

PROTECTING CHILDREN

IN SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

A GUIDANCE MANUAL AND TOOLKIT FOR
CHURCHES AND CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS



**Better
Care
Network**

Acci MISSIONS & RELIEF

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This manual was developed in collaboration
with Better Volunteering Better Care, an
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and Save the Children UK.

FOREWORD

The Child Protection in Short-Term Missions Manual and Toolkit has been produced by ACC International Missions and Relief. It has been designed for those who are passionate about missions and engaging people in missions through short-term teams, who pursue excellence in all they do and who are committed to pursuing God's heart for children and vulnerable members of society in the context of global missions.

The principles explored in the manual are drawn from the Bible, best practice concepts, as well as development, missiology, and cross cultural theories. Whilst they have been specifically applied here to engaging with children during short-term mission (STM) trips, many of them can be broadly applied. Therefore, as you work through the principles, you may discover other really relevant applications, which will also enhance the non-child centred aspects of your STM program.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS MANUAL AND TOOLKIT?

The manual and toolkit have been designed to be used by **those who are responsible for overseeing and/or coordinating a STM program** that either sends or receives STM teams. This could include missions pastors, team coordinators, service learning coordinators, missionaries, donor engagement and church partnerships coordinators, or staff from local churches, charities, volunteer agencies and grass roots organisations. Whilst there are resources contained within the toolkit to help you train and equip teams, the manual is not designed for team members themselves to read.

The manual focuses on protecting children and upholding their best interests in STM programs. However, its relevance is not limited to STM programs that solely work with children, as most teams will come into some sort of contact with children during their trip. Therefore, it is a good idea for all STM programs to include child protection and safeguarding consideration in their program's design and implementation phases.

This manual is primarily developed to reflect the most common scenario, which involves a sending and a receiving organisation working in partnership. We recognise however that there are a number of alternate models in existence. No matter what model you are using, the same child-safe principles apply. However, you may need to adapt some of the processes in the manual and checklists in the toolkit to fit your particular circumstances.



HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL & TOOLKIT

Inside this document you will find a manual and accompanying toolkit. Together they form a comprehensive guide for developing and implementing an effective and child-safe STM program.

THE MANUAL



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THE MANUAL component aims to introduce core concepts and thinking that influence the effectiveness of STM programs and their impact on children. It is designed to help you develop a strong Biblical and theoretical foundation for child protection and engaging with children in the context of STM.

THE MANUAL IS BROKEN INTO THE FOLLOWING TWO SECTIONS:



THINK IT THROUGH

Considering the impact of STM trips on children

This section will explore the Biblical mandate for protecting children, consider the impact of STM teams on children and unpack STM engagement with 'orphanages' or other types of residential care.



APPLY

Applying a child safeguarding lens to your preparation stages

This section will enable you to apply the principles in this manual and set you well on your way to ensuring your STM program is a child-safe program.

THE TOOLKIT



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THE TOOLKIT component provides you with practical tools and samples that will enable your organisation to readily apply the concepts in the manual to every stage of your STM program - from design, to recruiting and post trip debriefing.

THE TOOLKIT INCLUDES:



CHECKLISTS

For both sending and receiving organisations, to guide you as you prepare to send or receive a child-safe STM team.



HANDOUTS

Information sheets and summaries which you can share with team members to enhance their knowledge and awareness of key child protection issues and good practice in working with children.



SAMPLE FORMS

Forms and tools, which you can use or adapt as you develop effective child-safe recruitment and screening practices.



HELPFUL INFORMATION

Links and references to further reading and other useful resources, including child protection policies.

We hope and pray that this manual may act as a catalyst for you to engage team members in prayerful and thoughtful discussions about God's heart for children, and how the global church can best serve vulnerable children through overseas mission programs.

KEY TERMS

CHILD PROTECTION

Measures and structures intended to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children.

SAFEGUARDING

Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment; preventing harm to children's health or development; ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care; taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

CHILD-SAFE ORGANISATION

Any organisation or institution that shows a commitment to child-safe practices and procedures, and takes a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on child protection issues.

Therefore, child-safe mission trips are those organised and implemented with the same commitment, practices and procedures in regards to child protection.

SHORT-TERM MISSION (STM) TRIP

The period of time where short-term team members are in the host country or community, usually ranging from one week to several months.

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS (STM) PROGRAM

A program designed to promote, recruit, train and send or receive Christians on short-term mission trips. Includes the activities and actions taken before, during and after a short-term mission trip.

SENDING ORGANISATION

Organisations that mobilise volunteers from their community/country of origin and prepare them to go abroad or into a host community. This could include churches, travel companies, charities, mission agencies, schools, non-government organisations or volunteer agencies.

RECEIVING ORGANISATION

Any on-field persons who receive and facilitate short-term mission teams whilst in the host country or community. This could include churches, community groups, non-government organisations, volunteering companies or tour companies.

DUE DILIGENCE

An assessment of an organisation usually conducted by a third party for the purpose of understanding their function and identifying risks.

ORPHANAGE

This term refers to an institution providing residential care for children who have lost both parents. This term is not representative, as in practice these facilities often admit many children who are not actually orphans. In the context of this document, the term orphanage can be used interchangeably with residential care.

KEY SYMBOLS



KEY LEARNING

Summary of the key points and concepts covered in each section.



TOOLS

Helpful resources, links and sample documents to assist you in implementing a child-safe STM program.



LET'S BE HONEST

These boxes cut straight to the point to give you a direct perspective on a particular topic.



TIP BOX

Helpful tips and ideas for various stages of implementing your STM trip.

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MANUAL

FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN
IN SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

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APPLY



INTRODUCTION

Children are undoubtedly a precious gift from God. Each child is uniquely gifted by God and contain within them a potential and a purpose yet to be fully realised. For each child to realise their full potential, they need to be immersed in an environment that is both nurturing and safe. Whilst this is primarily the responsibility of parents, families and governments, we all have a role to play in protecting the children that we come across in our daily lives, work and communities. We also have a responsibility to safeguard the children we interact with in the course of our short-term mission (STM) trips.

When it comes to safeguarding children, taking a proactive approach is absolutely key. Whilst it is always our intention to bless and benefit the children and communities we interact with through our STM programs, without proactively putting measures in place to ensure this, even the best of intentions can fall short of their mark. When they do, children are amongst those most vulnerable and most likely to suffer unintended harm. It is for this reason that it is so important to apply a child protection and safeguarding lens to our STM programs, and carefully think through a number of key considerations. Doing so will help you ensure that your missions program enhances children's long-term outcomes and avoids causing unintentional harm.

FIVE KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILD-SAFE MISSION TEAMS

As you plan and prepare to send or receive a short term missions team we encourage you to think about:

1. WHO YOU SEND OR RECEIVE: Only send or accept STM team members who have been adequately screened, trained and pose no known risk to children.

2. WHERE YOU GO: Only work with reputable organisations who can demonstrate good practice and high standards and are committed to children's safety and long-term wellbeing.

3. WHAT YOU DO: Only promote or engage in activities that have positive outcomes for communities and children, and have no potential to cause harm. Always ensure that team members are appropriately qualified for the roles assigned to them.

4. WHY YOU DO IT: Always be motivated by the best interests of communities and children - not the desires of the team or potential benefits to the organisation.

5. HOW YOU DO IT: Always utilise teams to strengthen rather than replace or displace children's long-term support networks.

SECTION 1:



THINK IT THROUGH *CONSIDERING THE IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TRIPS ON CHILDREN*

*'Wisdom is of utmost importance, therefore get wisdom,
and with all your effort work to acquire understanding'*

Proverbs 4:7 (ISV)

1. PROTECTING CHILDREN IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD

'See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in Heaven always see the face of my father who is in Heaven'

Matthew 18:10 (NIV)

CHILDREN ARE VALUED BY GOD

The value God places on children is clear and woven throughout the whole Bible. Children, like all of humanity, bear the image of their Creator God², which is the basis of their inalienable worth and dignity. Scripture paints a beautiful picture of children being personally and intimately formed by God, knitted in the womb³, expectant with promise, purpose and plans⁴, and gifted by God to families as a joy and inheritance⁵.

The New Testament scriptures demonstrate Jesus' special acceptance and inclusion of children. He invites them to come to him in the midst of crowds, he rebukes those who devalue children by sending them away⁶, and he holds their child-like faith and humility up as an example to adults. On numerous occasions he goes out of his way to heal them and even brings a young girl back to life⁷. In all of these acts, Jesus was establishing the full personhood and value of children. He was challenging the contemporary Roman cultural belief that children were not yet 'full people'⁸ and were therefore without claim to rights and dignity. Jesus not only shows us that he values children, but that he ascribes equal worth to all humanity, with no respect to age.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & UPHOLDING THEIR RIGHTS IS A BIBLICAL MANDATE

Safeguarding children and upholding their rights is first and foremost a Biblical imperative. It flows out of a recognition of children's individual worth and claims to dignity, as well as the vulnerability that comes with their age and the evolving nature of their capabilities and independence. This recognition results in a mandate for adults to provide adequate care and extend protection to children in order to prevent them from being harmed, placed in situations which negatively affect their development, or denied their basic needs and rights. This is what we refer to as **child protection** and **safeguarding** (page 5).

There is once again ample evidence woven throughout the Bible that supports the need for Christians to actively safeguard children, as well as protect children's God-given rights. In the New Testament, Jesus' words and actions provide examples of his upholding children's right to survival, protection and participation.

Jesus recognised that all children experience a degree of vulnerability and warns of the seriousness of taking advantage of children or harming them, saying that, *'But who so shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea'* Matthew 18:6 (KJV).

¹ Genesis 1:26 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness'. (NIV)

² Psalm 139:13 You formed my inner most being. You knitted me together in my mother's womb'(WEB)

³ Jeremiah 29:11 'For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord'. (NIV)

⁴ Psalm 127:3 'Children are a heritage from the Lord'. (NIV)

⁵ Matthew 19:14 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them'. (NIV)

⁶ Luke 8:54-55 'But he took her by the hand and said "My child, get up!". Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up'. (NIV)

⁷ Keeley, R 2008, Helping our children grow in faith: How the church can nurture the Spiritual development of Kids, Baker books p. 42

He also recognises that certain children experience greater risks and a heightened state of vulnerability, such as those who are fatherless. Jesus requires believers to extend special protection to those children (in this scripture by supporting the vulnerable widow-headed household). *'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress'* James 1:27(NIV).

The Old Testament provides even more specific guidance regarding the 'special protection' Christians must afford vulnerable or at-risk children. Protecting these children is framed as an act of upholding God's justice. Scripture reveals that God's justice for children not only includes protecting vulnerable children from immediate harm, but also against having their broader rights denied, which can negatively impact their development and future. In accordance with this, believers are specifically instructed to:

PROTECT children's rights: *'Learn to do what is good. Seek Justice. Correct the oppressor. Defend the rights of the fatherless. Plead the widow's cause.'* Isaiah 1:17 (HCSB)

This verse instructs us to:

1. proactively put measures in place to prevent harm or violations of children's rights,
2. identify and respond to specific risks to children; and
3. address harm or wrongdoing if and when it occurs.

FULFIL children's rights: *'When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and widow, that they may eat in your town and be satisfied'.* Deuteronomy 26:12 (NASB).

This verse instructs us to:

1. proactively identify and reach out to those who are at risk or vulnerable, and
2. share our resources in recognition of our responsibility to fulfil the survival rights of others.

RESPECT children's rights: *'You shall not pervert the justice due to a sojourner or or to the fatherless, nor take a widow's garment in pledge'.* Deuteronomy 24:17 (ESV).

This verse instructs us to refrain from:

1. participating in corruption and/or the exploitation of children for personal or financial gain as this denies children their personhood and equality, and
2. profiting from vulnerable families when it denies them any aspect of their basic rights. In this context, taking a widow's garment, which is symbolic of her right to survival, affects not only the widow but the fatherless (vulnerable) children in her care.

The Old and New Testament instruction shows us a perfect representation of a child rights framework for action, which requires believers, as those charged with a duty of care, to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights to:



PROTECTION



**SURVIVAL &
DEVELOPMENT**



PARTICIPATION

OUTWORKING OUR BIBLICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO CHILDREN

The above Scriptures and the Biblical framework for action paint a holistic picture of what it means to protect and safeguard children. It shows us that all aspects of children's rights are equally important in creating an environment conducive to their development and wellbeing. It also shows us that all aspects of our responsibility must be upheld for this environment to be realised for the world's children. This holistic picture is the basis from which we need to evaluate our actions and their impact on children and is an important lens through which we need to look at child protection and safeguarding in the context of our mission programs and STM teams. It reinforces the need to think about the five considerations listed in the introduction. It also helps us see that operating out of good intentions alone is an inadequate response to our clear and Biblical responsibility to uphold children's best interests, protect them and respect their personhood. We need thoughtful and intentional action.

In 1 John 3:18, the Bible says *'Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and truth'* (ASV).

Outworking our Biblical responsibility to protect children in our STM programs is the evidence of our confession of love and concern for the children with whom we may interact with in the course of our STM trips.

We demonstrate this by:

a) Evaluating our actions and intentions and ensuring they are in the best interests of children⁸, and protect, respect and fulfil their rights, and

b) Implementing steps in the preparation and planning stages of STM trips to ensure our ministry and/or activities will be child safe.

The following sections will unpack how we achieve this in order to develop effective and child-safe STM programs that truly demonstrate our love for God and the world's children in action.



KEY LEARNING

- Our responsibility to protect children is first and foremost a Biblical mandate.
- The Bible considers protecting children and upholding their interests an act of justice.
- The Biblical framework for protecting and safeguarding children is one of upholding, protecting and respecting children's right to protection, survival and development, and participation.
- Outworking the Biblical framework for child protection requires both thought and action.

⁸ 'The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers'. **FACT SHEET: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

2. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM TEAMS ON CHILDREN

PRINCIPLE ONE: DO NO HARM

'Love does no harm to a neighbour' **Romans 13:10 (NIV)**

In one sense, a STM trip is an act of immersing a group of people into the lives and stories of others for a fixed period of time. Whenever and wherever this takes place, the inevitable outcome for all involved is some form of change. Whilst we hope that change will be mutually beneficial, history tells us that this is not always the case. As a result, one of the most important questions we can ask when preparing a STM is: **What harm could come from this?**

Asking this question is a sign that we:

- ✓ take our duty of care seriously – this duty of care extends to team members, and the people in local communities our team will interact with, including children;
- ✓ understand that it is possible that our STM trip could have long-term ramifications on the communities and children we interact with; and
- ✓ are committed to ensuring that the positive outcomes STM trips generate for team members or organisations involved, do not come at the expense of the local community or the wellbeing of children.

..... AVOIDING THE PITFALLS

The outcomes of a given STM trip flow out of the foundations and ideology of the missions program. Where solid foundations have been laid upon sound theology, good theory and notions of good practice, good outcomes are likely to follow. The reverse is also true - flawed foundations are likely to result in poor outcomes for both team members and the communities they interact with during their trip. Therefore, one of the first and most important steps in adopting good practice in STM is avoiding the common pitfalls listed below, which are likely to have a negative impact on STM outcomes.

ONE: OVERSIMPLIFYING COMPLEX ISSUES

There can be a tendency by some to oversimplify complex development and social issues, and reduce them down to sound bites. When these sound bites become the basis of how we conceptualise solutions to poverty or need, we run a high risk of developing irrelevant and inappropriate interventions that can actually compound someone's experience of poverty and cause long-term harm. A by-product of this, is leading STM teams to believe that they can effect significant, meaningful and sustainable change in the face of these complex issues in a very short period of time. In reality, however, this can set STM teams up with expectations that are unlikely to be met. It often puts receiving organisations in the compromising position of 'creating' experiences for teams, in order to meet those expectations, and perhaps most concerning of all, it can encourage teams to adopt the 'saviour mentality' (see glossary) that disempowers local communities and reinforces notions of inferiority and inequality, which are often at the heart of their experience of poverty.

TWO: OPERATING OUT OF ASSUMPTIONS RATHER THAN EVIDENCE

Sometimes our tendency to default to assumptions about how specific issues should be fixed or addressed gets in the way of us engaging with learning, research, innovation and evidence-based good practice. As a result, we can replicate methods or practices that we have been exposed to over a long period of time under the assumption that 'this is the way it is done'. In the context of STM, teams are often sent to get involved in programs without evaluating the appropriateness of the program or the impact it has on local communities or children. Supporting residential care centres such as orphanages and sending teams to volunteer in orphanages is one of the most common examples of this and will be discussed in much more detail in [Section 3: STM Teams and Orphanages](#) (page 30).

THREE: BEING UNAWARE OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE

Sometimes we can be unaware of the power we hold, based on who we represent (a donor church or organisation) or the position of privilege afforded to us due to dynamics such as nationality, socio-economic status, gender or other dynamics. Power and privilege can inadvertently create hierarchy in relationships and unintentionally silence the voices of the less powerful party. Being unaware of these power dynamics in our mission partnerships can result in misinterpretation of intentions. Sometimes our genuine suggestions, such as how we could help our local partners, activities we could get involved in, or what we could bring to help meet specific needs, are understood by our partners as requests or directives. These suggestions are often agreed to – even when they are inappropriate or counterproductive. This results in donor driven programs that are developed in response to donor initiation rather than the community's or children's true needs. It can also make us the target of partners who seek to profit from the resources we intend to invest in missions – often by exploiting the vulnerability of children. Countering this is a dual process of intentionally levelling relationships; asking and listening before suggesting, as well as ensuring we employ good partnership due diligence checks, which will be discussed below.

FOUR: NEGLECTING PARTNERSHIP DUE DILIGENCE CHECKS

The best STM programs happen in the context of long-term partnerships, where change and reciprocal learning is fostered through well established relationships. We need to make sure, however, that these partnerships are not formed on the basis of relationship or friendships alone, but also on the basis of evidence of good practice, evidence of sufficient organisational capacity to carry out planned activities to a high standard and financial integrity and transparency. This is called a 'due diligence check' and is all the more important when your potential partner is working with children. Without conducting basic partner due diligence checks before you commence a partnership, and before you send a STM team, it's difficult to know with any certainty if the program you have chosen to work with, and send STM teams to, is contributing to something positive or detrimental. Therefore, we should always conduct partnership due diligence checks before establishing a long-term partnership or partnership for the purpose of STM trips. To help with this, a partnership due diligence checklist is included in the [TOOLKIT](#) and discussed further in [Section 2: Child-Safe STM teams](#) (page 14).

FIVE: TAKING CHILDREN OUT OF THEIR CONTEXT

When our church or organisation has a heart to assist children through missions or development programs, it is important that we look at the **child in context**; and the context of the child is their family, community and culture. It is common to see programs that focus only on the child and fail to recognise the significance of the child's life long support networks. It is equally common to see promotional materials about mission initiatives, which show a lone child and fail to acknowledge the parents or family's presence.

Erasing the parents or caregivers from the picture creates an exaggerated perception of their vulnerability, and this can lead to well-meaning people taking action on behalf of children (rather than in consultation with their families), under an assumption they are alone and without an advocate. This can result in inappropriate interventions, such as building or funding orphanages for children who have parents and relatives. It leads to STM teams usurping the role of parents and long-term caregivers because they have been led to believe these children's parents do not exist. Both of these scenarios can do much more harm to children than good.

