





How to Use This Manual

Hello, Envision trip leaders!

We are so excited to be partnering with you and your team.

We created this manual to help us do this well together. This manual, in particular, is created for you as you lead your team. We know that we, as leaders, have a huge opportunity to influence, guide, and maximize these experiences—and that's a responsibility we don't take lightly (and neither should you)!

That being said, we want to lay out the big picture, to paint an accurate, honoring, and exciting picture of God at work in the world and His invitation to us to join Him! We also want to equip you well in the details and framework of leading a team so that we can take that 20,000-foot perspective and translate that to our teams. This manual has a mix of information that has been created for you in particular and that will mirror, or go along with, the information also found in our Team Manual. Be sure to use these together!

We hope that the following tools will be truly useful to you as you prepare your team for this experience. This is a unique opportunity to disciple your team, and we want to equip you to make the most of it!

We're looking forward to hearing from you and being on this journey together.



Big Picture

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Reimagining Short-Term Missions

You've probably heard some criticisms of short-term missions trips: "*They're too expensive;*" "*they're culturally oppressive;*" "*it's just tourism with a spiritual name!*"

And to say these accusations are wrong would be, well, wrong! There are most assuredly unhealthy things happening in the world of short-term missions with a negative impact on participants, recipients, and overall, the Church. The feelings of anger, frustration, or injustice are rightly felt.

However, in the midst of this frustration, we believe there's reason to not only be hopeful, but to continue, or rather, *reimagine*, participation in a new way. We want to leave behind outdated, inaccurate, and unintentional thinking and methodology that hurts the global Church. We want to pick up right thinking, right theology, and right practice. To do this, it's a good idea to pick up a little history on the subject.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

Western missions (assuming those of us reading this are from Western countries), have been going on for several hundred years. At its beginning, the idea of short-term missions or trips wasn't even on the radar. Sometime, around 40-ish years ago, long-term missionaries recognized a need to recruit and bring more workers to the field. A great way to introduce potential workers was to set up a vision trip for these folks with the intention of returning for a more long-term position. These vision trips slowly morphed into something that even those not considering long-term work were invited to join. Language changed too; it used to be that long-term workers were often those describing a "call"—so much so that it moved them to pack their belongings in a coffin (yes, really), as they didn't anticipate returning. Now, those going for 10 days have "call" stories, while their levels of commitment and sacrifice look vastly different. It's likely if you just hear the word "missions" today, the first thing that comes to your mind would be a short-term trip rather than long-term work.

Besides history, we also need to note changes, not just in the *missions* world, but in the world around us that have influenced how we view and participate in short-term missions.

LANDSCAPE CHANGES

Some major changes have shaped the way we live over the last couple hundred years. The Industrial Revolution, for one, means that we are more connected than ever before—we can use our computers, smart phones, and tablets to connect anytime, anywhere. We can even connect on a plane, which we can catch at a moment's notice to the other side of the world

for a fairly affordable price and with relative ease compared to travel historically. We have far greater access to travel, information, and connection than any other time in history, and this means there are major changes for how we see and participate in global missions.

So, how does this shape the way we do short-term trips? We've thought through a few ways this can shape our thinking and practice as we pursue healthier participation in the world of short-term missions.

REIMAGINING OURSELVES

There are a few crucial shifts we need to make in how we view ourselves and our role. The first shift is moving from **saviors to participants**.

It's common for us to view trips through the lens of *"What did we accomplish?"* We love before and after photos and explaining all the things we accomplished. This often ends up sounding like we're the hero, swooping in to save and do what the people we're serving cannot do. It elevates us to a position we're not meant to take. Remember, we're on God's mission. He doesn't need us! He's been doing this work for a long time and was working in the particular city or country you're now in before you were there! We are, by grace, invited to participate alongside Him.

