

Planning and Preparing for the Mission

PRE-PLANNING (ONE YEAR OR MORE BEFORE DEPARTURE)

- Gather everyone interested in organizing an UMVIM team. They may be from one local church, several churches, a district, or a conference. Select a convener and a recording secretary to take minutes.
- Decide what kind of mission team to organize. Will you include youth and adults? What kind of project is it: construction, medical, evangelistic, Bible School, a combination?
- Seek the endorsement of your local church administrative board, district office, and conference UMVIM Coordinator.
- Select a team leader.
- Select your location. Choose first, second, and third preferences. Contact the conference, jurisdictional, or GBGM Mission Volunteers Office for project lists.
- Decide whether you will raise money to pay the personal expenses of any team members. Volunteers pay their own expenses as a rule, but selective assistance can be useful.
- Appoint someone to lead fundraising activities. Select ways to raise money for the project.
- Choose a coordinator to handle all travel arrangements.
- Name a publicity coordinator to publicize the project. Decide how to inform and involve the local church(es), the district, and the conference in the project from beginning to end.
- Set a tentative date for the trip (to be confirmed with the host).
- Decide how to recruit team members.
- Write to the contact persons for more information about projects that interest you, or work with your UMVIM Coordinator to make these contacts.
- Narrow the field of project choices.
- Make final decisions about your project (type, location, cost, etc.). If possible, send the team leader for an on-site inspection. Keep your Conference and Jurisdictional UMVIM Coordinators informed. Follow normal procedures in your jurisdiction. Let your coordinators know if you will accept team members from outside your own area (who may call coordinators to find a suitable project for themselves.)
- Set a goal for the amount of money you will raise to pay for project materials and supplies (not personal expenses of the team).
- Check on insurance coverage provided by your local church or conference. Strongly consider the accident/accidental death and emergency evacuation insurance provided by the General Board of Global Ministries or by your jurisdictional UMVIM office.

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS ONLY

- Contact a travel agent. Find out if you will need passports and/or visas.
- Check the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website, <<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>> regarding required/recommended inoculations.
- Contact the UMVIM Coordinator in the country you will visit. Ask about any credentials and documents you will need to send in advance. (Medical teams need clearance from the local government to practice medicine.)
- Research customs regulations, especially about supplies you will bring.
- Decide how to handle your money. If your project is an Advance Special, your local church may route your money through the General Board of Global Ministries. If your project is not an Advance Special, you could possibly get an Advance Special number assigned to it. Contact your UMVIM Coordinator about this.

PLANNING (9-12 MONTHS BEFORE DEPARTURE)

Select Project and Team Activities

- Contact project hosts. Making arrangements may take several contacts and several months.
 - Receive formal letter of invitation.
 - Determine type of project and cost of supplies (see project profile).
 - Determine maximum number of team members the host can accommodate.
 - Make team arrangements for:
 - housing
 - meals (prepared by host or team)
 - transportation.
- Complete Covenant for Mission Partnership.
- Determine need for interpreter.
- Arrange for team orientation by host.
- Confirm joint worship opportunities with host.
- Arrange for sightseeing.
- Establish best form of communication with host (phone, fax, e-mail), keeping in mind costs for host.
- Have a clear understanding of host's expectations.
- Discuss and agree upon transmittal of project funds (means, timing, accountability).
- Research cultural information.

Make Travel Arrangements

- Transportation details and tentative airline schedule and reservations confirmed in writing.
- Non-personal luggage transportation details.
- Lodging/meals while traveling to site.
- Travel agent information: _____ .

Gather Health and Safety Information

- Emergency numbers:
 - Medical facilities
 - US Embassy
 - UMVIM office (conference, jurisdictional).
- First aid kit needs.
- Appropriate immunizations/medications needed.
- Worksite safety precautions.
- Other health, safety, and security precautions.

Develop Timeline

- Departure and return dates.
- Deadline for forms and money to be turned in to team leader (set deadline 2-3 weeks ahead of real need).
- Deadline for team leader to turn in money to appropriate treasurer (church, conference), travel agent, project host, etc.
- Dates for team orientation and training.
- Date for UMVIM team's Sending Forth Service.
- Possible dates for UMVIM team reunion.

Prepare Budget

- See “Budgeting” under the Basic Training Manual for Team Leaders section for suggested budget items.
- Take a receipt book for the trip.

Recruit and Select Team *(See “Recruiting Team Members” in the Basic Training Manual for Team Leaders section.)*

- Include interpreter(s) if needed.
- Consider offering scholarships.
- Keep size of team to host’s request (10-14 is generally acceptable).
- Confirm receipt of applications.
- Distribute forms to team members and discuss team member application; covenant; liability release; insurance; medical information and release; emergency contact; notification of death; parental permission for minors; and any others required by Conference or Jurisdictional UMVIM. (Consider making a spreadsheet to track receipt of inputs.)
- Announce deadlines for turning in money.

TEAM LEADER PREPARATION (3-6 MONTHS BEFORE DEPARTURE)

Determine Travel Essentials

- Obtain passports, visas, and work permits where needed.
- Collect money for airfares and purchase tickets.
- Send list of team members to travel agent (with names as they appear on passports).
- Verify professional credentials for serving in host country (health-care volunteers).
- Know information about medical system in country of travel.
- Have evacuation plans in case of severe weather, social upheaval, medical emergency, etc.