The most effective and sustainable way to help children who are vulnerable or in out of parental care is to strengthen their families and communities. Therefore, it is important that our work with children presents and responds to children in context and utilise teams in ways that strengthen children's support networks rather than replaces them. This will be discussed in more detail in [Principle 3: Enhance long-term positive outcomes for children](#) (page 23).



TIP BOX

In this section we've briefly touched on some deep and complex concepts and issues that are very relevant to STM. Whilst we haven't been able to explore each one in depth here, we have included a list of recommended resources in **Helpful Information 2: Further Resources** (page 86) in case you want to take a deeper dive. **HAPPY READING**

CASE STUDY: WHEN GOOD INTENTIONS JUST AREN'T ENOUGH

This true story is a graphic and sobering example of the harm that STM teams can cause when they attempt to solve problems that are beyond their understanding and disregard local knowledge. While this is a pretty extreme (and hopefully rare) example, it is an important reminder that a team's good intentions can cause significant harm when boundaries are not in place, or adhered to. Whilst in most cases any harm caused by poorly planned STM trips is less overt than this case study, it can still be damaging and disempowering to the local people and children that teams are trying to assist.

Ponleu is a young Cambodian person who was born with a rare genetic condition called Recessive Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB). At the slightest pressure or abrasion, Ponleu's skin blisters and comes off, leaving open sores all over his body. This even occurs inside his mouth, throat and stomach, making simple things like swallowing and eating extremely painful.

When he was 16 years old, a STM team from a well known mission organisation came to work with his local church. Team members noticed he had an open wound on his foot that wasn't healing, and without any knowledge of his condition, or current treatment, decided to intervene and 'help' him. They took photos of his foot and emailed them to a team member's father who was a doctor in America. With no understanding of the situation the doctor made an inaccurate diagnosis and the team decided to change Ponleu's medical treatment. They put him on extremely strong steroid medication and changed his wound dressing regime, undermining the treatment plan put in place by his long-term dermatologist in Cambodia. As a result, his long-term doctor refused to continue to treat him, saying he could no longer be responsible if other people were going to intervene.

Every day, the team would come to change his wound dressings, despite having no medical expertise or training. This was excruciatingly painful and Ponleu would beg them to stop. After a few days Ponleu reacted strongly to the steroids and ended up with heart arrhythmias, blood pressure issues, and extremely high temperatures. Both he and his grandmother thought he was going to die, but, they felt so powerless and out of control, they didn't know how to stop it or how to confront the foreigners who spoke no Khmer. This was made even more challenging as the team was associated with his local church, which was a key support network to him; they were foreigners; the team leader was a pastor; and both Ponleu and his grandmother had been led to believe one of the team members was a doctor! The unequal power dynamic at play made it culturally impossible for Ponleu to challenge them. "I didn't feel like I could speak up and question them ... I felt too out of control".

It was at this point that he called his (respite) foster carers in tears, begging for help. They immediately contacted another local specialist who had consulted on Ponleu's case in the past and arranged medical treatment for him. They also asked Ponleu and his grandmother what they wanted to do. Both Ponleu and his grandmother, who is his principle caregiver, said they wanted the team to stop and let Ponleu be cared for by the local medical staff. His foster carers called the team, and arranged to meet with them and the church organisation's leaders, to talk about the harmful consequences of their actions and communicate Ponleu and his grandmother's wish that they cease all involvement in his medical care.

Ponleu had to be slowly weaned off the steroids, but sadly, severe damage had already been done. What began as a wounded foot became open wounds covering 70% of his body and resulted in a permanent partial loss of movement in his fingers, wrists, knees and elbows. Despite the team's good intentions to help Ponleu, they had caused irreversible harm.



Ponleu: "I am telling this story because it needs to be told so future teams can think about their actions and avoid doing harm, even when they are well intentioned".

ASSESSING YOUR STM PROGRAM



The best defence against unintentional harm is regular reflection and self assessment. It is recommended that you conduct a basic self assessment once your trip itinerary has been formulated to identify any areas of potential risk. The following tool is a designed to alert you to some common pitfalls so that you can steer your plans in a direction that will result in positive outcomes for communities and children.

AVOIDING HARM SELF-CHECK



1. Is the team planning on doing something for the community that they could do for themselves?

- NO**  **SAFE ZONE:** instead of doing things ‘for the community’ that members of the community can competently do for themselves teams can be inspired as they witness and learn about what local people have been doing to develop their own communities and families. This empowers local people in the process and can encourage them to continue with the prayer and support of your team.
- YES**  **APPROACH WITH CAUTION ZONE:** This could discourage collective action and result in the disempowerment of local community members by reinforcing inferiority and making them believe the skills they have are insufficient to effect positive change in their own lives. Consider doing something ‘with the community’ rather than ‘doing it for’ the community.


2. Did the church/team determine the need and decide how they would respond to the need?


- NO**  **SAFE ZONE:** Teams should always come along side the existing goals and objectives of a program or community and support the responses that have been designed with knowledge of local context and the long-term development processes that are in place.
- YES**  **APPROACH WITH CAUTION ZONE:** Needs identification is significant site of power in development. Needs and solutions should therefore be identified by the local community as an act of empowerment, in consultation with their long-term in country partners. Outsiders are never in the best position to know what the real needs are or what the best responses are and doing so can often have a negative effect on local resilience. Teams can often create a lot of work for already resource stretched local organisations when they come with their own agenda.


3. Is the team bringing goods or funds to distribute in the community or directly to children?

- NO**  **SAFE ZONE:** If there is a legitimate need for goods or funds to be distributed it is better done through the program/organisation and their long-term relationships with the community. Where possible goods should be sourced from the local community which strengthens their economy and supports local business rather than bringing goods in from overseas.
- YES**  **APPROACH WITH CAUTION ZONE:** This could foster unhealthy dependency and discourage collective action. Bringing in resources from the outside when done en-mass in the name of ‘aid’ has been known to suppress local economies and be less cost effective as well. Teams publically giving items of necessity or money to or for children can cause parents to feel shamed in front of their children. It is better to make a child’s parents the hero in the child’s eyes rather than the members of an overseas STM team.


4. Will the team be directly interacting with children and replacing the roles of long-term staff or long-term local volunteers in children's programs such as schools, day care centres, children's homes, shelters?

NO  **SAFE ZONE:** Teams can often be used effectively to upskilling those who work directly with children or by providing behind the scenes support to child focused organisations. This is more likely to result in sustained positive benefits for children than direct interaction in such a short period of time. It also significantly reduces risks to children in the programs.


YES  **APPROACH WITH CAUTION ZONE:** A guest team could be beneficial once in a while in a school or day program for special lessons or events, however where teams are frequently assuming the role of teachers in education programs it can be disruptive, lead to repetition and affect children's educational outcomes.


 **DO NOT ENTER ZONE:** Teams should never assume caregiver roles in day care programs or get directly involved in any type of residential program (shelter, orphanage, children's home) as this can have numerous quite serious harmful ramifications for children, which will be discussed more in **3: Short-term Missions Teams and Orphanages**. (page 30)

5. Is the team adequately qualified to undertake any work that has been planned for them?


YES  **SAFE ZONE:** Skills exchanges and skills-based teams are one of the most effective types of STM programs. It is important to realise however that whilst team members might be trained and have lots of experience, the context may be very different and the cultural and language barriers may still make it challenging for them to transfer their skills, so it is wise to think through how you will overcome context related challenges.

For generalised teams, visiting, encouraging, sharing a meal with community members, learning, being exposed to the issues in more depth, are worthwhile things we are all well equipped to do. Never under estimate the power of STM teams investing in relationships.



 **APPROACH WITH CAUTION ZONE:** Medical teams- With some professions, team members may need local licenses or special government permission to practice by law, so make sure you look into this well in advance and acquire all appropriate licences. Medical and dental teams should be very cautious in their involvement with children with long-term medical needs and think carefully about how it may impact the child's long-term treatment. Always consult with their regular healthcare providers.

NO  **APPROACH WITH CAUTION ZONE:** It is never wise for teams to take on tasks which they are unqualified for and lack experience to do. This can lead to wasted resource, duplication, poor outcomes, accidents and hazards. When working with children, it can lead to harm and can undermine children's development. Parents and community members are likely to assume teams are qualified and trust them on that basis. We need to be very responsible with their trust, therefore a good way to measure appropriateness is by asking yourself:



- 1. Would it be appropriate and acceptable for me to do this at home?**
- 2. Would I allow someone with my level of skill and training to do this to my child?**

 **DO NOT ENTER ZONE:** Never allow teams to take on roles that require professional training and licensing that they have not fully acquired. Teams should also not get involved in legal matters or formal child protection interventions such as raids, rescues, removing children from situations of abuse or placing children in residential care. These interventions need to be carried out by licensed authorities and professionals. Teams should report all child protection concerns they witness to the authorities or an in-country NGO who specialises in child protection.



6. Have reasonable and realistic expectations been set for the team in recognition of the limitations of STM trips? (short time frames, limited cultural and contextual knowledge, appropriateness of skills)

- YES**  **SAFE ZONE:** Teams that understand that; (a) the most significant change that happens on STM trips happens in them, through what they learn and are exposed to, and (b) they are going to support and encourage local communities and their long-term partner organisations- are more likely to engage with learning and less likely to go with a 'saviour' complex. With the right attitude and expectations, the STM trip is more likely to be successful and impacting for all involved.
- NO**  **APPROACH WITH CAUTION ZONE:** It can be hard to challenge team's assumptions and moderate expectations, but in the long run it is not helpful for the community, local partner or the team members when teams' expectations are unrealistic. It is better to address expectations before the team departs than on the field. Attempts to create experiences that will live up to team's false expectation and make them feel useful (painting the local school for the 10th time) can often fail and leave teams feeling patronised.

7. Have you provided accurate and non-sensationalised information to the team about the issues they will be exposed to on the trip- particularly as it relates to the children they will interact with?

- YES**  **SAFE ZONE:** This helps teams understand the complexity of issues before they go and prevents teams from imposing oversimplified solutions on communities or target populations. This will lead to teams being better prayer partners, more responsible donors, more effective volunteers, or longer-term workers in the future. It also models a good principle of adopting a learner's posture before assuming the role of a teacher.
- NO**  **APPROACH WITH CAUTION ZONE:** Without being provided with context, teams are ill-equipped to interpret what they see accurately and know what is an appropriate response. Allowing teams to form their opinions on sensationalised promotion and media reports only can sometimes lead to teams desiring to get involved in things that are highly inappropriate such as brothel raids, or doing therapeutic activities with children in shelters.

8. Have you set clear and appropriate boundaries for team members regarding their interaction with children during the course of the trip?

- YES**  **SAFE ZONE:** Communicating clearly the do's and don'ts is one of the best defences against harmful outcomes. Boundaries around team member's interaction with children can be included in your code of conduct and child protection policy which all team members should sign. **See APPLY: Stage 1: Step 3: Have a Clear Child Protection Policy & Code of Conduct** (page 41) for more details.
- NO**  **DO NOT ENTER ZONE:** Failing to be clear about what is and isn't appropriate with children places children at risk. It also makes your ministry more vulnerable to being targeted by someone seeking easy unregulated access to children- for all the wrong reasons. Always have a code of conduct which stipulates clear behavioural boundaries for team members when interacting with children.




KEY LEARNING

- Good intentions don't automatically result in good outcomes. We have a responsibility to do all in our power to ensure no harm is done to children, families and communities through STM activities.
- Harm is more likely to eventuate when the foundations of a STM program are flawed.
- Common pitfalls include oversimplifying complex issues in overseas missions and development, operating out of assumptions, being unaware of power and privilege, neglecting to conduct partnership due diligence checks, and taking children and the issues that affect them out of context.
- The best way to avoid pitfalls is to conduct a 'do no harm' assessment before you finalise your itinerary.

PRINCIPLE TWO: SUPPORT & STRENGTHEN LOCAL CAPACITIES

'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up' 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

As the issues that put children (and their families) at risk, leave them vulnerable and contribute to their family's poverty are complex and usually require long-term cross sector solutions, they are rarely issues that can be fixed by STM teams. As a result, the focus of any action undertaken by STM teams is best directed towards empowering, supporting and strengthening the local actors (individuals, families, communities, organisations and government bodies) who are committed to being there for the long haul.

 **LET'S BE HONEST**

It's less motivating or appealing to be other people's behind-the-scenes support and advocates than it is to be on the 'frontline'. However, in the contexts of STM teams, it is far more effective. Sometimes we just have to ask the hard questions of team members: Who is this STM trip about anyway? If the answer is the local children, their families, their safety and their future, then teams will happily focus on being strategic rather than being centre stage.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE RIGHT PEOPLE

If your STM program is committed to contributing to long-term positive outcomes for children, then we need to support and strengthen not just any local person, but the **local people who are primarily responsible for children's wellbeing**. With respect to any aspect of a child's rights, whether that is education, care, protection or provision, there is what we call a:

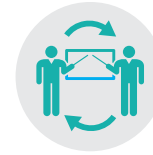
- Principle duty bearer:** The **State**
- Primary moral duty bearer:** **Parents** for **children**, **teachers** for students, **police** for crime suspects, **doctors/nurses** for patients etc.
- Secondary moral duty bearer:** Institutions and organisations with immediate jurisdiction over the primary duty-bearers e.g. **school principals**, community organisations, **hospital administrations**, etc.
- Tertiary moral duty bearer:** Institutions and organisations at a higher level / more remote jurisdiction e.g. **NGOs, aid agencies, private sector organisations**.⁹

These groups of people, particularly the principle, primary and secondary duty bearers, have the long-term responsibility for ensuring children's rights (as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child) are fulfilled, respected and protected¹⁰. Therefore, these are the people our mission programs should be seeking to support and strengthen, if enhancing long-term outcomes for children is truly the goal. In practice this means shifting the focus of the team's efforts from the direct beneficiary, such as children, to the appropriate duty bearer. The next page outlines some practical ideas and suggestions of what this shift looks like.

⁹ Ljungman, Cecilia M., COWI. Applying a Rights-Based Approach to Development: Concepts and Principles, Conference Paper: The Winners and Losers from Rights-Based Approaches to Development. P6. November 2004.

¹⁰ UN General Assembly Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

PRACTICAL IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BUILDING CAPACITY



Instead of **teaching children,**

consider providing skills exchange opportunities for local teachers and improving and resourcing local schools.



Instead of **caring for children,**

consider assisting parents through teaching small business skills, budgeting and saving skills, positive parenting programs, micro enterprise or economic empowerment programs or even hosting family events in local communities.



Instead of **running kid's camps,**

consider training and resourcing local volunteers, children's workers and children's pastors, and support them to run children's programs in their own communities. Teams are great at introducing children's workers to fun new games, new activities, new songs that they can contextualise and incorporate into their programs.



Instead of **running medical clinics in orphanages,**

consider working with local community health clinics, training health practitioners, raising awareness about preventive health to increase parents and community leaders' capacity to prevent illness.



Instead of **working directly with children,**

consider using team members to provide administrative support to community-based organisations who support children in the community. Examples include management training, helping set up data bases, financial systems, reporting systems or putting websites and promotional materials together for such organisations.

CASE STUDY: BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL EDUCATORS

Hope Education is an initiative of Hope Global, a faith-based not for profit organisation based in Australia. Hope Education's mission is to give quality education to children in post-conflict countries, by developing quality teachers and schooling. Hope Global's education program comes along side of schools and teachers by providing teacher training that is tailored to the local needs and aligns with existing local and national education plans and objectives. The training therefore builds the capacity of local educators which will result in long-term positive benefits for students.

In order to empower and train local educators in the countries where they work, Hope Global strategically recruits professional teachers and trainers from Australia who are willing to go on a STM trip for 2-3 weeks in order to deliver the training conferences. Each and every trip is made up of volunteers with the specific skill sets needed to help field partners achieve their goals, so every volunteer is making a valuable contribution. The trips are highly intentional and targeted, and so is the recruitment of volunteers. While Hope Global have faithful long-term volunteers who have been on multiple trips, they also put the call out for new volunteers with skills to match particular training needs. In the past, Hope Global have had team members who are teachers and head teachers, IT trainers, business professionals, photographers and nurses to deliver the training sessions, yet this list is always diversifying. They also utilise a small number of 'general' volunteers on each trip to assist trainers and provide administrative support. These roles can be just as valuable to help with the smooth running of conferences and training sessions.

Hope Global realises that for their STM teams to be effective, they need to select the right team members for the task. As such any new volunteer wanting to take part in a Hope Global trip must go through a two-step application and screening process. Firstly, they must fill in an online application form, listing their skills, experience and resume. Secondly, Hope Global conducts a short phone interview with them. This enables Hope Global to decide whether their skills, experiences, and character match with the particular objectives of a trip. If they do match, Hope Global then conducts child protection screening, which includes a police or children's check, as well as a pastoral and character reference. While volunteers may only have limited contact with children, Hope Global still ensures their teams are child safe. Therefore, all volunteers undergo basic child protection training before departure, which amongst other things includes information on what constitute appropriate interaction with children. All team members are also required to read and sign their child protection policy before they leave.

Hope Global have found their model of structured and intentional STM trips to be extremely effective. Not only are the team member's impacted, challenged and changed, they have genuinely strengthened the capacity of local teachers and schools. As one local educator said *"It helped me to introduce participatory methodology and to reward my children and to instil confidence in them. It helped me to use more teaching materials. Thank you so much for your kindness, may God in Heaven bless you"* Juliette Mukantaganda Head Teacher, Rwanda.

As a result of building the capacity of local teachers, Hope Global's STM teams have contributed to real and lasting positive impacts in the lives of children and young people.



KEY LEARNING

- Issues that have an adverse affect on children and their families are usually complex and require long-term cross sector responses.
- STM Teams can contribute to these solutions by supporting and equipping the long term local people and organisations who have a responsibility to provide assistance and services.
- The people who hold this responsibility are called duty bearers.
- Working with duty bearers is likely to result in more sustainable and effective impacts in children's lives than working with children directly.

PRINCIPLE THREE: ENHANCE LONG-TERM POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

'Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it'. 1 Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV)

Childhood is a formative stage in any person's life. Proverbs 22:6 tells us that laying a firm foundation and providing children with positive guidance and opportunities to develop in their early years will set them on a good pathway and enhance their long-term wellbeing.

As discussed in the previous principle, parents hold the primary responsibility to guide and nurture their children. However, a parent's capacity to do this independently can be adversely affected by a range of issues, including injustice, oppression, poverty, violence, death of the other parent, addiction or sickness. It is in circumstances like these that the church, in all its expressions, can come alongside families experiencing hardship and crisis, and become a valuable part of their support network. Directing the efforts and resources of STM teams towards helping vulnerable families become self-sufficient and secure, is one of the most effective ways the church and STM teams can get involved in protecting and assisting children, and prevent an ongoing cycle of harm. Programs that aim to achieve this are often called family strengthening and family preservation programs.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS

These are programs that aim to strengthen parents and guardians' ability to care for and protect their children, and seek to enhance the wellbeing of the whole family unit. Examples of family and community strengthening programs include:



FOOD SECURITY



WATER & SANITATION



EDUCATION SUPPORT



MICRO BUSINESS



PARENTING COURSES

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STM TEAMS

Where a STM team seeks to get involved in programs in order to assist vulnerable children, directing them towards programs that preserve, strengthen and enhance the resilience of families is the best way to improve children's long-term outcomes. This is because families are children's most important long-term support networks. There are numerous ways STM teams may be able to get involved in family strengthening programs; for example through **skills training**, **skills exchange** or **community development programs**.

FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

In times of significant stress or crisis, families may need more intensive or comprehensive support services for a period of time in order to prevent family break-down and the placement of children in alternative care, including residential care. These programs are called family preservation programs and can include:



COUNSELLING



MEDICAL & NUTRITION SUPPORT



HOUSING ASSISTANCE



RESPITE CARE



PARENTING SKILLS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STM TEAMS

Due to the often sensitive nature of family's situations, it's unlikely to be appropriate for STM teams to get involved in the delivery of formal family preservation services. However, where such programs are connected with local churches, STM teams might be able to provide valuable moral and spiritual support by **visiting, encouraging** and **praying** with families experiencing crisis or hardship, at the same time as **learning** more about family preservation in order to **advocate** for such programs upon the team's return.

CASE STUDY: STRENGTHENING VULNERABLE FAMILIES IN CAMBODIA

Banon district in North West Cambodia, was once a Khmer Rouge stronghold, and today is an extremely rural, remote and poor area of the country. With limited access to health and education services, mortality rates due to preventable and water borne disease are high, and education and literacy levels are low. Most households are in debt to loan sharks, and poor irrigation infrastructure affects people's ability to grow rice crops as they oscillate from drought-like conditions to floods. Since it is close to the Thai border, many of the working age adults cross over to Thailand and engage in illegal logging or irregular labour migration as a means of earning an income. This can be very dangerous, exploitive and unregulated. Children are often left in the care of grandparents, and when grandparents struggle to feed them, the children are sent to live in 'orphanages' in Battambang city.

Australian Christian Churches International Relief (ACCIR) began working in Prey Tatung village, in Banon district, in partnership with a local church. They trained the church and community leaders in community-led development principles so that the church could be a catalyst for holistic transformation in the community. A household survey was conducted, and the families of Prey Tatung identified access to water and sanitation and food security as the two challenges they wanted to address in order to strengthen their families. Initially the community engaged in digging wells, constructing dams and building latrines, as well as primary health education and preventative health training. The next step was to address food security through the creation of permaculture farms for each household, which would provide each family with a sufficient supply of food all year round. The church organised training sessions, run by a Cambodian permaculture specialist, who taught them not just how to set up and build their own farms, but about food groups and seasonal crops, so they would have a balanced diet all year-round. Each family was given a few basic supplies and crops to begin with, and they provided their own manual labour to set up the farms.

Well into the project, a STM team from an Australian church contacted ACCIR wanting to send a STM team to support Prey Tatung community. ACCIR, being careful to not hamper the community-led development process, determined that it would be valuable for the team to come and learn from the community and witness the community's pride at achieving the goals they set for themselves. They also asked the community leaders if there was anything they wanted the team to do whilst they were visiting. The village leader told staff that there were six vulnerable families who had yet to set up their farms because they could not complete the manual labour themselves. These were widow-headed families, parents with a disability, or elderly grandparents who were looking after their grandchildren in the absence of the parents. They were all families struggling to feed their children and were at high risk of sending the children to residential care centres in Battambang town if this issue could not be resolved. In response, the village leader was organising community work teams to help these six families set up their farms. He invited the STM team members to participate in these work teams and help dig the families' fish ponds.

The team spent three hard days in the dirt, hoeing the ground that was as hard as concrete, to help dig the families' fish ponds! Team members were paired up with members from the community, and the community members led, guided and directed the work done by each team member. It was not a case of a team of 'white people' coming to do all the work and undermine the empowerment process. Rather the team was working with the community, building relationships with them as they laboured and ate together. At the end of the three days all six families had ready-to-fill fish ponds and for the team it was a great learning experience as they got a true sense of what development means to a local community.

Life has been re-injected back into the Pre Tatung community. Some of the parents and youth working across the Thai border have returned home. Some families have brought their children who were in orphanages back to live in their village home. The initiative has been such a success, and has spread to the surrounding communities, not only strengthening individual families, but whole communities. The STM team contributed to a healthy and meaningful community development process.



KEY LEARNING

- The church and Christian organisations can be a valuable part of a family's support network, particularly in times of crisis.
- Teams can play a role ensuring children have adequate care and protection by engaging with family strengthening programs to enhance each family's capacity to protect and provide for their children.
- Strengthening families and preventing their breakdown and separation is the best way to ensure positive long-term outcomes for children.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: BECOME A CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCATE

‘Desire without knowledge is not good, and whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way’. Proverbs 19:2 ESV

“A Missionary came to our church one Sunday to share about her work with trafficked children in Kolkata. She showed a video of these little girls, and told us of the likelihood of them being sold into prostitution. They were so young and I felt such a strong sense of injustice. Everything within me wanted to go there and do something, anything, to help them and show them that God loves them.”

The plight of vulnerable children can break our heart, stir within us a righteous anger and a resolve to do something to break the cycle of oppression and poverty affecting millions of children in the world. That we are stirred with compassion and desire to act on behalf of children is a Godly and positive response to injustice. However, in the Bible, Proverbs 19:2 (ESV) also tells us that **desire** must be coupled with **knowledge** in order to be appropriately channelled and effective¹¹.

In the context of our STM trips, we can take the above verse to mean that we need to guide team members to first seek **understanding** about the issues affecting children – their causes and complexities – **before** we encourage teams to **respond** – lest their responses be misguided and their good intentions misdirected.

Perhaps the most effective STM teams are those that:

1. Go on a trip with the goal of trying to piece together an understanding of a given issue (such as poverty, trafficking, family breakdown or child exploitation) by:

- ✓ speaking with long-term missionaries, community leaders and development workers engaged in those issues;
- ✓ going to workshops or information sessions run by local organisations;
- ✓ spending time immersed in local communities; and
- ✓ learning from existing programs in the community.

2. Build upon their ‘on-field exposure’ with independent reading and prayerful reflection.

While, in the traditional sense, it doesn’t appear they have ‘done’ much on their trip, these are the teams who are legitimately positioning themselves to have a long-term impact, because they first sought knowledge.

Team members who return home with a greater knowledge and understanding of the real issues are more likely to:

- ✓ be more **responsible and informed donors** who know how to choose partners who are implementing good practice, thus maximising the impact of their giving
- ✓ be in a position to **raise awareness** by sharing their knowledge with their church members, family and friends; which in turn can lead to more thoughtful engagement in missions and development from churches and other individuals
- ✓ be in a position to **advocate on behalf of children** whose lives are being adversely affected by social issues, and through advocacy, see real and lasting change take place (this could be as a part of an advocacy group or as an individual)
- ✓ be better **long-term prayer partners** who can pray about the real issues and complexities affecting children and their families

¹¹ Proverbs 19:2 ESV

- ✓ become more **effective missionaries** in the event team members feel called to return long-term, as they have a more realistic understanding of what missions and development is actually about, and the investment they will need to make in learning before they can expect to have a positive impact on children, families and communities
- ✓ become **advocates for child-safe STM trips**, and
- ✓ be inspired to **volunteer in their own community** – volunteering locally removes the language and cultural barriers, and enables team members to tap into their valuable local knowledge and networks to effect meaningful change.



LET'S BE HONEST

It's probably true – more people will sign up for a trip when it's advertised on the basis of what the team will 'do' rather than what they will go to 'learn'. It can be tempting to advertise trips in this manner to incite interest out of a belief in this equation:



(Greater no. of people on STM teams = Greater amount of financial support + Greater no. of long term workers recruited)

However, many churches and organisations are beginning to see this formula as flawed and are starting to subscribe to another equation:

QUANTITY ± QUALITY = LONG TERM IMPACT

STM trips are an opportunity to improve the quality of the long-term missionaries we recruit through these trip by modelling that learning precedes effective action. It is also our chance to develop discerning donors with the ability to distinguish between good and poor practice, which can only happen if we give them a chance to understand before asking them to invest. Whichever outcome you are hoping for, learning is key to long-term impact. Never underestimate the power of a smaller number of people armed with knowledge and the right appropriate motivation.

CASE STUDY: IT'S ALL ABOUT EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY: A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

"We're not interested in a 'doing' based trip, we're interested in a 'learning' based trip... that's more about coming alongside partners in the field and watching and observing." Ps Danny Major, Global Pastor, Enjoy Church, Australia.

Several years ago, Enjoy Church launched a brand new missions campaign called Collective 61. Birthed out of Enjoy Church's community arm and its women's ministry, Collective 61 is designed to mobilise members of the church to be true advocates and agents of change in support of vulnerable populations in Cambodia. Collective 61 partners with several organisations in Cambodia who are working to assist vulnerable women and children through combating human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and providing crisis pregnancy and abandonment prevention services. As part of the Collective 61 initiative, Enjoy Church runs STM trips to Cambodia once a year that focus on helping team members develop a holistic understanding of the issues of injustice that create poverty and vulnerability, and inspire long term action.

The trips are extremely purposeful. They are not about facilitating an experience, rather all about education. The first STM team comprised of campus pastors from Enjoy Church's eight campuses to give them an opportunity to catch the Collective 61 vision. Subsequent trips have included key advocates and leaders who have a role in promoting Collective 61 at each campus. From start to finish, the itinerary is an intentionally constructed learning journey. It begins with a pre-departure training session on 'poverty and empowerment', which challenges the teams understanding of poverty and perception that we can 'fix' people's poverty by helping them become more like us.

It makes people aware of the importance of empowering partnerships in missions. Ps Danny explains that, for him, education is the key, *“We don’t want our teams coming in thinking they have all the answers. It’s actually about us coming alongside and acknowledging that though we may not be physically poor, we are often relationally and spiritually poor. It disarms the ‘we have all the answers’ top-down approach.”*

As soon as the team arrives in Cambodia they’re provided with information on Cambodia’s history, the people, and the positive and negative impacts of aid on the community. They visit two rural communities, which are in varying stages of their community development process. The team witnesses the difference between NGO-led and community-led development, and they see the pride and joy community members take in their achievements when a community has led their own development process, and witness the clear and positive impact of empowerment.

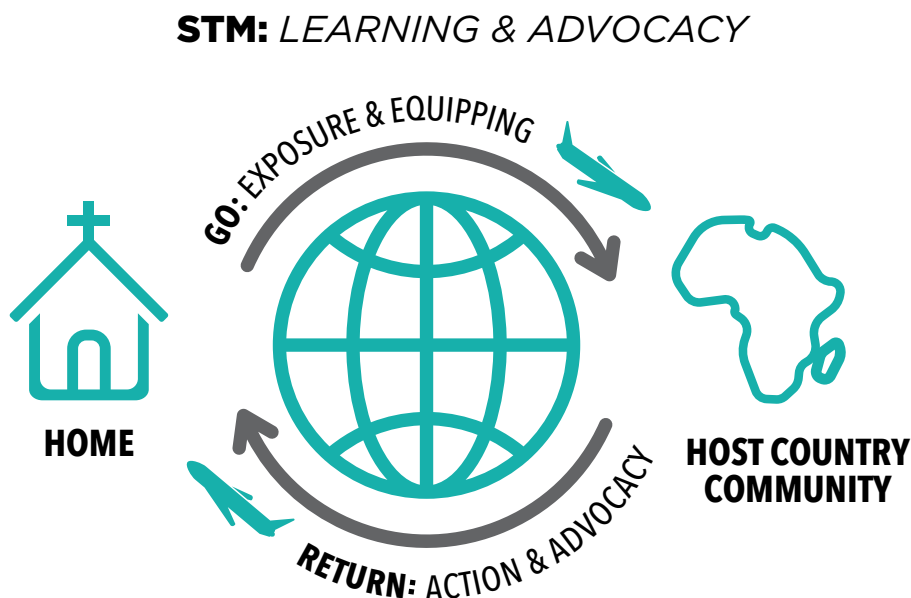
The middle section of the trip focuses on Enjoy’s Collective 61’s partner organisations; Chab Dai, Mother’s Heart and Daughters, which are all working with women and children at risk. At Chab Dai, the team is exposed to a holistic view of human trafficking; including the root causes, local issues, solutions and outcomes. At no point does the team meet survivors of trafficking or at-risk children, or take part in the projects themselves. At Mother’s Heart the primary focus is to learn about what Mother’s Heart does to assist women who experience a crisis pregnancy, by observing and learning from their social workers. Any further involvement is led and guided by the organisation, and this may include visiting some of the women in the program, visiting the medical centres where antenatal care takes place, doing a craft activity or devotion in their small group. At Daughters, the team members support the cafes, boutiques and other businesses that give women opportunities for employment, by simply being customers. During the STM trip everything the team sees and experiences helps them understand the global nature of these problems and helps them connect the dots between what is happening in Cambodia and how it is linked to what we do in Australia. Everything from, *“our belief systems, the clothes we wear, the perfume we buy – it can all have an adverse affect in-country”*.

Throughout the eight days, the team leader is continually engaging the team in conversation and reflection, asking clear questions on what they are seeing and experiencing. They unpack issues, speak to people’s assumptions and point them in the right direction, so that when the team members return home, each team member is now aware, knowledgeable and equipped to advocate on behalf of the people and programs they have visited from a more educated point of view. Team members can become aware of how their lifestyle in Australia can fuel the issues in Cambodia, and as Danny states, *“One of the best things they can do is to go home and begin to change how they live, to speak out, and educate others on the most appropriate part they can play”*.

Structuring the trips this way has also had a positive benefit on the Collective 61 fundraising campaign, as team members return better equipped to act as advocates. As a result, in just four years they have seen their yearly fundraising efforts grow from \$8,000 to \$50,000.

AN ALTERNATE MODEL FOR STM

The above case study presents us with a different model for STM trips; one which is broken down into two distinct stages rather than just a once-off overseas trip. In essence, the first stage, **GO: Exposure & Equipping** (field trip), can be approached as a missions boot camp – an intensive time of experiential learning which prepares team members for stage two, **RETURN: Action & Advocacy**. In this second stage, team members use their new found knowledge to create awareness and catalyse change upon their return.



The power of STM programs utilising this model is that they tap into an unseen and often poorly understood truth: some of the root causes behind the issues that leave children at risk or vulnerable in the 'developing world' may actually originate or have their roots in the 'developed world'. This is because our world is so globalised, so interconnected, and what people do in Australia or the USA can cause a chain reaction, and impact children in countries like Cambodia, Guatemala or India – for better or for worse.

CONSIDER THIS SCENARIO:

A POOR FAMILY IN BANGLADESH:



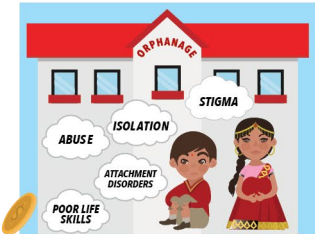
Parents work for a sneaker factory earning less than a living wage.



They work long days and forced overtime, have no worker's rights and not enough money to adequately provide for their children.



With little money and no access to day care, they send their children to an 'orphanage'.



Now the children are separated from their parents, and exposed to all the potential harms of institutional care.



MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY IN AMERICA:



Parents earn a decent living, have access to day care and other services.



They have sufficient money to feed and clothe their children.



Like most of us they buy the clothes and shoes (made in Bangladesh factories) without knowledge of who made them or under what conditions.



They are kind hearted people who also sponsor two children living in a children's home run by a Christian NGO.

As demonstrated in the above scenario, when we as consumers purchase from unethical companies that exploit their workers, we participate in the unjust system that places the children of such workers in a vulnerable position. When we direct our giving towards child welfare programs that don't address the root causes (such as poverty in the family) and incentivise family separation – like orphanages – we are involved in perpetuating an institutional approach to child welfare which can result in harm to children. Whilst our participation in global systems can unintentionally lead to harm, it also presents us with an opportunity to affect positive and lasting change. If we understand and use our power as donors and consumers to make ethical and just choices, and encourage others to do the same, we can cause a positive ripple effect felt by families and communities in other parts of the world.

Therefore when a STM team goes on a trip to Bangladesh to learn about:

- ✓ **systemic injustice** (such as labour exploitation in supply chains);
- ✓ **root causes** of child vulnerability (such as those that cause poverty);
- ✓ **appropriate solutions** that address root causes and uphold the full scope of children's rights (such as family preservation and family strengthening programs);
- ✓ **harmful effects of residential care** (such as emotional, cognitive and developmental delays and institutionalisation); and
- ✓ the **role that Western donors/volunteers** unwittingly play in proliferating 'orphanages'.

They can return to their home country and raise awareness about:

- ✓ **supporting companies which offer their workers a living wage and fair work conditions;**
- ✓ **supporting programs that strengthen families** rather than funding orphanages; and
- ✓ **the perils of volunteering in, and visiting orphanages,** and ethical alternatives.

These are all issues that will only change due to advocacy, awareness raising and behaviour change in the global north or 'developed' countries. Therefore, equipping teams with knowledge on a STM trip before sending them home to advocate and speak up on behalf of children and families overseas is an incredibly worthwhile and legitimate call to action.

CASE STUDY: IT'S ALL ABOUT EDUCATION & ADVOCACY: A TEAM MEMBER'S PERSPECTIVE

Mel was a member of an Enjoy Church Collective 61 STM trip to Cambodia in 2015. It was on this trip that Mel first heard about the harmful effects that institutional care can have on children and how prolific the use of residential care had become in Cambodia. Mel found the information presented by NGO's and Collective 61 partners really eye opening. She said, *"When I went over there I didn't know this issue (residential care) would stand out to me; yet the whole trip emphasised how great a need there is for children to be in families"*. She came to see the Western church's desire to build and support orphanages or children's homes as perpetuating an unhealthy cycle of institutionalising children that would continue if she didn't speak out and advocate at home, using what she had learnt about on the trip as a catalyst.

Since returning home, Mel has done just that! She has spoken to a lot of people about what she saw and challenged people's perceptions regarding the appropriateness of caring for children in orphanages, volunteering in orphanages and the fact that most children in orphanages aren't actually orphans! The trip equipped her with a level of knowledge and understanding about many of these complex issues, so that she could return home and start to educate people and make a difference in her own community. Mel says she will continue to advocate for this issue on behalf of all those vulnerable children who cannot, *"I will just keep telling people, because people just don't realise what is actually happening"*.



KEY LEARNING

- Desire to help others must be coupled with knowledge if our efforts are to be appropriate and effective.
- It is important to direct STM teams to learn about issues before encouraging them to respond.
- STM programs that engage team members in on-field learning are more likely to see longer term effective engagement from team members upon their return in the capacity of prayer partners, donors, advocates, and even long-term missionaries.
- Many of the issues affecting children and their families are in part caused or sustained by global inequality and injustice. STM tips can be used to raise awareness of these linkages so that team members can return home to advocate for changes in their own communities and countries in order to positively benefit children, families and communities overseas.