The second shift we need to make is moving from **experts to learners**. We live in an era of being able to discover anything by Googling it. This is not a substitute for extensive cross-cultural experience or the wisdom of time. Entering our short-term trips, we cannot expect Wikipedia to get us to the same level of expertise on what, when, and how we'll do ministry. Something we can both celebrate, and practice caution towards, is our Western "can-do" spirit. This can be a gift, but also a hindrance, when we come in making demands as the "experts." We need to defer to local experts (i.e. the workers receiving us and the local church) to let them share with us how to minister in a place.

The last shift is moving from **priority to secondary**. To be blunt, your experience or growth is not the most important part of the trip. If we make this the focal point, we're going to skew the purposes of trips. The real priority is joining God at work. Everything else is secondary. Life change or growth is a natural byproduct of life with Jesus. Don't sacrifice people or ministry on the altar of your own self-actualization.

REIMAGINING OUR HOSTS

When we say the word "host," we often think of the person or family that we spend the most time with on our trip. This needs to be expanded to include anyone serving or ministering alongside them, any local churches you're partnered with, and really any locals at all.

The first shift to make when it comes to our hosts is a language shift—moving from "for" to "with." Language influences thought, and this particular language, which is common in our short-term trips, creates an us/them mentality. When we go on a trip to do things "for," it communicates an unconscious power differential. "For" insinuates a greater doing something for a lesser. It creates an imbalanced partnership. By moving to "with" language, we put all participants on the same level. "With" means that power must be shared. We do

not call the shots. For us, it will put us in a place we're often uncomfortable. You could also say that "with" instead of "for" places the emphasis on *being* instead of *doing*. This is a cultural shift for us from the West. It takes us out of a position of power, as those who can do on behalf of others, and levels the playing field, leading us to our next point.

We need to shift from seeing our hosts as **needy to having something to give**. We often put a focus on *doing* because we're thinking about what we have and what those we go to serve are lacking. This comes from a one-dimensional view of poverty—seeing it as purely material. Poverty can also look relational, spiritual, and emotional, none of which we can say are strong points for those of us in the West. What can we learn from our brothers and sisters? Instead of focusing so much on giving to them, what can we receive? How can we learn about the beauties of community (relational), of lament and suffering (emotional), and of the power of the Holy Spirit (spiritual)?

Some key practices to get us on the right track are **contextualization and empowerment**. Contextualization means putting something "in context" so that it makes sense to people. We can't accidentally export Western culture along with the gospel in a way that confuses the people who hear it. For example, when we do an altar call in the West, it often involves individuals raising hands and coming up front. In a shame-based culture, like Thailand, something like this would get in the way of the right message coming across. We need to think sensitively about how we do ministry and defer to our hosts who know how to do this more effectively.

Empowerment means giving power to someone to do something or becoming more confident in controlling one's life. When we empower our hosts and the local church, they can appropriately lead and cast vision for ministries in a way that makes sense culturally. If it's done in a foreign way, it's not only not going to stick over time, but it can also create unnecessary confusion between what is gospel and what is cultural.

REIMAGINING OUR TRIPS

Lastly, we need to think through the way we think and communicate about our trips. The first shift we can make is moving from an emphasis on **experience to discipleship**. We tend to think about our trips in a vacuum, and when we get back, it's back to normal life, arguably losing any benefits of the trip over time. We can be more strategic about our trips! Instead of thinking of them as a one-off experience, think about them as yet another stop in the discipleship process. This means asking if the trip is the right timing for particular participants. The importance of mentors (outside of the limited trip leaders) following up with participants, asking hard questions, and walking with participants, cannot be undervalued. The importance of training, debriefing, and connecting the trip to overall church life is huge. When we minimize trips to an experience, we miss out on further opportunities for growth.

Another shift is moving from trips that are **isolated to integrated.** Isolated trips are unconnected to long-term work—a sort of "parachute in" mentality. By doing our trips in an integrated manner, alongside long-term workers and the church, it means we're connecting to something indigenous, not importing something foreign. It means that the work that happens begins before and continues after we leave, making it less about what we do and more about steady faithfulness in the same direction. It may mean that the work we

participate in is more mundane. It's less about accomplishing a particular task or "saving the day" in a week. It's about supporting the long-term work of God in a place and humbly acknowledging that our week-long trip is just a snippet of that. The pressure of expectation to "produce something" is off.

