

Adopting the Code

There is no suggestion that without this Code of Best Practice agencies and churches will not aim to develop their programs to the highest possible level. The Code does however provide guidelines and a means towards excellence. The aim of any implementation procedure is not to 'police' the Code, but to support its aims of continual improvement, quality, high standards and excellence. Yet implementation must be a meaningful process, so as to avoid mere lip service which undermines any value the Code may have.

There is a formal adoption and implementation procedure for the Code of Best Practice in Short-Term Mission, which is as follows:

1. An agency/church will decide to formally 'adopt' the Code, and advise the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada to this effect. We will then provide some forms for completion.
2. There will be two signatories to the Code, one being the person responsible for running the short-term program(s), the other being an executive officer of the church/agency (e.g. chairman, CEO, senior pastor, etc).
3. Those who adopt the Code are encouraged to indicate this on all publicity and materials relating to their program(s), and must provide information about the Code to all participants.
- 4) Implementation includes the following commitments:
 - a) Adoptees will be represented at an annual EFC Short-Term Mission Forum.
 - b) Before signing, active consideration will be given to how each section and element of the Code is presently being addressed by the agency/church.
 - c) There will be an active commitment to benchmark in every area of the Code. The EFC Task Force for Global Mission will assist in providing training opportunities in benchmarking.
 - d) A brief report will be submitted annually to the EFC Task Force for Global Mission, describing how the Code is being implemented, with submission of current operating benchmarks. A questionnaire will be provided by the EFC for this purpose.

It is recognized that there is a large variety of different short-term programs operated by agencies and churches. The above Code of Best Practice and implementation procedure are designed to be as flexible as possible. Benchmarking provides a means by which this variety can be taken into account as different benchmarks are developed for different contexts.

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The Code of Best Practice for Short-Term Mission



THE CODE OF BEST PRACTICE FOR SHORT TERM MISSION

Introduction

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Code of Best Practice in Short-Term Mission is designed to apply to all visits, experiences, teams and placements of up to two years duration, organized by Canadian mission agencies, churches and other organizations. Though formed initially with cross-cultural contexts in mind, it can apply to both same-culture and cross-cultural situation in Canada and overseas.

It is a Code of Best Practice. Our motivation is based on our desire that God be glorified in all that we do. We also recognize our responsibility toward all participants and partners in our programs, 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. Nonetheless some minimum accomplishments are implied in the Code. The Code is not intended to establish legal standards or liability. Adopting the Code should therefore be seen as a step in a process rather than an end in itself.

It is recognized that not every situation permits a literal application of every element of the Code. For example, on rare occasions the involvement of a local church is not a reality. Nevertheless it is desirable, and so must be included in a Code of Best Practice. In every case where literal application is impossible, consideration must be given to the question of who may have equivalent responsibilities.

In addition, this Code has some underlying core values, which include:

1. A commitment to culturally appropriate expressions of lifestyle and ministry activities.
2. A commitment to all the stakeholders in short-term mission, such as the participants, sending local church, mission agency, and host church and/or ministry.

3. A commitment to partnership and co-operation.

4. A commitment, wherever possible, to communicate between the stakeholders as early and as fully as possible.

Section 1: Aims and Objectives

1.1 A Short-Term Mission program will have a defined purpose within Christian mission.

1.2 A Short-Term Mission program will have clear and realistic aims and objectives, which include viability, expectations of outcomes, and consideration of how the program serves the long-term objectives of all those involved.

1.3 The benefits to, and responsibilities of, the participant, the sending organization, the sending local church, the host organization and the host local church will be clearly defined and communicated.

1.4 Partnerships will be established, as far as possible, with host local churches and communities. These relationships, in the context of unity love, will be defined in terms of agreed-upon priorities, ownership, and expectations.

1.5 Appropriate sending local church involvement will be sought. A partnership will be developed, as far as is feasible, between the agency, participant and sending local church.

1.6 There will be a commitment to the participant to provide opportunities for personal and spiritual development throughout the experience.

Section 2: Publicity, Selection and Orientation

Publicity

2.1 Publicity materials will be accurate, truthful and used with integrity.

2.2 Publicity will clearly represent the ethos and vision of the sending organization. It will not reflect negatively on the host culture or ministry. It will also define the purpose of the program in the terms of service, discipleship and vocation.

Selection

2.3 The application process, including timeline, all financial obligations and use of funds, will be clear and thorough.

2.4 A suitable selection process will be established, including selection criteria and screening. A pastoral care element will be included, regardless of whether or not the individual is accepted as a short-term participant.

2.5 It is essential that there is disclosure of the relevant details concerning the short-term participant between the church, agency and field.

Orientation

2.6 Appropriate orientation and training will be given prior to departure, and/or after arrival on the field. Team leaders will be briefed on the orientation and training provided.

2.7 Preparatory information will be provided as early and as fully as possible.

2.8 Placement decisions and changes will be made with integrity and communicated clearly to all involved.

Section 3: Field Management and Pastoral Care

3.1 Clear task aims, objectives, and job descriptions will be developed jointly by the sending and hosting leadership.

3.2 Home and field based communication and reporting guidelines will be identified, implemented and reviewed.

3.3 Mutually defined lines of authority, supervision, communication, responsibility and accountability will be established and implemented through regular reporting and/or meetings.

3.4 Pastoral Care and support structures will be provided, and respective responsibilities clarified with all parties.

3.5 Opportunities for spiritual, personal, and character development will be provided, promoted and pursued.

3.6 Participants will agree to follow guidelines on behaviour, relationships and financial management that are appropriate to the host culture.

3.7 Policies and procedures covering finances, healthcare and insurance, medical contingencies, security and evacuation, acts of terrorism or political violence, stress management and conflict resolution, misconduct, discipline, and grievances, will be established, communicated and implemented as is appropriate.

3.8 Where and when requested, necessary equipping and training of hosts will be provided.

Section 4: Re-entry support, evaluation and program development

4.1 Re-entry debriefing and support will be seen as an integral part of the short-term package.

4.2 Re-entry preparation, including field evaluation, will begin prior to return.

4.3 The mission agency and sending local church will assist the participant through re-entry, including facing unresolved personal issues, and future opportunities and direction in discipleship and service.

4.4 Evaluation of the mission agencies procedures and performance will be filled out by the participant. (The agencies' procedures will also be evaluated by local sending churches).

4.5 On the request of the host organization, an assessment of the host organization will be carried out in an appropriate way by the participant.

4.6 The results of evaluations will be communicated to relevant managers, for the improvement of future projects and the keeping of permanent records. Confidentiality, integrity and accuracy are required.