TOOLS

For more information to unpack these ideas further see:

- Handout: **'Justice for the Poor'** (<http://acci.org.au/resources/5.JusticeForThePoor.pdf>) (page 86).
- Video: **'What is Poverty?'** (<https://vimeo.com/125760376>)

3. SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TEAMS & ORPHANAGES

'God sets the lonely in families.' Psalms 68:6 (NIV)

INTRODUCTION

For a long time, visiting and volunteering in orphanages has been a common component of STM trips. In more recent years, however, new research, evidence and information has come to light that has caused us to question whether or not this is a positive and helpful practice, or something which is exacerbating issues for children who are already vulnerable in developing countries. In this section, we will unpack the core reasons why there is now a global move away from encouraging STM teams to visit and volunteer within orphanages, or any form of residential care programs for children, and an emphasis on STM teams supporting programs that are family and community-based.

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE?

Most of us assume that children who live in an orphanage, children's home or any form of residential care, are there because they are orphans who have no suitable adult caregivers. Whilst this is the case for a small percentage of children in care, research shows that more than 80% of the eight million children estimated to be living in residential care around the world are children with one or both parents still alive¹³. In the majority of these cases children are not placed into care due to true abandonment or abuse, but rather due to family stressors such as poverty, family breakdown, the death of one parent, loss of shelter, access to education or disability.

CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS: THE GLOBAL PICTURE

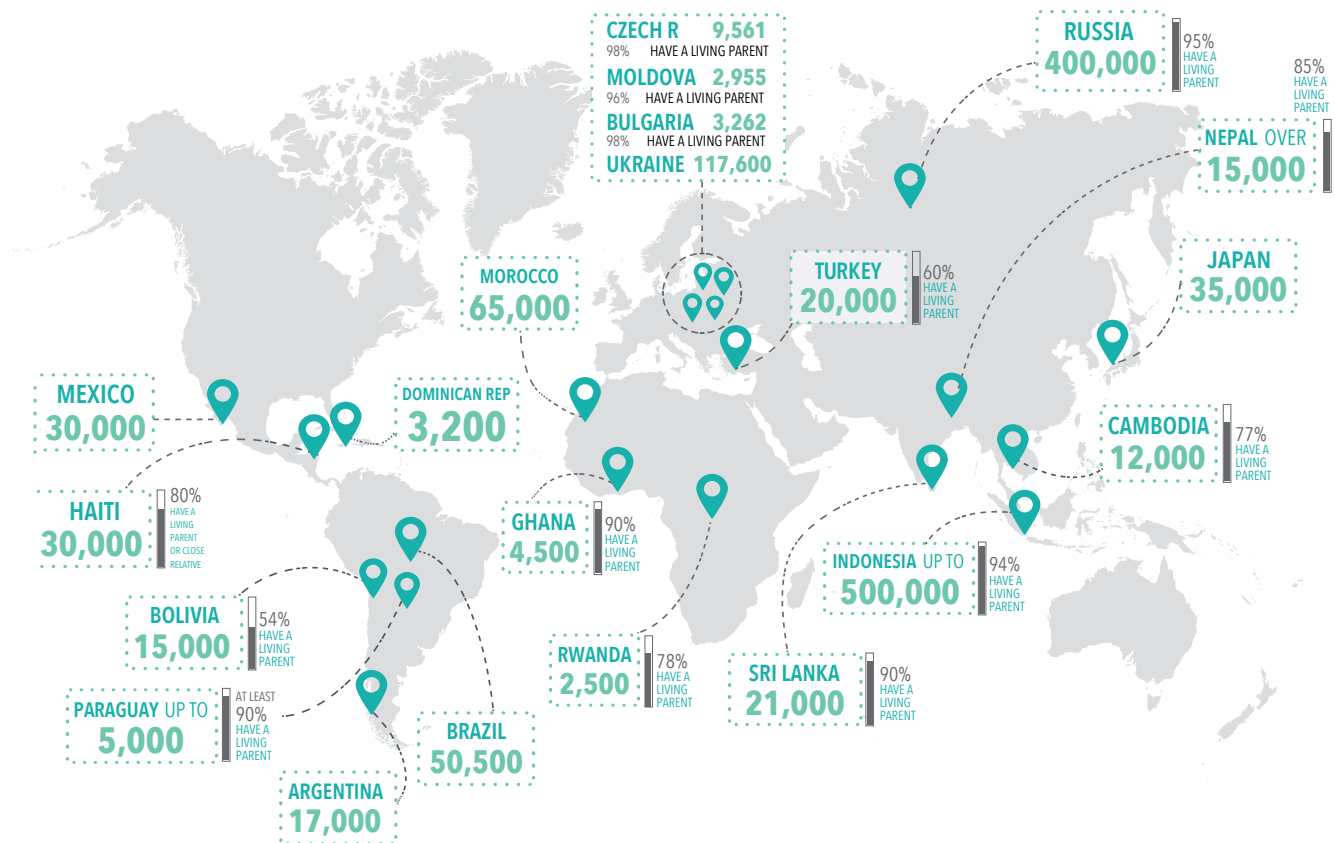


Figure 1: Children in institutions: countries with data (Lumos 2016)

http://wearelumos.org/sites/default/files/1.Global%20Numbers_2_0.pdf

¹² Csáky, C 2009, Keeping children out of harmful institutions, Save the Children. London.



The majority of children in orphanages are therefore children **with parents**, who want their children to have a good future, and have been led to believe that sending their child to an orphanage will result in better opportunities and a better life.

Whilst well run residential care centres can meet the children's physical and educational needs, they are generally ill-equipped to meet a child's emotional and psycho-social needs. These needs are crucial to a child's development and wellbeing and are by far best met in a family. In fact, when these needs are not met, children can suffer adverse effects such as developmental delays, attachment disorders, behavioural problems, low self esteem and can struggle with their sense of identity and belonging. It is for these reasons (and many more) that placing a child in any form of residential care should be a measure of last resort, should only ever be temporary and should **never be used solely in response to poverty**¹³. Every child deserves the opportunity to be raised in a loving permanent family; *'God sets the lonely in families'* Psalm 68:6 (NIV).



LET'S BE HONEST

Many people ask the question: Can an orphanage be a family? Whilst there is a lot an orphanage can do to provide a more **'family-like'** environment for children in care, there is nothing an orphanage can do to be an actual family to a child. A family is the most natural and conducive environment for a child to grow, develop and thrive, and **the only institution designed by God for the care of children**. Though creating a family-like environment in residential care centres is much better for children than an institutional environment, a family-like children's home is still not a good substitute for a real family!

WHY IS SENDING A SHORT-TERM TEAM TO WORK IN AN ORPHANAGE POTENTIALLY HARMFUL?

It sounds counter intuitive to suggest that sending a STM team to spend time with children living in an 'orphanage' isn't a positive thing. Visiting or volunteering in residential care centres can be such a rewarding experience for teams, and children may really enjoy the attention while teams are there, but for several reasons it can result in a lot of harm.

REASON ONE: Children need secure attachments

"Many foreigners came to visit our orphanage. We were encouraged to think of them as parents and were so happy when they came because they gave us so much attention, played with us and gave us gifts. We all felt so sad when the foreigners left and we cried a lot.. I don't know what a mother's love really feels like. I wish I could have stayed and lived with my family" - Careleaver from Myanmar

One of the most fundamental needs of a child is to form a secure attachment with a primary caregiver. This attachment, or bond, creates the security a child needs to confidently explore their world, develop (cognitively, emotionally and physically), learn to trust, and form healthy relationships with others. A child without this secure attachment is missing something very critical in their life, and this can have serious ramifications for a child's development and wellbeing. It can result in children developing what is called an attachment disorder, which may lead a child to form unhealthy and unnaturally quick bonds with people in an attempt to fill this need. When volunteers or STM teams are brought in to care for children in residential care, children can often form such an attachment with team members or volunteers, only to have it broken shortly after, when the team or volunteer leaves. This cycle of attachment and abandonment repeats with every team or volunteer that comes along, and the experience can exacerbate existing attachment disorders and expose each child to repeated patterns of emotional and psychological harm.

Yes! Children in residential care absolutely deserve love and attention, but they deserve to have these needs met by stable permanent caregivers.

¹³ United Nations General Assembly 2010, Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children: resolution/adopted by the General Assembly, 24 February 2010, A/RES/64/142.

REASON TWO: Children need to be protected from abuse

Unfortunately, not everyone who wants to volunteer in an orphanage has good intentions. Orphanages are known targets for adults who seek opportunities to abuse children. Therefore, one of the best ways to prevent abuse is to limit the number of people who are allowed access to residential care centres to the professionally trained and thoroughly screened permanent staff who are essential to the children's care and support. Whilst the vast majority of people who want to help in an orphanage are not abusers, opening the doors to well meaning people, opens it to everyone. With children's safety at stake it is much better to be cautious and make all residential care centres off limits to outsiders.

REASON THREE: Visiting and volunteering in orphanages fuels the orphanage industry

It's devastating to think that the global church's desire to help children by supporting and visiting 'orphanages' could potentially contribute to children being separated from their parents, or even worse, fuel an industry in which children are being recruited and used for financial gain. Unfortunately, there is evidence to suggest this is happening. The number of orphanages and children's homes in countries like Cambodia, Uganda, Nepal and India have increased in sync with the rising interest in orphanages from donors, churches, STM and volunteers - even though the number of actual orphans has decreased¹⁴. This seems to be happening for two reasons. Firstly, when donations and funds are primarily given to support residential care, it leaves very little resource to develop family and community-based services that can prevent family breakdown (and are better suited to most children's needs). This incentivises family separation, because without family and community based services, families experiencing hardship are often left with no other choice but to access support from orphanages, which is conditional upon relinquishing their children into care.

Secondly, in a number of countries where visiting or volunteering in orphanages is widespread, establishing an orphanage has become a profitable business, and unscrupulous individuals are recruiting children from families and placing them in orphanages in order to elicit financial support from overseas donors and volunteers. These children are sometimes referred to as 'paper orphans'¹⁵. As a result, visiting and volunteering in residential care centres - even the legitimate and transparent ones - can contribute to the perception that there is a demand for so-called orphans in 'orphanages' and a ready supply of people willing to pay to visit them. Unbeknownst to the visitors and volunteers, the children caught up in the 'orphanage industry' are not orphans at all, but children who have sadly become a commodity¹⁶.



TOOLS

For more information about residential care and volunteering in residential care see:

Handout 1: Becoming a Child-Safe Short-Term Missions Team (page 70)

Better Care Network - <http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/>

Faith to Action - <http://faithtoaction.org/>

Kinnected - <http://kinnected.org.au/>

For a full list of websites and resources refer to **Further Resources: Helpful Information 2** (page 86).

¹⁴ Brown, K 2009, The risk of harm to young children in institutional care, Save the Children, London. UNICEF 2011, A study of attitudes towards residential care in Cambodia, UNICEF, Phnom Penh. Williamson, J & Greenberg, A 2010, Families: not orphanages, Better Care Network, London.

¹⁵ Van Doore-Nave, K 2015, 'The business of orphanages: where do 'orphans' come from?', Forget Me Not, <http://forgetmenot.org.au/the-business-of-orphanages-where-do-orphans-come-from/>. Terre des hommes Foundation 2008, Adopting the rights of the child, Kathmandu.

¹⁶ Punaks, M & Feit, K 2014, The Paradox of Orphanage Volunteering, Next Generation Nepal, Eugene.

CASE STUDY: REFLECTIONS OF A RETURNED ORPHANAGE VOLUNTEER

From a young age I can recall hearing about the orphanages my church and school supported and listening to the stories of returned missions teams who visited orphanages on their trips. I distinctly remember dreaming I could one day be just like them and volunteer in an orphanage overseas. At the age of 19 I had the opportunity to go on a 6-week trip to the Philippines to teach child rights to local students and stay at a children's home with a team from my university.

When we arrived at the children's home, the kids ran towards the jeep, squealing and hugging us the moment we stepped out of the car. We spent our days playing with them, helping with homework and planning for the child rights training we would run at the end of the trip. The 'Right to Family and Alternative Care' was given to me to teach. As I researched, I found information regarding the damaging impacts of residential care and that it was not in the best interest of children. But these children in front of me were always smiling, gave us long hugs and lived in nice buildings on a big property. How could this place be harmful to children? How could loving and caring for these children possibly be wrong?

On the third day one child started crying and begging the manager to let him go home to his mother. The manager said it might be possible, which confused me as I thought that these children had no parents or were unable to stay with them due to abuse or abandonment. Why were we looking after this boy in an orphanage if he wanted to and could go home?

Half way through the trip we had a home stay in a nearby village. This stay highlighted the huge differences between life in a village, compared to life in the children's home. In the village the children ran from house to house greeting different aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins. There were no guards at front gates, young children sat on their mother's laps and there was always a watchful eye of a nearby relative making sure the children were safe and happy. I asked myself, 'where would I want to grow up'?

As the trip continued more things began to concern me, such as the sibling groups separated by gender and only able to see each other once a month. There was the favoritism the staff and volunteers unwittingly showed to some certain children. The children also constantly asked after former volunteers who had come and gone, promising to send letters that never arrived.

On the last day I could no longer silence the nagging feeling inside that maybe what we were doing was not in the best interest of these children. We knew that saying goodbye would be hard but we were excited to be going home to see our own families. For the children however, our departure was torturous. Tears soon turned into sobs and screaming as the children, some in their late teens, clung to us pleading us not leave them. When the staff managed to pry their fingers from the edges of the jeep we drove out of the gates hearing their sobs fade. We all sat in shock and silence at the scene we had just witnessed. One of my fellow volunteers broke the silence by simply saying "what have we done?" We provided those kids with hours of fun, hugs and English practice, but in that moment I realised it wasn't worth it. What we had really done was contribute to an ongoing cycle of abandonment for those children. What was worse was I knew that in a matter of days a new group of volunteers would arrive and these children, so desperate for love and attention, would once again embrace them and be devastated as another jeep full of people left.

IS SENDING STM TEAMS TO VOLUNTEER IN ORPHANAGES EVER APPROPRIATE?

Child protection experts, governments, non-government organisations, and numerous Christian organisations and churches around the world, are now saying that it isn't. They all agree that it is absolutely legitimate to send teams and volunteers in order to assist orphaned or vulnerable children. But, volunteering in orphanages isn't a good way to achieve this.



LET'S BE HONEST

Defending the fatherless and vulnerable children means putting all other agendas aside and putting children's best interests first. This includes the agendas of our churches, organisations, our mission programs and even those of our ministry friends. In some instances, redirecting STM from visiting orphanages is going to mean we have to have some difficult conversations with people we've been in relationship with for a long-time. As Christians, we are called to speak truth and advocate for those whose voices are silenced, especially vulnerable children. While we should approach these conversations with love and respect, we shouldn't be silent and we should never perpetuate something that is harmful to others.

REDIRECTING GOOD INTENTIONS

HOW CAN STM TEAMS BEST HELP ORPHANED AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN?

The best way STM teams can help truly orphaned and vulnerable children is by helping local churches and organisations that support their families and relatives to care for them. Look for opportunities to:

- ✓ prevent family breakdown;
- ✓ address poverty and education issues in local communities;
- ✓ support and strengthen parents and children's caregivers in the community;
- ✓ build the capacity of those with the long-term duty of care for children;
- ✓ learn about the issues that affect the world's most vulnerable children; and
- ✓ advocate for children and their families in our own countries.

By pursuing these types of opportunities for your team, you will be well on your way to facilitating a STM team that supports children in a way that is **legitimate, sustainable**, and in their **best interests**.

HOW DO WE PUT AN END TO STM TEAMS ENGAGING WITH ORPHANAGES/RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN?

Whilst it is not easy to challenge and change a practice that is so intertwined with the global church's understanding of missions and compassion, the good news is it is very achievable! There are many practical things we can do which will begin to shed light on this issue, and see STM redirected towards programs that will have far more positive long-term outcomes for children.

If you are from a sending church or organisation you could:

- ✓ **Put a policy in place** that prevents STM or individuals from visiting or volunteering with orphanages.
- ✓ **Raise awareness** within your church leadership and congregation about the harms associated with volunteering or visiting orphanages.
- ✓ **Raise this issue with any current partners** you might have who do allow STM teams to visit children in residential care, and consider suspending teams until you are confident this has been addressed.
- ✓ **Choose to only partner** with and send STM teams to organisations that do not run residential care or do not allow teams and volunteers access to children in residential care.
- ✓ **Include a session on residential care** in your pre-trip training in order to educate team members before they depart.

If you are a receiving organisation you could:

- ✓ Include **a no visiting or volunteering in residential care clause** in your child protection policy and code of conduct.
- ✓ Include **information about orphanage volunteering in the information pack** you provide to potential teams or sending organisations/partners.
- ✓ Include **a session on the situation of children in residential care** in your country of operation, in the team's orientation and briefing session.
- ✓ **Invite a child protection/child advocacy organisation** to come and do a presentation with the team on the issue as a part of their itinerary.



LET'S BE HONEST

It's difficult to raise this issue in cases where there has been a history of visiting orphanages. If you've previously facilitated teams to go and spend time in orphanages, when you first put these new measures in place you may get some initial strong reactions or feel pressured to renege on your stance. Be prepared to respond with grace and respect for those who are grappling with the information you have provided them. However, stay focused on what is in the best interest of children. The good news is, in most cases people come around over time. Check out the following case study - it's a good example of just that.

CASE STUDY: REDIRECTING STM TEAMS IN UGANDA

Care4Kids (C4K) Uganda was originally founded as an 'orphanage' in Jinja. Yet, in 2013 as a part of ACCIR's Kinnected Program, C4K began the process of transitioning to family-based care, and focused all its efforts on the reunification of children with their families and community strengthening programs. Colleen, C4K's CEO, is the first to admit it was a huge process. It started with introducing the idea of reintegration to the community through a Kinnected workshop, then became a simultaneous process of educating the community on the benefit of having children in families after a long history of orphanage care, family tracing, and the more delicate process of reuniting children with their families and reconciling broken relationships. Family tracing took 1.5 years, yet it was extremely successful and they managed to find the families for 64 of the 68 children in their care. Many of the children have already been reunited with their families, and Colleen hopes that by the end of 2016, all of the remaining children will have also returned to their homes.

C4K's transition to a family-based model has also meant a transition with regards to how they engage with volunteers and STM teams. Colleen says that, *"Once we became part of the Kinnected program, we also started to look at our policies around volunteers. We started to do research in the surrounding villages on the impact of institutional care on care leavers. One care leader talked about how she'd form relationships really quickly (with volunteers in the orphanage), she'd really connect to a person, and then all of a sudden they would leave and she'd never see them again. This resulted in trauma, which she had carried into her adult life. This research then led me to talk to our own kids about the impact of volunteers on them. I started to see that it affected them even if they didn't voice it."*

It was clear that volunteering had a direct and negative impact on the long-term development of children. So, C4K completely stopped volunteers and STM teams from coming to the home and working directly with the children. They adopted new policies in order to uphold children's rights, wellbeing, needs and protection above all other considerations. C4K then re-educated their staff in Uganda, the board and key stakeholders on their new child protection policy, so they all understood the serious implications that STM teams can have on the development of children who are in residential care.