We've talked reimagining *ourselves*, our *hosts*, and our *trips*. There are, of course, tons of other healthy ways to reapproach and think about our short-term efforts. Don't let this be the only exploring you do on this subject! But, if you can start to apply some of these concepts and talk about them with your team, it can lead to healthier, more stable short-term work that will bless, instead of harm, the ministries with whom you partner.

Here are a few questions, or starting points, for you as you apply these ideas to your trip:

- 1. How do I share about or recruit for our church's short-term trips? (What language do I use? What sort of idea does this communicate—about my role, about my partners, and about missions? Do I use "for" or "with?")
- 2. What are my expectations for my trip or trips I lead? (*Are these healthy? Do any of these play into ideas of being the "savior" or of coming in to "accomplish" a bunch of stuff?*)
- 3. What am I lacking that I can look to learn, or receive, from those who are hosting me?
- 4. What's going on in my own faith journey? What could be key discipleship moments that God has for me on this trip? What about those on my team?
- 5. Who can partner with me, as a mentor, to ask hard questions and to follow-up with me when I return home? Who can I pair with my team members to mentor and coach?



Training & Debriefing

Short-term trips don't happen in a vaccum and the results you desire don't come out of nowhere. If you want to make the most of your short-term trip, then both training and debrief play a very important role.

SET ASIDE TIME FOR TRAINING LEADING UP TO YOUR TRIP

This is an opportune time to cast vision, begin discipling your team, guide them through cross-cultural training, and manage expectations for the trip. Now is the time to begin building rapport among your team that will set the tone for interactions and growing friendships during the trip. Beginnings matter, and any investment you make on the front-end will only help achieve the outcomes you desire for your team. Be strategic!

DON'T LONE-WOLF IT

There's plenty of tasks to go around, and there's no need to put the entire burden on one person's shoulders. Build a team around you that's not necessarily all going on the trip, but who can help with the administrative tasks and training pieces to keep your team on track. Delegate to your team and meet often to make sure everyone is moving forward with their part. If there's a piece that doesn't fit your giftings, find someone who can help you so that your team can succeed.

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT SKIPPING DEBRIEF

If short-term trips aren't meant to be one-off experiences, then it's important that the process continues when we return home! It's easy to go, but it's hard to come back with sustained change and tangible next steps. Connect with your team members when you get back. Walk with them through next steps and check in with them. Ask other trip leaders and mentors within your church to connect with the team members that they have good personal relationships with. Make sure debrief is an expectation, and set aside time in advance for this.

Check out the Envision Team Manual for loads of tools and resources to go through with your team during training and debrief!



How to Build a Good Team

While it's not rocket science, team dynamics can make or break a short-term trip. Here are a few practical tips and need-to-knows when it comes to choosing your team:

MAKE IN-PERSON ASKS TO THOSE YOU WANT

Up-front appeals may spark some general interest for a trip, but go after the folks who will balance and round out the team well. Explain why you would like them to come and the role you'd like them to have on your team. Cast some vision and then ask them to join the team!

