- 3.4 Opportunities for personal and spiritual development of the participant will be provided.
- 3.5 Practicalities and procedures will be established, communicated and implemented as appropriate. These would include:
 - Healthcare, medical contingencies, security and evacuation
 - Identifying and managing risks
 - Stress management and conflict resolution
 - Misconduct, discipline, and grievances



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Section 4: re-entry support, evaluation and programme development

To ensure

- the participant is supported post-assignment
- all partners are able to give feedback, leading to improvement of future programmes

- 4.1 Debriefing and support for the participant will be seen as an integral part of the short-term 'package' (in addition to orientation, task supervision and pastoral care), and the process will involve all partners.
- 4.2 Re-entry preparation, including placement appraisal, will begin before the end of the project.
- 4.3 The senders will assist the participant through post-assignment readjustment.
- 4.4 Advice and guidance will be offered to participants to find the next step in their Christian life following the programme. Where appropriate, this will be done in liaison with the participant's home church.
- 4.5 An evaluation of aims, responsibilities and procedures will be undertaken, inviting comment from all partners. Culturally-appropriate ways of feedback will be sought.
- 4.6 The results of evaluations will be communicated to relevant managers, for the improvement of future projects.

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