C4K has also had to bravely explain to sending organisations and church partners why they would no longer allow volunteers to visit the orphanage, as well as prevent past volunteers from visiting again. As a result of this, they have had churches, ministry groups and individuals giving them a difficult time, and threatening to pull support and sponsorship. Colleen even had to explain to one unhappy sponsor that, *"These are not my children, they're Christ's children. They have a heavenly father who knows and cares for their needs, and though your lack of funding may be detrimental in the short-term, their exposure to short-term mission teams is more detrimental to them in the long-term"*. Despite these reactions, C4K have stuck to their resolve to put the rights of children above any negative feedback.

Colleen openly admits that, *"These things have been challenging. Yet, people are starting to understand it now"*. One person who threatened to pull sponsorship, has now doubled their support! This year (2016) they are sending a STM team to Uganda, but it will look completely different from previous trips. Instead of the team staying and working in the children's home, they will stay in a nearby community and take part in family and community strengthening programs that truly protect and enhance children's development.



TOOLS

See **HANDOUT 1: Becoming a Child-Safe STM Team** (page 70) for a summary of the key ideas presented in the past two sections and as a useful handout for team members.



KEY LEARNING

- An estimated 80% of the children in orphanages and other forms of residential care are children with families. The reasons why children with families live in orphanages include poverty, disability, family crisis, loss of shelter, income or death of one parent, access to education and a belief that orphanages will provide children with better life outcomes.
- Research shows that children develop best in families and residential care can have serious detrimental impacts on children's growth, development and life outcomes. It is for this reason that residential care should be a last resort and family strengthening and family based care should always be prioritised.
- Allowing STM teams to visit and volunteer in orphanages can compound issues and should be discouraged. It can exacerbate children's attachment issues, expose them to abuse, and fuel an 'orphanage industry' which causes family separation and exploits children.
- STM teams can best help orphaned and vulnerable children by supporting their families and family strengthening programs, advocating for their rights and educating others about child-safe mission trips.



SECTION 2:



APPLY

*APPLYING A CHILD-SAFE LENS TO SHORT-TERM
MISSIONS PROGRAMS*

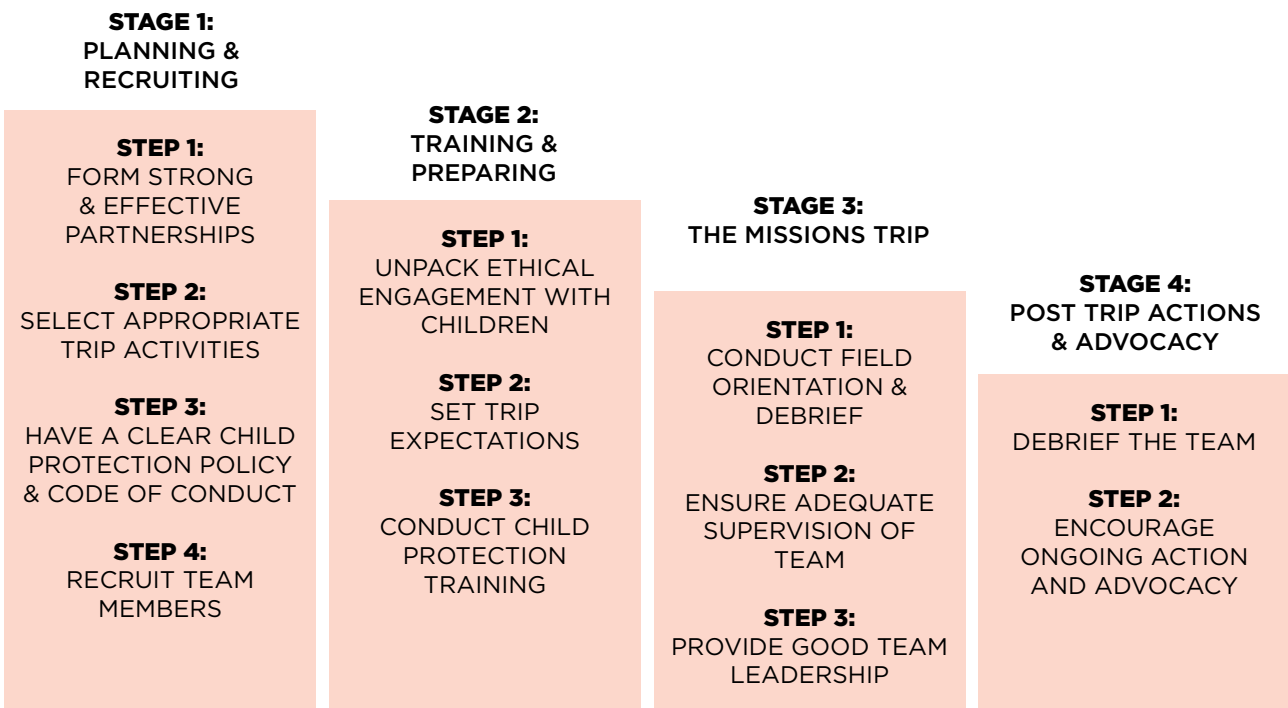
INTRODUCTION

Our Biblical mandate to protect, fulfil and respect the rights of children is by now well established and evident. In this section we will therefore shift our focus from the best practice principles, to their application and towards the goal of assisting you to develop a child safeguarding framework for your STM program.

Throughout this section you will therefore find guidance and suggestions that will:

- **EQUIP** you with practical ways to apply child safeguarding lens to each stage of your STM program; and
- **ASSIST** you to implement child safeguarding measures when determining who you send or receive, where you go, what you do, why you do it and how you do it (See page 11).

In this section we have divided the STM team program into four separate stages, with clear steps you can follow to incorporate child safeguarding measures during each stage:



TIP:

In most situations, there are two organisations involved in the planning and running of a STM program - the receiving and sending organisation. Your organisation may have a strong commitment to child safeguarding. However your partner organisation's processes or level of awareness may differ. In these instances, you might need to come alongside the partner organisation, help them understand the importance of child safeguarding and assist them in putting the correct processes in place. This in and of itself is a great outcome of a STM program.

STAGE 1: PLANNING & RECRUITING

STEP 1: FORM STRONG & EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The first and one of the most important steps to ensure your STM program is successful and child safe is selecting a partner organisation who shares the same desire to protect and uphold children's best interests as you do.

REMEMBER: The best STM programs happen in the context of long-term partnerships. So, where possible, focus on building strong partnerships over a significant length of time.

CONDUCT PARTNERSHIP DUE DILIGENCE CHECKS

The best way to be confident that you are selecting the right partner is to first conduct some basic background research and a partnership due diligence check. This will help you gain a better understanding of the organisation and the way it operates. Ideally you should look into the following areas:

- LEGAL STATUS** — ? Is the organisation appropriately registered with the government, licensed to conduct their activities and operating legally?
- COMPATIBILITY** — ? Are the organisation's core values compatible with your organisation's values?
- CHILD PROTECTION** — ? Are they committed to child safeguarding and do they have a robust child protection policy and adequate procedures in place?
- ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY** — ?
 - Do they have the technical and organisational capacity to carry out their work to high standards?
 - Have the organisation's projects been designed in response to an in-depth and evidence-based understanding of the issues, target community and root causes? (e.g. do they complete needs assessment and establish baselines)
- RISK MANAGEMENT** — ? Do they have adequate risk management systems in place covering areas such as finances and child protection?
- REPUTATION** — ? Does the organisation have a good reputation in the area/s they work? (e.g. Is not the subject of any allegations, Is held in high regard by others)

You can also conduct a due diligence check on an existing partner, particularly if you've never done so in the past. It will allow you to make decisions about the future of the partnership, based on the right information, and give you an opportunity to address any gaps in standards with your partner should any be identified.

Where there is a commitment on both sides to improve the standards of practice, is a good idea to set clear goals and timelines for addressing gaps in standards with your partners. It is also helpful to agree on which standards require immediate attention and should be addressed as a condition of the partnership and which ones can be progressively improved as a part of the partnership. Be willing to support your partner in the achievement of these standards and be mindful of the cultural and contextual differences.



TOOLS

See **CHECKLIST 3: Partnership Due Diligence Check** (page 64) for a more detailed list of due diligence questions.

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS

Good communication between the sending and the receiving organisations is a mark of a strong partnership, and vital for the running of a successful and child-safe STM program. The global nature of STM trips means that the various people involved in organising trips are often located in different countries, speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds. This makes it very easy for there to be miscommunication and differing expectations. Good preliminary discussions can prevent confusion and can limit the risk of team members returning home disappointed and disillusioned.

Preliminary discussions can be used as a time to:

1. agree on the approach and purpose of the STM program;
2. explain your commitment to being child-safe;
3. discuss expectations, roles and responsibilities and potential trip activities; and
4. exchange key organisational documents, such as child protection policies and codes of conduct.

It's a good idea to revisit these conversations with long-term partners anytime you update your processes, policies or approach to child safeguarding.

STEP 2: SELECT APPROPRIATE TRIP ACTIVITIES

It is important that the purpose of the STM trip is very clear and agreed upon by both organisations (i.e. learning, exposure, skills based). Once determined, you can work with your partner to select activities that will achieve the trip's intended purpose. The principles covered in section one of this manual (e.g. do no harm, strengthening local capacity and enhancing long-term outcomes for children) can now act as a filter to ensure the activities you select are purposeful, appropriate and child safe.

Once your draft itinerary is developed, you can use the self-assessment tool as a further check and safeguard against causing unintentional harm to the communities and children your team will visit.



TIP BOX

You may need to be prepared to explain why team members cannot participate in certain activities which don't meet your approach to child safeguarding, particularly if you've recently made changes.



TOOLS

See **'Avoiding Harm Self-Check'** (page 17)

See **Helpful Information 2: Further Resources** (page 89)

Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions

Corbett, Fikkert & Casselberry

This eight-part program for STM teams educates leaders and their teams on how to engage with missions in a healthy way that doesn't harm the materialsy poor communities teams visit. Check out the first section of the Leader's Guide for a detailed introduction to healthy STM trips.

STEP 3: HAVE A CLEAR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & CODE OF CONDUCT

WHAT IS A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT?

A **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (CPP)** outlines the measures and structures the organisation has put in place to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children.

A **CODE OF CONDUCT** provides a clear list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and boundaries in relation to working with children, which all staff, volunteers and team members must agree to adhere to.

WHY IS A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & CODE OF CONDUCT NEEDED?

We often presume everyone has the same understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and actions towards children, which sometimes is not the case – especially when there is a lack of clear guidelines and when people are placed in cross cultural environments.

Effective child protection policies and codes of conduct are vital to minimise risks to children by:

- providing clear behavioral guidance; and
- outlining child protection and safeguarding commitments, responsibilities and reporting procedures.

A CPP also serves to protect your organisation and staff; by demonstrating your commitment to child protection and safeguarding and creating clear boundaries, which minimises the risk of potential misunderstandings or incidents that may lead to allegations of child abuse.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

There is no one policy that fits all organisations or ministries. The most effective CPPs are developed:

- based on the nature and size of the organisation and activities undertaken;
- from an assessment of the specific risks posed to children involved in the organisation's programs and how these risks are managed; and
- in consultation with a range of different stakeholders.

A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY INCLUDES:



INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION:

Begin with an overview of why the policy was developed and who it applies to. Information commonly found in the introduction includes:

- **A Statement of Commitment:** clearly states your organisation's commitment to protecting and safeguarding children.
- **Policy Purpose:** outlines the reasons why the policy has been developed.
- **Guiding Principles:** list the Biblical and/or legal frameworks which guide the policy.
- **Scope:** lists who the policy applies to, and that they are required to read, sign and abide by it.
- **Definitions:** defines the different types of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual abuse and abuse in the form of neglect.



RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING PRACTICES:

Outline the processes you have in place to recruit and screen staff, volunteers, team members and other stakeholders (e.g. applications, interviews, reference checks and background checks).



USE OF IMAGES AND INFORMATION:

Outline what constitutes the appropriate use of information, photos and videos of children. The policy should include guidelines around:

- respecting the rights of children and presenting people with dignity;
- ensuring information and images are honest representations of the context and facts;
- ensuring children's private information is not made publically available;
- restrictions around posting images and information on social media; and
- obtaining written or verbal consent from a child and their parents/guardians, and avoiding publishing a story or image which puts a child at risk of stigmatisation or harm.



REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESSES:

Clearly outline how a child protection incident or concern should be reported, and the processes for how the organisation will respond. This section should provide team members and anyone covered under the policy scope with the answers to the following questions:

- What do I need to report?
- Who needs to report?
- How and who do I report to?
- What happens when I report?
- What happens if the incident is proven or suspicion is credible?
- What if I am not satisfied with the organisation's/ministry's response?



OTHER SECTIONS that are also often included in a child protection policy include:

- Education and Training
- Risk Management
- Child Participation
- Reviewing Policy



TIP BOX

Make sure you are able to provide team members and volunteers with a copy of your child protection policy in their own language. This will give you greater confidence that it has been understood and will be adhered to.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN A CODE OF CONDUCT?

A child protection code of conduct is commonly broken up into a list of 'I will' and 'I will not' actions or commitments. See below for summarised list of points often included in a child protection code of conduct.

I WILL:	I WILL NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ treat children with dignity and respect ✓ listen to children and take their concerns seriously ✓ ensure I abide by local and national laws especially in regards to child protection and child labour ✓ ensure I am not in a position where there is a risk of an allegation being made ✓ ensure that I am never alone with a child by following the 'two-adult rule' ✓ comply with communication guidelines, including guidance around the use of social media and when needed, obtaining informed consent from the child and his/her parents/guardians before photographing or videoing a child ✓ immediately report any concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with the policy ✓ respect and uphold the measures designed to create a safe and protective environment for children ✓ be sensitive to others and cease any behavior that is making someone else feel uncomfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity ✗ touch a child in a way that is unnecessary or inappropriate to the culture or circumstance ✗ hit, smack or otherwise physically assault, punish or abuse children ✗ be intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs immediately prior to, or whilst, engaging with any child ✗ sleep in the same bed or same room as a child (other than my own child or a child legally in my care) <i>* One exception may be a youth team where you have under 18yr old team members sharing accommodation.</i> ✗ show favouritism to children or give certain children preferential treatment ✗ exchange personal contact details with children ✗ use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate or sexually provocative ✗ conduct or be part of harmful traditional practices, spiritual or ritualistic abuse ✗ view or access child pornography through any source or medium ✗ volunteer or visit a residential care centre (limited long-term stakeholder exemptions may apply)



TOOLS

See **Helpful Information 2: Further Resources** (page 86).

If your organisation doesn't currently have a child protection policy or code of conduct, links to examples can be found in the toolkit, which can be used to help you develop one. If you already have a policy, this may be a great opportunity for you to review it and ensure your policy is comprehensive and up to date.



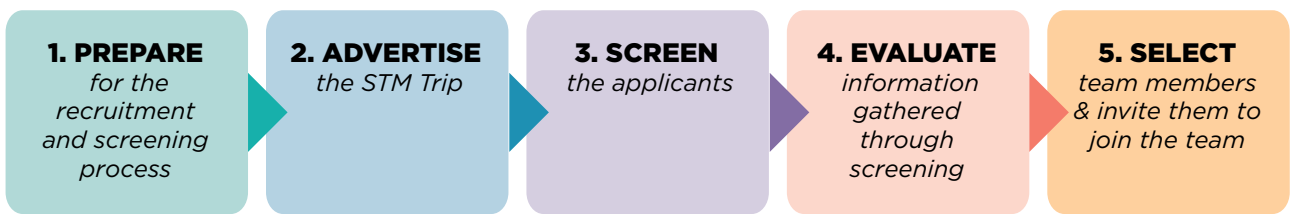
TIP: Ask “What would be ok in your own country?”

If members of the team are unsure about what is appropriate behaviour around on a STM trip, often it is helpful to ask them “What would be ok in your own country?”. In churches, where a significant proportion of teams come from, there are strict child protection policies and rules in place to protect children and young people in kids and youth programs.

Also, in most developed countries, the government’s child protection systems would not allow us to visit any kind of shelter or residential care home and most of us wouldn’t contemplate asking. It would be considered a violation of the child’s right to privacy and a risk to the children. In developing countries, children have the same rights, but often child protection laws are weak or unregulated. In the absence of strong local laws, we should apply the same standards we would expect for our own children, to children everywhere.

STEP 4: RECRUIT TEAM MEMBERS

The next step is beginning the process of recruiting and screening applicants, which in most cases is completed by the sending organisation.



1. PREPARE:

Start by planning out the recruitment process. There are a number of steps involved, so it is important to be organised. This may include putting together timelines, application packs and setting up a system to track applications and notes. Give yourself enough time to collect and review documents to ensure that every team member is properly screened. Remember to allow for the processing times for acquiring documents such as criminal background checks or working with children’s checks.



TOOLS

See **SAMPLE 1: Application Tracking Chart** (page 74)

2. ADVERTISE:

Once the preparation work has been completed, you can advertise the trip. This may include distributing application packs or hosting information sessions.



TIP: Advertise your trips as ‘child safe’

A good way to deter people with malicious intentions towards children from signing up to your team is by including your organisation’s commitment to child protection and child-safe recruitment practices in your trip advertisements. This indicates that applicants will be scrutinised and that it will be difficult for someone to exploit the opportunity for the wrong reasons.

3. SCREEN:

Selecting the right team members through good screening processes helps to ensure the team is child safe and minimises the risk of an incident. Screening also gives the team leader an opportunity to get to know the team members and can also reveal any concerns or gap areas in understanding that need to be addressed before departure.

It is vital that you ask purposeful questions during the screening process that will enable you to properly evaluate the level of risk the applicant poses and their suitability for interacting with children. For example, throughout the interview process, interviewers should be conscious of vague or unrealistic answers to questions, which may indicate an applicant is trying to hide something or has ulterior motives.



LET'S BE HONEST

Most people who exploit or abuse children seem like nice normal people and you're rarely going to be able to tell who is 'safe' and who is not by outward appearances alone. It is widely known that child predators often gain access to children by volunteering with organisations that work with children. This is why it is so important that everyone who applies to go on a STM trip, with no exceptions, goes through the same careful screening process before being invited to join the team.

CASE STUDY: THE IMPORTANCE OF SCREENING

A number of years ago a Christian mission organisation in Australia was approached by a man who wanted to be sent overseas through the organisation as a volunteer, and dedicate some of his time to assisting their overseas projects. He explained to staff that he wanted to work with children's ministries and specifically with orphanages in the Philippines and that he had previous experience with STM trips to orphanages. The organisation had a policy of not sending volunteers to work within residential care, however proceeded with the application and screening process with the intention of redirecting him to a more appropriate volunteering opportunity.

The organisation's screening process included a police check, working with children's check, reference checks and an interview. The criminal record check came back clear and the reference check from his pastor raised no concerns. It was not until the interview that staff began to uncover some concerning information. They asked him what he was planning to do in the Philippines, outside of the time he wanted to dedicate to volunteering in their project. His answers were quite vague and there were concerns around his plans to work with children. When asked more questions, he mentioned that he wanted to start a business to provide funding for an orphanage, and to financially support the work he wanted to do with children who live there. He claimed that he had an agreement in place with a foreign investor to start a coconut oil business, but had no business plan and was unable to clarify basic details. It became very apparent that he either did not have a clear purpose or he was concealing information.