ASK TEAM MEMBERS TO INVEST UP FRONT

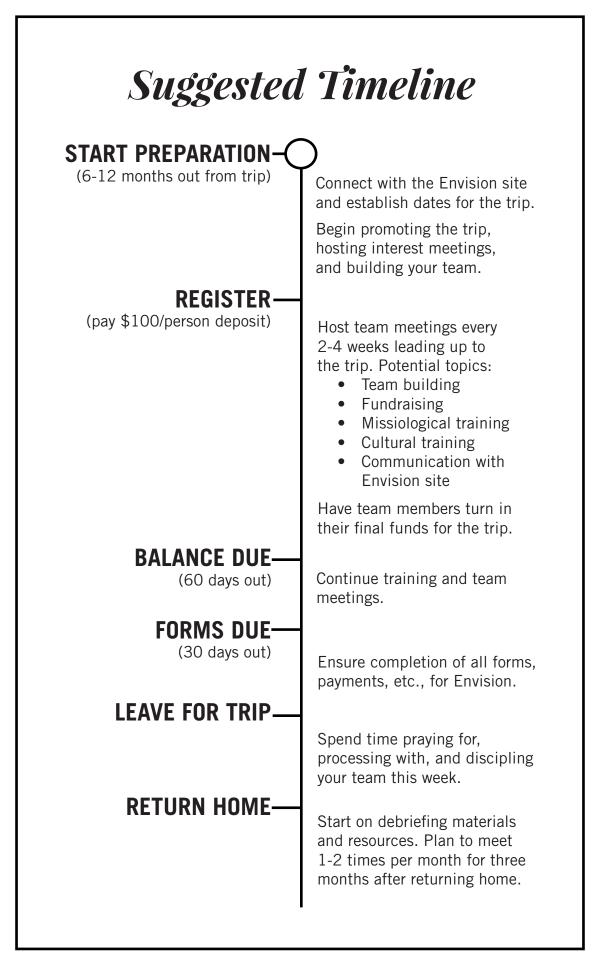
Most people will "sign up" at an interest meeting for a faraway trip to another country. Because we ask you to pay an initial deposit for your participants, it's most helpful for us, and these potential participants, to get some skin in the game. Ask folks to turn in a deposit with their team member application to "finalize" their spot on the team. This will help them more seriously consider their commitment and may even jumpstart the fundraising process. It will also help you as you meet some of our Envision deadlines!

SELECT BASED ON SKILL SETS, GIFTING, TIMING, AND TEAM RAPPORT

Not everyone is a good fit for a particular trip. If your trip will be focused on children's ministry, select folks who have experience working with children, are passionate about it, and who bring the gifts needed to do the ministry required. As a general principle, the bare minimum of what's needed is a willingness to learn, to serve, and to work as a team. Having the additonal skills and gifts on top of this essential DNA will help you build a strong team.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY "NO"

There are seasons, situations, and, to be frank, particular personalities, that might jeopardize the unity of a team on a short-term missions trip. If there are potential participants who are in a season or situation in which it would be unwise for them to join the trip, don't be afraid to say "no." There will be another opportunity down the road. Keep in mind that it is most likely in their best interest as well.





Buying Airline Tickets

Buying group flights is maybe one of the more stressful tasks you undertake as you lead your team. We recommend the following tips, from our experience:

- Double-check with your site coordinator which airport you will be flying into before booking.
- If making a multi-stop trip, please book all flights with the same airline. If you have a delay, you don't want to be stuck re-booking and paying twice for another ticket.
- For the best prices, book 3-4 months out for international flights and 1-2 months for domestic flights.

Our Partner

Envision (and the C&MA) have been working with Key Travel for 20+ years. Key Travel provides travel support for those serving worldwide. They partner with over 50 worldwide airlines to offer needed benefits. These benefits include (depending on the airline):

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- Group specialists
- 24/7 emergency service
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To get a quote, please contact Key Travel by email at travelteam1.us@keytravel.com or call 844-882-3233. You can also go to https://my.keytravel.com/us/travel-inquiry/ to request a quote (make sure to put in Christian & Missionary Alliance for Organization Name).

Team Member Application

Name:	
(Please write your name as it appears on your passport)	
Address:	
Phone: () Gender (circle one): M F DOB: _//	(mo/day/year)
Email Address:	_
T-shirt size (circle one): S M L XL XXL XXXL	
Please check one of the following statements: I have never been on a cross-cultural missions trip I have been on a previous missions trip with this church to in I have been on a cross-culutral missions trip with another church/organiza	
Who did you go with? What types of things did you do on your trip?	
What languages do you speak besides English and how fluently?	
Why do you want to go on this trip?	
How would you describe your current relationship with Christ?	
What talents/gifts has God given you? (Drama, singing, teaching, youth, etc.)	
What are your strengths and challenges in the areas of personal relationships and new people?	d meeting
What do you expect to learn on this trip? How do you hope to be changed?	