Team Training Preparations

- Schedule orientation and training (meetings, conference calls, mail, video sessions).
- Prepare or assign devotionals for orientation and training sessions.
- Prepare training packet with mission information:
 - Purpose of UMVIM.
 - Project information (place, personnel, work to be done, weather, housing, food, etc.)
 - Mission Policy Agreement and other forms.
 - Tentative itinerary for the mission (daily schedule of travel, work, worship, and recreation).
 - Accidental/medical insurance information for team members, optional travel health insurance.
 - List of team member responsibilities to the team and hosts, sign-up lists (devotions, work assignments, etc.).
 - Emergency and contact numbers.
 - Packing lists. (See “Team Member Packing List” under Forms for Team Members.)
 - Health and safety information. Be certain to stress any dangers and possible problems or concerns that might arise so that team members fully understand them prior to going. This is critical for you as team leader.
 - Currency information.
 - Cultural information.
 - Sightseeing information.
 - Deadlines for payments and forms to be turned in to the team leader.
 - Team assignments, job descriptions. (See “Suggested Team Member Assignments” in the Appendix of this manual.)

- Plan team-building exercises for training session. (See “Icebreakers” in the Appendix of this manual.)
- Plan UMVIM team Sending Forth Service.

PREPARING THE TEAM (1-2 MONTHS BEFORE DEPARTURE)

Hold Team Orientation and Training Meetings

- See “Team Orientation and Training” and related materials in the Basic Training Manual for Team Leaders section.
- Have team members choose work assignments (or delegate assignments based on knowledge of their skills).

Collect Documents and Money from Team Members

- Collect forms from team members. Consider having a notary attend the meeting to complete forms.
- Check forms for signature, witness, and notarization as indicated.
- Collect copies of picture pages of each passport for international teams.
- Collect any remaining money due from team members.

Follow-Up

- Have medical information forms checked by team medic and precautions discussed with individual team members.
- Send forms to appropriate UMVIM office (conference and/or jurisdiction).
- Send team roster to conference and/or jurisdiction UMVIM Coordinator.
- Receive devotions sign-up list from spiritual guide.

Verify All Arrangements

- Travel.
- Lodging.
- Food and drinking water.
- Ground transportation.
- On-site work information (tools or supplies to bring from home, or money needed to purchase them).
- Daily schedule.
- Receipts for monies spent (request receipts and carry a receipt book if needed).
- Advance Special number for the project (so that team members can continue to support the project financially).
- Ordering of needed supplies (medical, Bible School, etc.).
- Team roster sent to US Embassy in host country, including passport numbers (see <http://www.tyzo.com/planning/embassies.html> for locations of embassies).
- Team roster sent to US Representative, including passport numbers.
- Recorded health needs of team members and persons to contact in case of emergency.

Involve Sending/Sponsoring Congregation in the Mission

- Educate congregation(s) about the mission project.
- Ask for prayerful support of the team during the mission.
- Raise funds.
- Prepare to share the story after the team returns.

FINALIZING MISSION PLANS (2-3 WEEKS BEFORE DEPARTURE)

- Reconfirm airline reservations.
- Notify travel agent immediately if there is a cancellation.
- Check tickets for correct names, times, points of departure and arrival.
- Verify insurance coverage. (See “Accident Insurance Application” in the Forms for Team Members section of this manual.)
- Look into passports, visas, immigration, and customs requirements.
- Confirm plans with host contact.
 - Make travel and meeting arrangements with host.
 - Verify work project and housing details (money sent or brought with team for project supplies, food, lodging).
 - Make currency-exchange plans.
 - Obtain or verify phone numbers of local contacts, officials, etc. Give copies to team members and conference UMVIM Coordinator.
 - Ask what amount is customary when tipping luggage handlers, waiters, etc.
- Have a Sending Forth Service for the team.

TRAVEL TO PROJECT LOCATION (PRE-DEPARTURE AND DEPARTURE DAY)

- On pre-departure day, pack donations. (*See “Luggage” in Basic Training for Team Leaders for special packing suggestions.*)
- On departure day, meet at a church or other appointed meeting place early enough to load luggage and boxes, say goodbye, take pictures, get last-minute instructions, and ask God’s blessing on the mission.
- Team leader will carry documentation for the team members such as emergency numbers, medical, insurance and death forms, parental permission forms.
- Travel with the team.
- Participate in on-site orientation as previously arranged with the host.
- Confirm all arrangements with the host and keep track of finances.
- Lead the team at the worksite.
- Build Christian community with the team.
- Invite assessment and celebration of the mission with the host.
- Have the team assess the mission.

UPON ARRIVAL

- Have nametags with only first names.
- Spend a few minutes with the introductions and exchange of greetings.
- Take time, if the location allows, for a brief prayer/devotional with the hosts and the team.
- Confirm arrangements for lodging.
- Confirm plans for meals/drinking water.
- Clarify transportation arrangements and time schedules.
- Review the covenant with the local coordinator and clarify any area that is not clear.
- Have on-site orientation by the host team. (*See the Appendix in this manual for “Guidelines for Hosting Volunteers In Mission.”*)

DURING THE MISSION

- Daily devotions and sharing times.
- Daily reports on the project.

CONCLUDING THE MISSION

- Consider having a farewell meal and a worship/communion service near the end of the mission.
- Invite the host to assess and celebrate the mission.

AFTER YOUR RETURN (2-3 WEEKS AFTER RETURNING)

- Send letters of appreciation to team and to hosts (include some photographs for hosts).
- Hold debriefing and evaluation meeting. Include time for sharing journals, photos, videos.
- Complete plans for your presentation to your congregation(s), district, etc.
- Assemble items you will need for keeping permanent records of your mission trip.
- Arrange for publicity about the trip through local newspapers, church publications, TV, radio, websites.
- Send final reports to appropriate UMVIM Coordinator.
- Suggest readings and resources for dealing with reactions to Third World cultures and problems.