Based on these red flags, staff requested a written business plan and information detailing his plans regarding working with children. When the 'information pack' arrived, it contained only vague information about his purpose and there was no proper business plan. At the back of the pack there was a section labelled, "Teaching sexuality to children". This contained numerous pages of detailed information and lesson plans on sexually related topics that he was planning to teach to children at a particular orphanage. Staff were suitably alarmed at what they saw and noted that his plans and behaviour fell within the scope of grooming behaviours listed in their child protection guidelines. He was immediately deemed unsuitable for a placement with the organisation and his application was rejected. Further reporting measures were taken, based on the organisation's child protection incident reporting and response protocols.

Reflecting on the incident, one staff member said *"Up until this point, we often thought of our screening processes as just 'hoops' to jump through, because we never imagined that anyone who contacted us wanting to work or volunteer in missions would actually pose a risk to children. This incident was really sobering for us, and highlighted how important those 'hoops' are. I have often thought about what could have happened if I hadn't followed the process, and how I would feel if something happened to a child because I took a short cut. It's a horrifying thought! Thanks to this wake up call, that certainly won't be happening on my watch."*

SCREENING PROCESS



APPLICATION FORMS

All potential team members should be required to complete an application form containing the following information:

- **personal details;**
- **motivation, expectations and goals for trip;**
- **experience working with children;**
- **emergency medical information;**
- **personal testimony and church involvement;**
- **list of skills and qualifications; and**
- **reference contact details.**



See **SAMPLE 1: Application Tracking Chart** (page 74)



RELEVANT BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background checks should be conducted on all applicants (over 18yrs old) to ensure that any person who poses a risk to children or communities on the basis of their criminal past, are not accepted onto the team.

Types of checks include:

- **Criminal Record Checks** - the name of these checks vary and may be called 'Police Clearance Certificate', 'Police Record/File/Check', 'Criminal Check' etc.
- **Working with Children/Vulnerable People Checks:** some countries also have further checks for sexual offences or suitability for working with children or other vulnerable people. These checks may be called 'Working with Children Checks', 'Sex Offender Registry Searches', 'Vulnerable Sector Check' etc.

Conduct your own research regarding what checks are available where your applicants are from, and the processes & costs involved.



See **'HELPFUL INFORMATION 1: Background Check Information'** (p 84)



INTERVIEWS

Interviewing applicants helps you assess a potential team member's motivations, expectations, skills and experiences.

- **Ideally interviews should be conducted face-to-face.** Where this is not possible, interviews can be conducted over the phone or Skype.
- **When the team will be working directly with children** ask a variety of questions to assess the applicant's motivation and suitability for working and interacting with children. Consider incorporating the use of scenarios in the interview, which may help you develop an understanding of the applicant's attitude towards and awareness of child protection and safeguarding.



See **'SAMPLE 3: Interview Questions'** (page 79)



REFERENCE CHECKS

When doing reference checks:

- **Contact at least two people** who know the applicant well enough to testify to their suitability for joining a STM trip, and their behaviour with children.
- **Consider stipulating who can and can't be listed as a reference.** For example:
 - Must include current pastor/leader and current employee
 - Must not include people related to the applicant
- **Ideally, conduct verbal reference checks** (e.g. over the phone). Where verbal reference checks are not possible, written references can be gained by asking the referee to complete a reference form you provide them with and return it directly to you.
- **Have a pre-determined list of questions prepared** so the person conducting the checks understands the questions that need to be answered, what they should be looking out for and how to ask follow up questions if something is concerning.



See **'SAMPLE 4: Reference Check'** (page 80)

4. EVALUATE:

Once you have completed the above processes, it is important that you critically analyse all the information gathered on an applicant, and determine their suitability. Below are four key considerations you can factor into your evaluations:

1. SUITABILITY TO INTERACT WITH CHILDREN

Safe zone:	Approach with caution:	Unsafe zone:
<p>The applicant demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ a commitment to child protection policies & procedures ✓ a willingness to engage in activities that promote the safety and long-term wellbeing of children ✓ an understanding of appropriate behaviour when interacting with children 	<p>The applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✋ was dismissive of the child protection policies or procedures ✋ had unrealistic expectations of the roles they will fulfill when interacting with children ✋ failed to recognise the unique vulnerabilities of children ✋ had misconceptions around residential care and stated their desire to visit or volunteer at an orphanage. 	<p>The applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ has a criminal conviction related to child abuse or there was significant evidence/suspicion of child abuse ✗ showed complete disregard for child protection policies or procedures ✗ used inappropriate language when speaking of children ✗ has unsafe or unclear boundaries with children.

Note: If concerns regarding their suitability to interact with children were raised during the screening process, or you have reason to believe that an applicant may pose a risk to children, there should be a clear response process for dealing with this situation, including guidelines regarding whether it is your responsibility to report any serious concerns back to the applicant's church's leaders. You may need to refer to your own, or the relevant church's child protection policy, for guidance.

2. QUALIFICATIONS

Safe zone:	Approach with caution:	Unsafe zone:
<p>The applicant demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ evidence of the necessary skills and qualifications to undertake their assigned role ✓ an understanding of the language and cultural limitations in using these skills 	<p>The applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✋ expressed a desire to engage in roles they have skills or qualifications in, but are not appropriate for the trip 	<p>The applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ an expectation to engage in roles they are not skilled or qualified for

3. MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Safe zone:	Approach with caution:	Unsafe zone:
<p>The applicant demonstrated a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ strong desire to learn ✓ realistic level of expectations regarding the roles and activities they will engage in ✓ understanding of the limitations of a short-term trip 	<p>The applicant demonstrated a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✋ desire to do lots of activities and an expectation to make a large impact ✋ pre-planned agenda of what they want to do on the trip ✋ demonstrated discriminatory attitudes (e.g. on the basis of cultural, religious or economic differences) 	<p>The applicant has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ an exaggerated desire to 'rescue' children ✗ unrealistic expectation that they will assume the roles of local caregivers/ staff ✗ expectations that they will be actively engaged in legal matters or child rescues

4. DEMONSTRATION OF RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Safe zone:	Approach with caution:	Unsafe zone:
<p>The applicant demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ a high level of respect for authority figures and willingness to follow their instructions ✓ an ability to understand and respect other people's opinions, beliefs and culture ✓ an ability to work as part of a team 	<p>The applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✋ displayed difficulties with submitting to authority figures or following instructions ✋ had a low level of understanding or respect for other people's opinions, beliefs and cultures ✋ submitted forms late or completed them poorly 	<p>The applicant demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ a complete disregard for authority figures ✗ racist or bigoted attitudes and opinions

5. SELECT:

After evaluating the information collected during screening, your organisation can now select team members who have the right motivations and do not pose a known risk to children. You can now inform the successful applicants that they have been selected to be a part of the team.



LET'S BE HONEST

Conducting thorough screening of applicants takes time and adds to our workloads. However, because we have a Biblical responsibility to protect and safeguard children, time constraints are a problem to solve – not a legitimate reason to skip this important step! If delegating the trip administration to a capable and authorised person is not a viable solution, then you may need to consider whether, at this point in time, your organisation has sufficient bandwidth to run a STM program.

STAGE 2: TRAINING & PREPARING

Once the team members have been selected, the process of training and preparing the team members for the trip can begin. Apart from generally equipping team members, pre-trip training is also a good opportunity to address any concerns, misconceptions or gaps in understanding that were revealed during the screening process.

SUGGESTIONS OF WHAT TO DO DURING PRE-TRIP TRAINING SESSIONS



STEP 1: UNPACK ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN

Start orientation training by discussing:

- ✓ **the Biblical basis** for the team's engagement with children and the key principles outlined in Section 1 of this manual. This will establish a strong Biblical framework for everything else that will be covered in pre-trip training;
- ✓ **visiting or volunteering in orphanages** - it's common for STM teams to be invited to visit orphanages when they are overseas, even when it wasn't on the original itinerary. Therefore, it is important to include information about the harm this can cause children in your pre-trip training so that team members will understand why, as a child-safe team, you will respectfully decline any such invitations; and
- ✓ **other topics** - you can also provide the team with accurate and non-sensationalised information about any other issues they will be exposed to during trip (e.g. trafficking, HIV/AIDS, causes of poverty).



TOOLS

See '**HANDOUT 1: Becoming a Child-Safe STM Team**' (page 70)



STEP 2: SET TRIP EXPECTATIONS

Team members will no doubt have various motivations and expectations for the trip. Discussing expectations in the pre-trip training will provide clarity for team members and minimise any disappointment associated with unmet expectations. Discuss the:

- ✓ **trip's purpose and activities;**
- ✓ **limitations of the trip due to short-period of time; and**
- ✓ **importance of returning from the trip and stewarding the experience well** (e.g. long-term action, prayer, advocacy, missions involvement and financial support).



TIP:

Consider inviting someone from a previous trip to come and share their open and honest reflections with the team during a training session. This could be a constructive and helpful way of ensuring team members have realistic expectations for the upcoming trip.



STEP 3: CONDUCT CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

In cross cultural settings, everything can be foreign to team members and they can become unsure of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. This may result in them acting in ways that are inappropriate or doing things that they might not do in their own country. That's why it's so important to give team members clear information and set clear boundaries around their interaction with children before the trip. Clear guidelines can also make team members feel more confident, as they understand what to do and not to do whilst on the trip. During training:

- ✓ **Distribute and discuss the child protection policy and code of conduct** and ask all the team members to read, sign and agree to them. When the receiving and the sending organisation both have their own child protection policies, you will need to determine if the team members are required to sign one, or both, policies. As the team will be working in the receiving organisation's context, in most cases they will need to sign the receiving organisation's policy, at a minimum. If the standards vary between policies, the policy with the highest standards should be upheld.
- ✓ **Select Child Protection Officer (CPO).** It's a good idea to select one team member to be responsible for ensuring that the CPP is followed, and to act as a point person for any concerns or incidents that need to be reported.
- ✓ **Explain how to report child protection suspicions, beliefs or incidents** and your organisation's reporting and investigation procedures. It is also important that team members understand what to do regarding a child protection concern that is unrelated to the partner organisation or a team member's actions (e.g. if they are concerned about the safety of a child they see in the community). While team members may feel like they should intervene, they often lack the local knowledge, cultural understanding or language skills to be able to do so appropriately, and may inadvertently cause more harm than good. The best way that teams can respond is to contact and inform the local authorities or local child protection organisations (e.g. Childline) that are set up to handle reports, initiate action and refer children to long-term support where necessary. It's a good idea for the team's CPO to have these contact details available.
- ✓ **Discuss guidelines regarding taking and using photos, videos and stories of children.** Photos and stories can be positive tools for advocacy. However, depending on their content, can also reinforce stigma, reduce someone down to a label/stereotype (e.g. widow, victim, aids orphan) or inflict a "second victimisation" on an individual; particularly when the focus is on a traumatic experience or a highly sensitive issue. Therefore, we must ensure that the best interest of an individual or child is always put above the desire to evoke a strong emotional response by sharing a powerful story or image.

Pre-trip training should therefore include discussions on the following key considerations:

- **Portrayal of Local People** – Local people, particularly children, need to be portrayed respectfully and with dignity. Teams should avoid the use of stereotypes and labels and be conscious of stigmatisation.
- **Truthfulness of Material** – Teams need to ensure information and images are honest representations, and should avoid exaggerating facts, sensationalising issues, jumping to conclusions or oversimplifying issues.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality** – Teams should uphold an individual's right to privacy and avoid sharing personal, sensitive or identifying information without the proper consent or where it is not appropriate.
- **Consent for Stories and Images** – Teams need to obtain written or verbal consent from a child and their parent/guardian before taking or sharing a photo or story. Gaining consent can be difficult, especially when there are language barriers. Sometimes **verbal consent** may simply involve pointing at the camera and allowing a child or parent to nod or shake their head or turn away. When photos and information will be shared publicly, you may need to organise **written permission**, especially when:

- photographing a child in the context of culturally/ politically sensitive or high-stigma issues;
- the photo or story clearly identifies and provides substantial information about a child; and/or
- taking images or film of individuals in clinical or private settings.

• **Internet and Social Media** – Teams need to be cautious when publishing or posting online, including on social media. It is very difficult to erase online information, and individuals may not want to be continually reminded of a traumatic experience or identified on the basis of sensitive information posted about them during their childhood.



TOOLS

For more information see **HELPFUL INFORMATION 2: Further Resources** (page 89) under Chalmers Center for a sample handout for STM teams regarding posting on social media.



Give the team an opportunity to practically apply their child protection knowledge.

Discuss potential scenarios and get the group to determine the appropriate course of action. The scenarios should:

- reflect the place the team are going and the types of situations they may encounter;
- at a minimum address the use of social media and reporting child protection concerns; and
- vary in their degree of complexity.

Leave plenty of time for discussion and guide the group to refer back to the child protection policies and code of conduct to help them reach a conclusion. This will help familiarise teams with the policy and improve their ability to adhere to it during the STM trip.



TIP:

Consider **designating a team member as the only photographer** when in communities or with children. This limits the number of cameras being used, helps the team be less intrusive and allows the team to interact meaningfully with the community without the distraction of everyone trying to capture it.



TOOLS

See **HELPFUL INFORMATION 2: Further Resources** (page 86)

Keeping Children Safe: A Toolkit for Child Protection (page 86)

This helpful toolkit provides standards and exercises to assist organisations develop a sound basis for the development of effective measures to prevent and respond to child abuse: from awareness raising strategies to safeguarding measures.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TOOLKIT: HOW TO CREATE A CHILD-SAFE ORGANIZATION (page 86)

This toolkit has been produced by ChildHope to introduce organisations to child protection and to equip them to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate their own child protection policies and procedures.



LET'S BE HONEST

We would likely find it odd and be alarmed if a team of 10 strangers arrived in our neighbourhood, church or school and began taking photos of children and posting these photos on social media, without asking parents for permission. It can feel just as odd and alarming to parents and community leaders overseas. Therefore, we need to help team members consider their actions from the point of view of the community members and children's parents. This is one of the situations where it can be helpful to ask team members, **“What would be ok in your own country?”**

STAGE 3: THE MISSIONS TRIP

STEP 1: CONDUCT FIELD ORIENTATION & DEBRIEF

In most cases the sending organisation will provide pre-trip training and post-trip debriefing. It may be helpful however for the receiving organisation to provide the team with a short field orientation, and debrief, during the trip itself. In the case where the pre- and post-trip steps will not be completed by a sending organisation, then the receiving organisation will need to take on the orientation and debriefing responsibilities and include it in the itinerary.

DAY 1: FIELD ORIENTATION BY RECEIVING ORGANISATION	FINAL DAY: FIELD DEBRIEF BY RECEIVING ORGANISATION
<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ general introduction to the organisation, staff and programs✓ logistical considerations for the trip✓ a discussion on child safeguarding covering the main aspects of your child protection policy and social media guidelines✓ time to allow the team to ask questions	<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ time to reflect on the trip experiences and lessons learnt✓ a discussion on how the team can stay connected to and up-to-date with the organisation post departure✓ thank yous and farewells

STEP 2: ENSURE ADEQUATE SUPERVISION OF TEAM

During the trip it is important that the receiving organisation makes sure there is always a staff member, or representative with the team, when they are working in or interacting with the community or at project sites. If the team will have direct contact with children, it is important to ensure you have sufficient staff to uphold the two adult rule at all times and that team members are not left unsupervised with children.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The receiving organisation staff member/representative:

- ✓ can answer any of the team's questions regarding what is appropriate behaviour;
- ✓ is another person to help keep everyone accountable, which limits the risk of a child protection incident occurring; and
- ✓ can prevent the team from doing something that is ill-advised, inappropriate or for which they are inadequately prepared or skilled.

STEP 3: PROVIDE GOOD TEAM LEADERSHIP

During the trip it is important that the team leader:

- ✓ understands their responsibilities and is very familiar with the child protection policy and code of conduct;
- ✓ is well equipped to respond to child protection incidents or other issues;
- ✓ maintains good communication and collaboration throughout the trip with the receiving organisation; and
- ✓ can help the team members process, reflect and form valid conclusions with respect to what they are experiencing and learning throughout the trip.

STAGE 4: POST TRIP ACTIONS & ADVOCACY

“Our best ambassadors have not been the pastors of churches, but the members of STM teams. It is not about what the teams do in Vietnam, but about what they do when they return home. They provide and propel the much needed prayer, awareness, support, advocacy and funds upon their return to keep this program alive and keep families from being separated”.

- Paul Hilton, Country Coordinator, AOG World Relief Vietnam

Post-trip activities, including debriefing and mobilising team members for ongoing action, are critical aspects of STM programs that are often overlooked or underutilised. Debriefing sessions, when done effectively, can encourage team members to process what they have learnt and determine how they can apply that learning to ongoing action and advocacy, which will continue to benefit the communities they visited well after the trip is over.

POST-TRIP ACTIONS



STEP 1: DEBRIEF THE TEAM



Reflect on the lessons learnt throughout the trip

You may want to start by asking some basic questions to stimulate reflection and encourage the team members to process the experience and share any personal stories. For example, ask the following kind of questions:

- What was your understanding of _____ before the trip?
- What things did you learn through the trip?
- What is your understanding of _____ after the trip?
- How has your perspective changed?
- How will that affect how you respond moving forward?



Allow time for team members to process any difficult or challenging experiences

Some team members can find aspects of the STM trip quite confronting and struggle to reconcile the situation of children and families overseas (extreme poverty or child vulnerability) with their own lives and cultures, upon their return. It is a good idea to create space for returning team members to discuss this with guidance from the team leader.



Provide feedback to the sending/receiving organisation

It may also be really helpful to share with the partner organisation the trip highlights, key lessons learnt and discuss suggestions to make the next trip more effective.



STEP 2: ENCOURAGE ONGOING ACTION AND ADVOCACY



Facilitate discussion on how the team members will steward the STM trip experience well

For example, team members could commit to:

- raising awareness and advocating on behalf of children by sharing their knowledge within their networks
- joining an advocacy group
- being responsible informed donors
- becoming long-term prayer partners of a credible ministry or organisation
- preparing to become effective long-term missionaries or field workers
- positive lifestyle change, and/or get involved in activities in their local communities
- sharing their learning through blog articles, writing to their local paper and conducting talks at local churches





LET'S BE HONEST

Many of us state that the purpose of STM trips is to increase the number of people in our churches who are motivated, long-term supporters of our missions programs. But, does this really happen? Without intentionally tracking and evaluating the impact of our STM programs over a period of time, we really can't be sure. Therefore, it's important to regularly evaluate the program and make changes if the program is not achieving its stated goals (e.g. through more selective recruitment and better training) or re-evaluate the program's purpose altogether.

CONCLUSION

'Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves' Matt 10:16 (NKJV). These instructions, given to the disciples as they prepared to go into all the world, are as relevant to those of us who engage in contemporary missions as they were to the aforementioned disciples.

Jesus is instructing us to be wise, strategic, and thoughtful in our engagement in the Great Commission. He knew that it would take wisdom to effectively navigate the often complex issues we interact with in the course of STM trips and bear fruit. He knew it would take wisdom to know how to show love and how to be light in cultural contexts vastly different to our own. Jesus also knew that it takes more than good intentions to avoid doing harm. It takes wisdom.