PASSPORT INFORMATION

If you are applying to go overseas and do not already have a passport, apply immediately for one. The process can take several weeks (passports are not required for stateside trips).

(please continue on the next page)

Team Member Application

Your name EXACTLY as it appears on your passport.			
Passport # Issue date			
Expiration date Birthplace			
Agency issuing passport		_	
If you do not yet have a passport, please check here	9:		
CHURCH INVOLVEMENT			
Have you committed to church membership?Yes			
Are you committed to any church programs?Yes	No	I plan to before	the trip!
(Sunday school, small groups, etc.)			
Are you currently serving in a ministry?Yes	No	I plan to before	the trip!
If 'no' please explain:			
REFERENCES Name	Phone # _		
Relationship to you			
Name			
Relationship to you			
Name	Phone #		
Relationship to you			
HEALTH INFORMATION		_	
Present health conditionExcellentGood Explain, if needed:			
Are you presently covered by health insurance?			
Does your health insurance cover you outside the U	nited State	es? _Yes	No
List all current medications you are taking	,cu		
Date of last tetanus shot// Other			

(please continue on the next page)

Team Member Application

EMERGENCY CONTACTS		
Name	 Relationship:	
	Cell ph:	
Name	 Relationship:	
	Cell ph:	

I understand my responsbilities in terms of financial commitment, attendance at team meetings, and other areas of preparation.

Date

(If applicant is under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign.)

I, the parent/legal guardian of the above applicant, understand the responsibilities in terms of financial commitment, attendance at team meetings, and other areas of preparation. I hereby give my child permission to participate.

Signature

Date

Please include your \$100 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit made out to the church with this application.



Social Media & The Short-Term Missionary

We've all seen it, and some of us don't want to admit it, but we've been there—the perfect Instagram shot of a missions trip. It's hard to distinguish between the purpose of the trip and the purpose of the post. Is this about "likes" or the Kingdom? There's nothing inherently wrong with social media, but let's dialogue about social media and short-term missions.

One of the dangers of social media is creating a virtual life, separate from reality. We don't often realize it, but we may use social media to numb or escape our boring or painful existence. The problem is, when we go on a missions trip, everything we feel in our culture (and everything we escape from) will be exaggerated because of the atmospheric change of the new culture. Social media can especially help us escape one of the scariest things in our society—silence. It's hard to wait in general, but when we're always connected, always hurried in the deepest parts of us, it's really hard to stop, rest, and be quiet. It's hard to let our minds wander and be patient, but much of serving God, and much of other cultures, are filled with natural places of pause. Wanting to escape will happen especially when we're in a new place with new people and missing faces or activities from home. Instead of the weight of figuring out what to do, it's easier to pull out our phones. We might also be tempted because we don't want to "miss out" on things that happen while we're away.

Social media is especially addictive because it lacks the "stop" triggers that are normally present at the end of a newspaper or an article. We can end up scrolling endlessly, spending more time on things we actually value less. If we value being present and engaged, and we know this is healthy, how can we set good boundaries on our screen time/social media while on the field?

These are personal convictions, not mandates. We encourage prayerfully considering this, inviting accountability, and creating a new rhythm for your time on the field. The biggest argument against posting a bunch is not saying "no" to the "evils" of social media, but a better "yes" to being aware and present. When we do this, we choose deep conversations, richer relationships, more intimacy with our team(s), and better personal tools as we learn to engage in awkward, difficult, or new situations. We'll develop longer attention spans, allowing space for creativity. We desire, most of all, for you to be healthy, to use social media as a tool, but to know how to connect and be present.

Here are some rules as you think about using this tool to share and connect with others:

EXAMINE MOTIVATION

Ask questions like: "Why am I posting this?" "How does it make me look?" "Is this an accurate picture of the local culture or church?" "What story does this communicate about the local culture or church?" "Who does this honor?" This helps identify unhealthy motivations for posting. If you're still unsure, sleep on it or take a few hours to consider it further.

