

Code of Best Practices for Cross-cultural Visits to Restricted Nations

Preamble:

We believe that everything we do and say has the potential to build or undermine the trust of our team members and our international partners. It is with this understanding that we commit ourselves to following these *Best Practices for Cross-cultural Visits to Restricted Nations*.

Prior to the Visit:

1. Prior to departure all team members will be involved in a comprehensive and formal briefing that will address issues such as:

- Security
- Objectives and expectations
- Team roles (leader, finances, devotions, contact person, et al)
- Medical issues
- Cross-cultural issues
- Gender-related issues
- Ethical concerns
- Communications issues
- Political/historical/religious environment
- Spiritual wellbeing
- Other relevant issues e.g. paying for our own meals, covering internal travel expenses, not asking to use personal telephones/Internet, etc.

We aim that all team members come together prior to the trip for this briefing. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to do this briefing by Skype conference and Powerpoint, at the discretion of the team leader.

2. Prior to each trip a security rating will be assigned to each country by mission executive and the appropriate practices to be employed. The security ratings will be Green (unrestricted), Amber (restricted) or Red (very restricted).

3. Each trip will be approved by the mission executive only after prayer, a definite benefit to the mission and our partners is identified and the trip's purposes can be clearly stated.

During the Visit:

4. We will endeavour to be good guests while in country. We endeavour not to be a burden to our hosts. This is, in fact, very difficult. We cannot avoid being a burden on their time and schedules, but we can exercise prudence and modesty by, for example, avoiding being a financial burden to them.

5. We will clearly express our expectations and objectives for the visit to our hosts/partner, while exercising sensitivity to their needs, concerns and aspirations which may differ from our own. If an agreement cannot be reached, the judgment of our host/partner will prevail.

6. On field activities of the visit will be aligned to long term partnerships and priorities. Long term partnerships and priorities will always take precedence over short term needs or aspirations. For example, we will not endanger a partner or a project for the sake of a photo or interview.

7. All non-project gifts should be given by the team leader on behalf of the mission through our local partners only after consultation with them as to its appropriateness. Ideally, gifts should be anonymous with the understanding that this is not precedent setting. All gifts must align with the mission, purpose and values of the mission. They must be receipted and reported upon.

8. We will be careful not to make unauthorised promises or raise expectations that we cannot guarantee fulfilment of. We will endeavour to clearly explain the decision making processes of the mission that precludes individual staff from making such commitments. These include requests for finances, photos, videos, services and projects.

9. We commit to meet together as a team each day of the trip for prayer and Bible reading.

10. We commit to meet together daily to assess the progress of the trip objectives, team dynamics, the present security situation, and emerging issues and determining corrective action.

11. We commit to follow our partners' directives and guidance as to what can be reported on and how it can be publicized. In principle, we will say less than what is approved by partners in the country but we will not say more than what they have approved. We will always confirm the appropriateness of the use of photos and interviews with trusted leaders/partners in the country, even if the interviewee has already given approval.

12. We will endeavour to maintain as low a profile as possible when in country. We will inform our partners/hosts of this desire and ask for their assistance and advice on how to carry this out appropriately and especially when it involves invitations to preach, visiting homes, arranging interviews, etc.

13. When the team is composed of mixed genders, we will avoid any public or private actions, no matter how innocent in intent, that may be perceived as inappropriate, may be misleading, may bring disrepute to the mission or the team members or cause offense to your hosts or members of that culture. For example, whenever possible, men and women will not eat or travel alone or together publicly.

After the Visit:

14. Within a week of the conclusion of each trip, each team member and the team will be verbally debriefed by the mission executive. We aim that all team members come together after the trip for this debriefing. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to do this debriefing by Skype conference at the discretion of the mission executive.

15. Within a month of the conclusion of the trip, each team member will submit a written report including how the trip purposes have been fulfilled, what were the team dynamics, how the partnership is functioning, financial accounting and what follow up is needed.