'By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might, for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.' Proverbs 24:3-7 (ESV)

An effective and child-safe STM program is one built by wisdom. Whilst this can amount to considerable effort, the peace of mind that comes from knowing that we have done our utmost to uphold children's best interests, reflect God's heart for them and contribute to positive outcomes for children, families and whole communities, makes it well worth the effort. The good news is that the hard work is in establishing a solid foundation, and once you have embedded the principles and child-safe framework in your STM program and procedures, outworking it will become second nature to you and your partners.

We hope the information contained in this manual and toolkit has equipped you to strengthen your foundations and enrich the wonderful work you are doing through your short-term missions program.

***'You are the light of the world.
A city set on a hill cannot be hid'***

Matt 5:14 (ASV)



TOOLKIT

FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN
IN SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS TOOLKIT?



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CHECKLIST FOR A SENDING ORGANISATION/TRIP COORDINATOR

The following checklists provide a summary of the key steps outlined in the previous sections of the manual for a sending organisation or trip coordinator to consider. You can use these checklists to keep track of the steps and stages involved in making your STM trip child safe. Refer back to the relevant sections for more information at any stage.

STAGE 1: PLANNING & RECRUITING

STEP 1: FORM STRONG & EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- Complete a partner due diligence check on each of your existing or prospective partners



See 'Checklist 3: Partnership Due Diligence Check' (page 64)

- Conduct preliminary discussions with the receiving organisation/s

- ✓ Agree on the approach and purpose of the STM program.
- ✓ Explain your commitment to being child safe.
- ✓ Discuss expectations, roles and responsibilities, and potential trip activities.
- ✓ Send key organisational documents, such as child protection policies and codes of conduct.

STEP 2: SELECT APPROPRIATE TRIP ACTIVITIES

- Confirm the purpose of the trip with the receiving organisation/s

- ✓ Examples include: learning and cultural immersion, building capacity of receiving organisation/s, assisting in a family preservation or strengthening program, or utilizing specialised skills.

- Confirm the trip activities with the receiving organisation/s

- ✓ Remember that activities should:
 - be child safe,
 - support and strengthen local capacities,
 - enhance long term outcomes for children, and
 - help team members learn so they can become child and family advocates.

> Refer back to 'Section 1: Think it Through' (page 10)
> See 'Avoiding Harm Self-Check' (page 17)

STEP 3: HAVE A CLEAR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & CODE OF CONDUCT

- Develop or review your child protection policy and code of conduct as a sending organisation
- Review the child protection policy and code of conduct of the receiving organisation/s
- Decide which child protection policy (or policies) needs to be used

> Refer back to 'Section 2: Apply'







See 'Helpful Information 2: Further Resources' (page 86) for a link to a sample child protection policy and code of conduct

- ✓ You should only send teams to receiving organisations that have an adequate child protection policy and code of conduct. In some instances you may be able to help your partner develop these.
- ✓ This might be both the sending and receiving organisation's policies, or just the receiving organisation's CPP.



STEP 4: RECRUIT TEAM MEMBERS

<p>PREPARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan the trip timeline <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare application packs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take into consideration application deadlines, trip dates, orientation and training sessions, debriefing sessions, and payment schedules.
<p>ADVERTISE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advertise the trip <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute application packs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Don't forget to advertise your trip as child safe! ✓ Remember to include application forms and relevant background check forms. ✓ Set up a system to track applications as they are returned. <p> See 'Sample 1: Application Tracking Chart' (page 80) See 'Sample 2: Application Form' (page 75)</p>
<p>SCREEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Collect applications <input type="checkbox"/> Collect background checks <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct interviews <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct reference checks <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Check that everything has been filled out, submitted on time and that all required documents are attached. ✓ Ensure background checks are recent or valid. <p> See 'Helpful Information 1: Background Check Information' (page 84)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In interviews and reference checks, try to gather an understanding of the applicant's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivations and expectations • skills, qualifications and experience • behaviour with children, and • overall character and suitability for the trip. <p> See 'Sample 3: Interview Questions' (page 79) See 'Sample 4: Reference Check' (page 80)</p>
<p>EVALUATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate applicants 	<p>> Refer back to 'Section 2: Apply' (page 37)</p> <p> See 'Sample 5: Applicant Review' (page 82)</p>
<p>SELECT</p> <p>Select final team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inform team members.

STAGE 2: TRAINING & PREPARING

STEP 1: UNPACK ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN

- Explore ethical engagement with children in the context of STM trips

- ✓ Start with the Biblical basis for engaging with children in safe and protective ways.

- ✓ Cover the guiding principles of child-safe STM programs.



> Refer back to 'Section 1: Think it Through' (page 10)
See 'Handout 1: Becoming a Child-Safe STM Team' (page 70)

- Discuss visiting or volunteering in orphanages (residential care)

- ✓ Misconceptions around orphanages.

- ✓ The harm of residential care and visiting children in residential care.

- ✓ Positive alternatives to visiting and volunteering in orphanages.

- Educate the team on the local context and relevant issues

- ✓ Information on the country, region and local community.

- ✓ Include relevant religious and political information.

- ✓ Consider key issues such as poverty, human trafficking and child exploitation.

STEP 2: SET TRIP EXPECTATIONS

- Set realistic expectations of the trip

- ✓ Trip purpose and approved activities.

- ✓ The value of learning, listening, encouraging and building relationships.

- ✓ Limitations of a STM trip.

- ✓ Being prepared to steward the experience well once you return.

STEP 3: CONDUCT CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

- Conduct training on the child protection policy and code of conduct

- ✓ Make sure the team reads, understands and signs the relevant organisation's child protection policy and code of conduct.

- ✓ Discuss appropriate boundaries for interacting with children.

- ✓ Make sure everyone understands incident reporting.

- ✓ Designate a child protection officer for the trip.

> Refer back to 'Section 2: Apply' (page 37)

- Taking photographs/videos of children

- ✓ Respecting the rights of children and portraying people with dignity.

- ✓ Publishing images and information on social media.

- ✓ Obtaining consent for photos/videos.

- ✓ Understanding re-victimisation and stigma.



STAGE 3: MISSION TRIP

STEP 1: FIELD ORIENTATION & DEBRIEF

- Ensure the first day orientation and last day debrief is conducted

- ✓ Generally, this should be conducted by the receiving organisation. If this is not the case, then this will need to be conducted by the team leader.

STEP 2: ADEQUATE SUPERVISION OF TEAM

- Ensure adequate supervision is provided by the receiving organisation

- ✓ Ensure the team members respect the supervisor and follow their instructions throughout the trip.

STEP 3: PROVIDE GOOD TEAM LEADERSHIP

- Understand your responsibilities as the team leader

- ✓ Lead and manage the team.
- ✓ Ensure the team is acting in line with child protection policy and code of conduct.

- Be equipped to report child protection incidents or concerns

- ✓ Be familiar with the child protection policy and code of conduct.
Have contact details of relevant authorities on hand; police, child protection agencies, Childline, etc.

STAGE 4: POST TRIP ACTIONS & ADVOCACY

STEP 1: DEBRIEF THE TEAM

- General debriefing and feedback

- ✓ Help team members reflect on lessons learned.
- ✓ Assist team members to process any difficult or challenging reflections.
- ✓ Provide feedback to the receiving organisation/s.

STEP 2: ENCOURAGE ONGOING ACTION & ADVOCACY

- Stewarding the experience well

- ✓ Make sure you encourage the team to utilise all they have learnt to advocate for the issues they have been exposed to by:
 - sharing the experience and lessons learnt with others,
 - forming an advocacy group with fellow team members,
 - being more responsible donors,
 - advocating for child safe short-term missions,
 - positive lifestyle change,
 - becoming a prayer partner, and
 - positive action in their own community.



See 'Helpful Information 2: Further Resources' (page 86)





CHECKLIST FOR A RECEIVING ORGANISATION/HOST

The following checklists provide a summary of the key steps outlined in the previous sections of the manual for a receiving organisation or host to consider. You can use these checklists to keep track of the steps and stages involved in making sure you host child-safe STM trips. Refer back to the relevant sections for more information at any stage.

STAGE 1: PLANNING & RECRUITING

STEP 1: FORM STRONG & EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Have preliminary discussions with the receiving organisation

- ✓ Agree on the approach and purpose of the STM program.
- ✓ Explain your commitment to being child safe.
- ✓ Discuss expectations, roles and responsibilities, and potential trip activities.
- ✓ Send key organisational documents, such as child protection policies and codes of conduct.

STEP 2: SELECT APPROPRIATE TRIP ACTIVITIES

Confirm the purpose of the trip with sending organisation (or with the individual team members in the absence of a sending organisation)

- ✓ Examples include: learning and cultural immersion, building capacity of receiving organisation, assisting in a family preservation or strengthening program or utilizing specialised skills.

Confirm the trip activities

- ✓ Remember that activities should:
 - be child safe,
 - support and strengthen local capacities,
 - enhance long term outcomes for children, and
 - help team members learn so they can become child and family advocates.
- > Refer back to 'Section 1: Think it through' (page 10)
- > See 'Avoiding Harm Self-Check' (page 17)

Finalise itinerary and send to sending organisation (or team members)


- Take into consideration:
- times throughout the trip where the team can discuss what they are learning and experiencing, and
 - time for team members to rest and reflect on the experience.

STEP 3: HAVE A CLEAR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & CODE OF CONDUCT

Develop or review your child protection policy and code of conduct

- ✓ Make sure it covers STM teams and volunteers.
- > Refer back to 'Section 2: Apply' (page 37)

Clarify what child protection policy and code of conduct the sending organisation will be using

-  See 'Helpful Information 2: Further Resources' (page 86) for a link to a sample child protection policy and code of conduct
- ✓ They may want to use your child protection policy and code of conduct only, or they may use their policy and your policy.



STEP 4: RECRUIT TEAM MEMBERS

- Confirm the sending organisation has adequate recruitment and screening processes in place

- ✓ This should include application forms, background checks and reference checks.

STAGE 2: TRAINING & PREPARING

STEP 1: UNPACK ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN

- Provide sending organisation with relevant information on your context and programs

- ✓ Information on your country, region and local community.
- ✓ Religious and political information.
- ✓ Key issues such as poverty, human trafficking and child exploitation relevant to your context.
- ✓ Do's and don'ts in your particular culture.

STEP 2: SET TRIP EXPECTATIONS

- Provide the sending organisation with information on the itinerary, details of activities and expectations of team members

- ✓ This will assist the team coordinator to set up healthy and realistic expectations for the team.

STEP 3: CONDUCT CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

- Provide the sending organisation copies of your child protection policy and code of conduct

- ✓ Make sure the team has read, understood and signed your child protection policy and code of conduct (either before or upon arrival).

STAGE 3: THE MISSION TRIP

STEP 1: CONDUCT FIELD ORIENTATION & DEBRIEF

- First day orientation

- ✓ Provide a general introduction to the organisation, staff and programs.
- ✓ Sign child protection policy and code of conduct if not already done by the sending organisation.
- ✓ Reinforce and build upon the ideas that the sending team has already taught the team, including revising key child safeguarding principles and communications guidelines.

- Last day debrief

- ✓ Reflect on the trip and lessons learnt.
- ✓ Consider ways for the team to keep supporting the organisation and stay up-to-date with their ministry.
- ✓ Say farewells.



STEP 2: ENSURE ADEQUATE SUPERVISION OF TEAM

Provide supervision to the team

- ✓ Ensure the team is acting in line with your child protection policy and code of conduct.
- ✓ Provide particular attention and guidance when interacting with children.
- ✓ Ensure the team members know who the supervisor/representative is, and can come to them with questions throughout the trip.

STEP 3: PROVIDE GOOD TEAM LEADERSHIP

Work with the sending organisation's team leader

- ✓ Ensure the team leader is aware of their responsibilities and adequately manages the team.
- ✓ Assist them to report any child protection concerns.

STAGE 4: POST TRIP ACTIONS & ADVOCACY

STEP 1: DEBRIEF THE TEAM

Provide the sending organisation with feedback on the team

- ✓ Consider the preparedness of the team.
- ✓ Discuss their willingness to learn and follow instructions.
- ✓ Talk about any child protection concerns or inappropriate behaviour that may have taken place.

STEP 2: ENCOURAGE ONGOING ACTION & ADVOCACY

Provide ongoing updates to the sending organisation

- ✓ Send progress or donor reports/promotional material/newsletters.
- ✓ Provide prayer requests.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for further engagement.





PARTNERSHIP DUE DILIGENCE CHECK

As a donor, it is important to know that the organisation you are supporting is operating legally and following good practice. The questions below are a starting point to carrying out your own due diligence check on a partner organisation.

OPERATING LEGALLY	WAYS TO VERIFY
<p>1. Is the organisation a legally registered entity?</p>	<p>1. Registration documents with overarching government body, e.g. Ministry Interior, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Religion etc.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>If yes, what type of organisation? If no, what reason was given?</p>	
<p>2. Does the organisation have an up-to-date Memorandum Of Understanding with the appropriate government ministry that approves the specific types of activities they are doing?</p>	<p>2. Registration with Ministry of Education, or Child Welfare Department Department that has approved their activities.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>If yes, what type of agreement? If no, what reason was given?</p>	
<p>3. Does the organisation have a stated purpose for existence or set of objectives?</p>	<p>3. Governing instrument, e.g. Constitution.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Describe:</p>	
<p>4. Is the organisation on the terrorist listings, or linked to any individuals or organisations that are?</p>	<p>4. Research what terrorist listing tools are available in your own country. For example, in Australia see: http://www.dfat.gov.au/issues/terrorism.html http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Describe:</p>	

COMPATIBILITY	WAYS TO VERIFY
<p>5. Is the organisation able to clearly articulate the vision, mission and purpose of individual projects?</p>	<p>✓ When asked about the organisation's vision and mission, and a project's purpose and goal, different staff give consistent answers.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>6. Does the organisation's vision, mission, values and culture align with yours, and are these values evident in their practice?</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>What were the stated values and culture? How is this evidenced in their practice?</p>	
TECHNICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY	WAYS TO VERIFY
<p>7. Can the organisation clearly identify who their target community or target group are?</p>	<p>✓ Discussions with relevant staff reveal a good understanding of the community that is not only based on assumptions or subjective opinions but primary and secondary research as well as experience.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>8. Does the organisation demonstrate a sound understanding of the culture and target community?</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>9. Has the organisation done comprehensive research on the issues that they are engaging with?</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	

10. Is the organisation networked with other organisations that are working in this area (either geographical or issue-based)?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussions with relevant staff reveal that they are aware of what other organisations are doing in the community, or target group, and how their work fits into this bigger picture.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
11. Has the organisation's approach been developed in line with accepted good practice and local and international law?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussions with staff confirms that their approach meets accepted good practice in the sector which you've researched independently.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
12. Does the organisation have the relevant technical expertise for the type and scope of work they're doing?		
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
13. Does the organisation invest into staff development and training?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussions reveal that learning and training opportunities have been provided to staff, and that a plan is in place to intentionally build staff capacity.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
14. Was the local community meaningfully involved in determining the activities of the project?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussions about how the project was conceived will reveal whether or not the community had a meaningful voice in their design.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		

15. Is the local community involved in implementing and evaluating the project?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussions about how the activities are run day to day will reveal the communities' ongoing involvement. It is important to remember that whilst paid staff of the project may come from the community, it is not satisfactory if they are the only members of the community involved in designing or implementing the project.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
16. Can the organisation describe how it monitors and evaluates its projects?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussions reveal that they have a formal process for monitoring their work and the staff can provide previous monitoring and evaluation reports for you to look at the quality of the information they are collecting.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
17. Does the organisation have a functioning governing body in place?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussions reveal that the management and governing body is accountable and active.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
RISK MANAGEMENT		WAYS TO VERIFY
18. Does the organisation have practices in place that mitigate fraud risk such as banking of gifts and grants, multiple signatories on a bank account that is in the name of the organisation, documentation to track financial transactions and supporting documentation collected and retained?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff are able to describe processes during discussions.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
19. Does the organisation have a process in place to monitor expenditure against a plan or budget?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial reports
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
20. Does the organisation have appropriate screening and recruitment practices?		
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		

REPUTATION	WAYS TO VERIFY
<p>21. Do people in the community speak well of the organisation?</p>	<p>✓ Discussions with the local community and the broader civil society community</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>22. Does the organisation have a positive working relationship with the appropriate government authority/ies?</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>23. Does the organisation collaborate with other people who work in this area of development?</p>	<p>✓ Discuss this with the organisation.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>24. Do other well-respected organisations that work in this area of development view their approach, work and staff positively?</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>25. Is the organisation currently involved in any litigation or disputes?</p>	<p>✓ Discuss this with the organisation.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>26. Has the organisation received any negative media attention or public accusations against the organisation or its leadership?</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	

CHILD PROTECTION		WAYS TO VERIFY
27. Does the organisation have a child protection policy and code of conduct in place?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sight the Child Protection Policy. ✓ Staff can articulate their Child Protection practices and why they are important (evidence whether it is just a piece of paper or if it is actively applied). ✓ Staff can articulate what they must do in the case that they have a Child Protection concern.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
28. Does the organisation run residential care?		
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		
29. Does the organisation facilitate teams or tourism visiting and working in residential care?		
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Comments:		



BECOMING A CHILD-SAFE SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TEAM

The value God places on children is clear and woven throughout the whole Bible. Children, like all humanity, are created in the image of God and have inalienable worth and dignity. As followers and imitators of Christ, we have a mandate to protect and uphold the rights of children in all settings – including our short-term missions (STM) trips.

Most STM teams will interact with children at some stage during their trip, whether it is in a school, day care centre or in the local community. Although our intention is to help these children, good intentions only translate into good outcomes for children when we are deliberate about thinking through the consequences of our actions – both positive and negative, and commit to being a **child-safe team**.

CHILD-SAFE MISSION TEAM: What does it mean? Being a child-safe team member is a commitment to:

1. Put children's wellbeing first (above the dreams and desires of the team)

This means our actions and activities should be child-centric (focused on children's best interests), rather than team-centric (focused on fulfilling team members' desires for certain experiences).

- ✓ Be willing to work behind to scenes rather than seeking direct contact with children where it is not appropriate.
- ✗ Replace children's long-term caregivers and support networks for the duration of the trip.

2. DO NO HARM

You can avoid doing unintentional harm by: acknowledging that issues are complex and cannot be solved by a STM team, seeking to learn rather than defaulting to assumptions about what children need, upholding clear boundaries when interacting with children, and thinking about the long-term impact of your actions on children.

- ✓ Go on a STM trip with a desire to learn.
- ✗ Do not assume you have all the answers, make decision for children, determine their needs or develop new programs and interventions for them.

3. Use the skills you have to benefit children (but not the skills you don't)

Only engage in activities that you have the relevant qualifications, skills and experience for. Always ask yourself whether it would be appropriate for you to conduct that activity in your own country – if not it is unlikely to be appropriate overseas.

- ✓ Help out with basic administration, IT or maintenance tasks for organisations that work with children.
- ✗ Counsel traumatised children.



4. Enhance children's long-term outcomes

Rather than trying to 'care' for children yourself on a STM trip, use your time to focus on supporting and strengthening the people that can provide the children with stable long-term care – their families, primary caregivers and communities.