PICK THE HERO

The more we can highlight local ministries and heroes, the better. Your photos can tell the story of local church members or missionaries who are doing long, faithful, and sometimes unseen work, or who are stepping out boldly in faith in their community. This is an opportunity to not use social media as it's often used—a platform to make much of ourselves—and instead, honor others serving the Lord or even call for prayer for those we partner with.

USE A POST TO TEACH OR BREAK STEREOTYPES

Use a post as a teaching tool about missions or culture, especially when it broadens perspecive. In the DR, a post sharing about the local church leading in zeal and listening to the Holy Spirit could give better perspective of the Majority World Church. A photo of a typical after-church meal may reveal the beauty of collectivist culture blended with the Church. Glimpses of "real" ministry are helpful for people—especially elevating relational ministry and listening over projects and tasks.

CALL FOR PRAYER

Social media can be a tool to unite if we choose to use it that way. Prayer is a great uniter. We may get to see immediate impact because of prayer or it could be an ongoing situation that we choose to stand in faith with those in the midst of it—regardless of whether we stick around to see results. Sharing a need, on your team or from the local church, can unite brothers and sisters around the world in prayer. Faith is multiplied as we join together to pray.

DON'T SHAME OR PICK A FIGHT

Never use social media to shame or call out. Online conversation can easily dissolve into arguments. We forget people are behind online accounts, and hurt follows. You may be experiencing convictions or new insights, perhaps into American culture, during your time away. Creating a post intended to "jolt" everyone to your new reality may cause them to bunker down more in their way of thinking. People tend to have reactionary responses when engaging over the Internet. These conversations are best had in person. Social media is not a tool to change the opinions of others.

IF YOU DO ANYTHING, JUST DON'T DO THIS

Avoid posting pictures of [most often white] Americans with underprivileged people for the sake of a "like." This narrative is so perpetuated online that avoiding it is most helpful. We understand you may build relationships with awesome kids during your time. You can both take and save photos for yourself, but if you're choosing just a few photos to tell the story, these may get lost in the noise of typical missions trip photos.

Fundraising Tips

(FOR INDIVIDUALS)

WRITE SUPPORT LETTERS

People get missions trip letters all the time. People love to say "yes" to the development of someone they believe in. Have your team write personal support letters, and send these out to friends and family. *Better yet, use our sample letter in the TEAM MEMBER MANUAL!*

DON'T FILTER WHO YOU ASK

You may have heard this, but it's always suprising who will give. Whether it's someone you haven't seen in 10 years or a friend who doesn't even know Jesus, you don't know until you ask them.

ASK IN PERSON

It's always great to receive a letter, but even more powerful to ask in person. See if you can find a time to meet faceto-face, or even over the phone is better than nothing!

USE SOCIAL MEDIA

We often see fundraising happening through Facebook these days. Use social media and your more virtual networks to let those who don't live close to you know about your trip! (FOR THE TEAM)

GET THE BOARD ON BOARD

Does your church have a missions board? Ask them to support the trip financially and in sending. Don't make it just about money. Pair them up with the team as mentors and those who will follow up when you get back!

COMBINE TEAM BUILDING & FUNDRAISING

Okay, so the payout of these events can either be a huge success or more of a toss-up. Consider your context before planning, but there's always fun group ideas like a bake sale, pancake dinner, silent auction, etc. that can both bring the group together and serve to raise a bit of cash for the trip.

LOOK LOCALLY

There are often local businesses or even franchises that run specials for groups doing fundaisers. Check in with restaurants (or other businesses) to see if they run any events of this kind. Typically, your team can "host" an evening where a percentage of the proceeds can be donated to the cause.



Questions?

Reach out to us on our website at www.weareenvision.com or follow us on social media @WeAreEnvision



If you have any questions, don't hesistate to reach out to our trips coordinator. Ciro Castro castroc@weareenvision.com (380) 208-6034