- ✓ Volunteer in a family strengthening program, such as helping families set up vegetable gardens.
- ✗ Volunteer in an orphanage.

5. Support and strengthen the capacity of local organisations and children's workers

Rather than replacing the roles of local staff (which can be harmful to children and undermining for local workers), focus on building the capacity of local staff, which will be more beneficial to children in the long-run.

- ✓ Teach children's workers new games and activities they can run in their children's program.
- ✗ Take over the teacher's role.

6. Advocate for children and their families

Learn from your STM experience so when you return home you can be a more informed donor, a better prayer-partner and an advocate for the issues facing children and families.

- ✓ Continue to speak up for children and the organisations working with them upon your return home.
- ✗ Return to normality and do nothing more with the experience or knowledge gained.

7. Abide by child protection policies and procedures at all times

These are in place to keep children safe and minimise the risk of harm – following them demonstrates you value children and are committed to keeping them safe.

- ✓ Only interact with children when there is at least one other adult present.
- ✗ Spend time alone with a child.

8. Report all concerns about children's safety to the appropriate people or authorities

When faced with a concern for a child's safety you may want to intervene and help the child yourself. However, without the local knowledge and understanding you may respond inappropriately and cause more harm than good. Always report to the people that are set up to deal with these concerns.

- ✓ Report the incident to the local child protection agency.
- ✗ Intervene in the situation and try to fix the issue yourself.





HOW VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS CAN BEST SUPPORT VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The plight of vulnerable children in the developing world is challenging and moving and stirs many good-hearted people to seek opportunities to volunteer within programs that assist children such as orphanages and shelters. Without careful consideration and awareness of the broader issues, our good intentions could contribute to the exploitation and vulnerability of the children we seek to help. Therefore before you decide to visit or volunteer in an orphanage we suggest you consider the following questions:

1. HOW CAN VISITING AN ORPHANAGE HARM THE CHILDREN?

It is critical that young children form a strong attachment with a primary caregiver for their cognitive, social and emotional development. Children in orphanages have been separated from their parents and often experience attachment disorders, which cause them to develop unnaturally close bonds with people they have just met. When volunteers take the role of caregivers in an orphanage the children quickly form these bonds. Each time a volunteer leaves, this bond is broken and the child once again experiences rejection. This is extremely detrimental to children and therefore only long-term staff should assume caregiver roles for children in orphanages.

2. HOW CAN VOLUNTEERING AT ORPHANAGES FUEL AN EXPLOITIVE SYSTEM?

Many orphanages rely on donations from visitors and volunteers. They often keep the children undernourished and in poor conditions to illicit donations from tourists who feel sorry for the children. There are cases of orphanages recruiting and trafficking children to fill their orphanages for fundraising purposes. This is a system that exploits children and is unfortunately perpetuated by volunteers who are genuinely trying to help.

3. WHO IS VOLUNTEERING?

When orphanages open their doors to well meaning volunteers, they also make a way for predators to gain access to the children. Predators are known for seeking opportunities to volunteer and work within orphanages to access children. Whilst good screening can reduce the risk, it is not always possible to identify a child abuser and therefore volunteering does expose children to risk.

4. DO I HAVE THE SKILLS AND TRAINING TO ASSIST TRAUMATISED CHILDREN?

Children in residential care have undergone multiple traumas, including being separated from their families. They need the assistance of trained, qualified and committed staff who are equipped to deal with their special needs. Most volunteers do not come with these skills or the local language to use these skills. They can therefore inadvertently compound the children's trauma out of a lack of awareness of how to appropriately deal with their behaviour.

5. WHAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE IN MY OWN HOME OR COUNTRY?

In most of our own countries our government's child protection systems would not allow us to visit any kind of shelter or residential care home and most of us wouldn't consider asking. It would be considered a violation of the child's right to privacy and a risk to the children. In developing countries, children have the same rights but often child protection laws are weak or unregulated exposing children to risk. In the absence of strong local laws we should apply the same standards we would expect for our own children to children everywhere.



ETHICAL ALTERNATIVES- SUPPORT FAMILIES, STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES.

- 1. Volunteer in a program that seeks to preserve families and prevent family separation.** Volunteers could work with whole families or parents to strengthen their capacity to look after their own children.
- 2. Volunteer within family reunification programs.** Help a family prepare for their child's return by helping them renovate their house, get access to a water source or set up a small business or a veggie patch.
- 3. Volunteer in programs run in the community that everyone can access.** Examples might be English programs, sports programs, creative workshops or educational support programs.
- 4. Use your skills to build the capacity of staff working with children.** This might be in areas of promotions, websites, English, management, accounting or games and activities.
- 5. Focus on learning so that you are better equipped to advocate for a project or the needs of children when you return to your own country.**

When done with thought and consideration, volunteering can positively contribute towards good outcomes for vulnerable children and their families as well as be a life changing experience for volunteers.

However you choose to volunteer we encourage you to



THINK about the impact



ASK the right questions



ACT in a way that protects children and promotes families.





SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM

Short-term mission trip you are applying for:

This form will be used for team selection. It will be viewed by only those selecting the team and the information will be kept confidential. Filling in this form is not a sign of acceptance on the trip you are applying for.

Please submit the following documents along with your application, or as soon as you receive them back from the relevant authorities.

1. Criminal record check
2. Working with children/vulnerable people check
3. Your personal testimony

Applicant Details

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (AH) _____ (BH) _____ (M)

Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Marital Status: _____

Occupation: _____

Motivations

1. What are the key motivations for you to go on this short-term mission trip?

2. What are your personal expectations and/or goals for this short-term mission trip?



Experience

1. Have you been overseas before? If yes, where and for what purpose (e.g. business, holidays, ministry)?

2. What skills, talents and work experience do you have?

Working with Children

1. Please describe what experience you have working/interacting with children.

2. Do you have a recent:

Criminal record check? Yes No

Working with children/vulnerable people check? Yes No

If yes, please attach copies along with this application. If no, you will need to apply for these and submit prior to going on the mission trip.

3. Do you have any criminal convictions related to children, or has anyone ever made allegations against you? Please provide details.



Personal spiritual information

1. When, and where, were you saved? Please also attach a copy of your personal testimony along with this application.

2. Are you a regular participant in church activities? Yes No

If yes, please list areas of involvement/serving (e.g. small groups, youth ministry, creative ministries, etc.):

3. What are your spiritual gifts?

Emergency Medical Information

In the event of an accident or medical issue while on the trip, it would be helpful to have some general medical information about you. Please fill this section out carefully.

1. Please list any current medical conditions (incl. allergies) and indicate where they are severe:

2. Please list any prescribed medications you are currently taking that we need to be aware of:



3. Please give details of who to contact in an emergency:

Name: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Contact Numbers: _____ (AH) _____ (BH) _____ (M)

References

Please provide the details of at least two referees that are not related to you. Ideally, this would be one reference from a church leader and one from a current employer.

Name: _____

Position: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Financial and Team Commitment

All short-term mission trips are self-funded and will require full payment by the specified date (usually a number of weeks before departure). Do you commit to making a full payment by the specified date, recognising that failure to do so may result in you being refused to go on the mission trip?

Yes No

Should you be accepted on this short-term mission trip, you will be required to attend a number of team meetings prior to departure, participate in all team activities whilst overseas (including prayer meetings, planning sessions, etc.) and debriefing sessions at the end of the trip. Do you commit to attending all required sessions, recognising that failure to do so may result in you being refused to go on the mission trip?

Yes No

In signing below, I accept the above stated conditions.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Please note: If applicant is under 18 years of age, parent or legal guardian's signature)

In signing below, I _____ accept the above stated conditions on behalf of:

Parent/Legal guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____





SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are some suggested questions to cover when interviewing applicants. You may want to add these to your existing questions or include some of your own in this list to reflect the nature of your particular missions program.

1. Motivations and Expectations

- a) What do you feel are the main reasons that have led you to want to go on this short-term mission trip?
- b) What is your understanding of the trip, and what your role will be?
- c) What would you like to learn from the experience?
- d) This trip will be focused on learning about our partner organisations and how we can best support their long-term work, more so than doing things while we are over there. How do you feel about that?

2. Skills/Qualifications

- a) What skills/qualifications do you have?
- b) What experience do you have in cross-cultural missions or volunteering overseas? *(This may reveal misconceptions from past experiences, such as volunteering in orphanages).*

3. Child Protection

- a) What experience do you have working or interacting with children?
- b) Why do you think it is important to protect children?
- c) Has there been a time where you have had serious concerns about a child's wellbeing? How did you respond?
- d) Do you have any criminal convictions related to children that we should be aware of? (You may want to mention this if you have not received their background checks back yet, or discuss anything that may have been revealed in their background checks).
- e) If you were overseas and had a concern about a child's safety or wellbeing, what would you do? (You may want to include a specific example relevant to your context, such as a child begging on the street).

4. Character

- a) What would you describe as your strengths? What would describe as your weaknesses?
- b) Tell me about a time when you have been in a situation that made you feel completely out of your comfort zone. How did you respond?
- c) Tell me about a time when you disagreed with someone in a position of authority. What did you do?
- d) How do you feel when someone holds an opinion or belief that differs from your own? How do you respond in that situation?

5. Spiritual

- a) Can you share your testimony briefly?
- b) What is your understanding of the gospel message? How has this shaped your personal life?
- c) What are you currently doing to grow spiritually?
- d) What are your spiritual gifts, and how would you like to use this on this trip?

6. Other

- a) Are you aware that this trip will involve multiple preparation and debriefing meetings? Can you commit to attending them?
- b) Do you have any concerns about the financial commitment for this trip?
- c) Do you have any health issues that may be cause for concern? If so, please explain.
- d) Do you have any questions or comments about this short-term mission trip?





SAMPLE REFERENCE CHECK

Applicant's name:

Trip applied for:

Referee: Phone:

Reference check completed by: Date:

INTRODUCTION	
<p>My name is <your name> and I'm calling to conduct a reference check for <name of applicant> who has applied to attend an upcoming <short-term mission trip/volunteer trip> with <name of sending organisation/church>. Your details have been provided to me by <applicant's name> and I would first like to check if you are prepared to provide a reference?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
<p>The reference check will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Is this a good time for you? If not, when is a convenient time for us to continue this conversation?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> CALL BACK <input type="checkbox"/> PROCEED
<p>Please note that this reference will be used in the overall evaluation of the applicant, and will affect whether they are selected to be a part of this <short-term mission trip/volunteer trip>. Any information you provide will be confidential.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
<p><Briefly explain the nature of the short-term mission trip and the factors you will be assessing through the reference check></p>	

GENERAL QUESTIONS	
<p>What is the nature of your relationship with the applicant?</p>	
<p>How long have you known the applicant?</p>	
<p>What responsibilities or roles have you seen them perform?</p>	
<p>What would you say are the applicant's strengths?</p>	
<p>What would you say are the applicant's development areas (e.g. weaknesses)?</p>	

<p>How well does the applicant manage stress or challenging circumstances?</p>	
<p>Have you had any concerns with their character/behaviour?</p> <p>If yes, please explain when these issues were identified? When were they discussed with the individual? What work are they doing to improve and what progress has been made?</p>	
<p>Can you comment on the applicant's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> willingness to learn <input type="checkbox"/> respect for others <input type="checkbox"/> submission to authority <input type="checkbox"/> reliability <input type="checkbox"/> spiritual maturity (where relevant) <input type="checkbox"/> <Insert other factors> 	
CHILD PROTECTION QUESTIONS	
<p>In this STM trip, the applicant will be interacting with children. Have you observed the applicant interacting with children? If yes, in what context?</p>	
<p>If yes, do you have any concerns around their interactions and behaviour with children?</p>	
<p>Are you aware of any criminal convictions, allegations or suspicions of child abuse related to this applicant (if they are authorised to disclose this information)?</p>	
IN CLOSING	
<p>Would you recommend this applicant for a <short-term mission trip/ volunteer trip>?</p>	
<p>Do you have any final comments?</p>	
<p>Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback. If you wish to provide any further information, you can contact me on <your contact details>.</p>	



SAMPLE APPLICANT REVIEW

Applicant:

Trip applied for:

Trip coordinator:

FORMS

FORM	RECEIVED	COMMENTS
Application form including referee contact details	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criminal record check	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Working with children / vulnerable people check	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Personal testimony	<input type="checkbox"/>	

INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWER	DATE	SUMMARY

REFERENCE CHECKS

REFEREE NAME	DATE	SUMMARY

ASSESSMENT (based on applicant evaluation on next page)

RATING	Comments/Areas to address in training
<input type="checkbox"/> Suitable <input type="checkbox"/> Some Concern <input type="checkbox"/> Unsuitable	

FINAL APPROVAL

Approved by:

Date:



APPLICANT EVALUATION

Suitability to interact with children

- Were there any criminal convictions or significant evidence/allegations of child abuse?.....
 - If yes, has this been communicated to the relevant people as per the organisation's child protection policy?.....
- Were there any concerns raised by referees around the applicant's behaviour with children?.....
- Did you note any concerning answers regarding their view of children or interactions with children?.....
 - If yes, have these concerns been investigated further?.....

Qualifications

- Did they have the relevant skills/ qualifications required for the planned activities?
 - If yes, did they provide evidence of their skills/qualifications?
 - If no, do they understand they will not be engaging in activities they are not skilled/qualified in?

Motivations and expectations

- Were they motivated to go on the trip to learn, encourage and build relationships?.....
- Were they motivated by any other reasons that would seem unreasonable or concerning?.....
 - If yes, can this be addressed through orientation and training?.....
- Did they demonstrate realistic expectations and understandings of the trip?.....
 - If no, can this be addressed through orientation and training?.....

Demonstration of respect for others

- Did they demonstrate an ability to submit to authority and follow instructions?
- Did they demonstrate a willingness to go as a learner?.....
- Did they show a good level of respect for other people's opinions, beliefs and cultures?.....
- Did they show an ability to be flexible and resilient in challenging circumstances?

Other

- Did the screening process reveal any other concerns or potential barriers for them participating in the trip?.....

KEY:

= Area of concern. Re-evaluation or further action required.

= Desired response. No concerns revealed in this area.



BACKGROUND CHECK INFORMATION

Criminal Record checks and Working with Children/Vulnerable People checks

Below is some information on background criminal checks from several different countries. Policies and practices can change. So, it is recommended that you complete your own research to determine what check is required for your own ministry.

COUNTRY	CHECKS
USA	<p>There is no national or state specific database in the USA where a check on a person’s criminal records can be obtained. Instead, background check companies can provide a range services and packages. When considering which investigation company to use, look for a company that has access to multiple databases, including national, state, and county records.</p> <p>Checks should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SSN Verification and Address History 2. National/Multi State Criminal Database Search, and 3. National Sex Offender Search/Registry. <p>Examples of online companies that offer background check services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect My Ministry: protectmyministry.com/background-checks/volunteer-screening/ • Background Checks: backgroundchecks.com/solutions/churchesandreligiousorganizations
AUSTRALIA	<p>In Australia, each state and territory has their own procedure for obtaining Police Checks and Working With Children Checks. It is necessary to research requirements in the jurisdiction in which you live.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Police Checks: Police Checks identify and release relevant criminal history information relating to convictions, findings of guilt or pending court proceedings. Police Checks can be gained through your relevant state government or the Australian Federal Police (See: afp.gov.au/what-we-do/police-checks/national-police-checks). • Working with Children Checks (WWCCs): Working with Children Checks are checks of the databases of law enforcement agencies and are more extensive than Police Checks, gathering information from additional sources including sex offender registers and adverse findings on professional disciplinary registers. See: aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/pre-employment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks#table-4.
SINGAPORE	<p>A Certificate of Clearance (COC) is issued by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Singapore Police Force (SPF) to certify that a person has no Criminal Conviction within a stipulated period of time in Singapore. See: http://www.spf.gov.sg/epc/cert_issued.htm.</p>
CANADA	<p>Information of how you can obtain a Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector checks can be found the Royal Canadian Mounted Police website. See: rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/criminal-record-and-vulnerable-sector-checks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Record check: This process verifies whether an individual has a criminal record, and provides the applicant with the detailed information that can be legally disclosed. • Vulnerable Sector (VS) check: This process verifies whether an individual has a criminal record, as well as any record suspensions (formerly pardons) for sexual offences and local police records for information relevant to the VS check.

COUNTRY	CHECKS
<p>ENGLAND</p>	<p>DBS Check (Disclosure and Barring Service): A criminal records check can be processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). For certain roles, the check will also include information held on the DBS children and adults' barred lists, together with any information held locally by police forces that is reasonably considered to be relevant to the applied for post.</p> <p>See: gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#volunteer-applications.</p>
<p>SCOTLAND</p>	<p>Disclosure Scotland is an executive Agency of the Scottish Government, and provides criminal records checks and Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme checks. See: disclosurescotland.co.uk/index.htm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Check Disclosure: A Disclosure contains impartial and confidential criminal history information held by the Police and government departments. • PVG Scheme Check: The scheme helps to ensure that those who have regular contact with children and protected adults, through paid and unpaid work, do not have a known history of harmful behaviour.
<p>NORTHERN IRELAND</p>	<p>AccessNI is a Criminal History Disclosure Service within the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland. See: dojni.gov.uk/articles/about-accessni. They provide various levels of checks including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic check containing details of all unspent convictions • Standard check containing spent and unspent convictions, informed warnings and other non-court disposals from the Police National Computer, and • Enhanced check containing above checks plus information held by the Disclosure and Barring Service. <p>The Disclosure and Barring Service keeps two barred lists of people who are unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults. Enhanced checks are normally required where the applicant will work or volunteer in a role providing services to, or having close and regular supervision of, children and/or vulnerable adults.</p>
<p>NEW ZEALAND</p>	<p>Criminal Conviction History Checks: In New Zealand, a criminal record history check is available through the Ministry of Justice.</p> <p>See: http://www.justice.govt.nz/services/criminal-records.</p>



FURTHER RESOURCES

CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES & TOOLKITS

Save the Children Australia - Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct

https://www.savethechildren.org.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/5458/2014-FINAL-Child-Protection-Policy-2.pdf

Save the Children Australia is the Australian arm of the Save the Children International association. Their child protection policy includes their code of conduct, and can be used as a helpful example when developing your own policy and code of conduct.

Viva - Creating Safe Environments for Children Toolkit

http://www.viva.org/downloads/PDF/Learn/Child_Protection_Toolkit.pdf

Viva is committed to creating safe environments for children by initiating networks of churches and community organisations to work collaboratively to see lasting change for children. Their toolkit assists churches and organisations to develop systems and policies for keeping children safe and includes a sample child protection policy, code of conduct and a number of useful forms.

Keeping Children Safe: A Toolkit for Child Protection

<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/keeping-children-safe-toolkit-child-protection>

Keeping Children Safe is a global network of organisations working together to protect children globally from violence, abuse and exploitation. This comprehensive toolkit assists organisations to develop a sound basis and effective measures for the protection and safeguarding of children.

Child Protection Policies and Procedures Toolkit: How to Create a Child-Safe Organisation

<http://www.childhope.org.uk/resources/learning-resources/>

This toolkit has been produced by ChildHope to introduce organisations to child protection and to equip them to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate their own child protection policies and procedures.

HANDOUTS

JUSTICE FOR THE POOR: ACCI POSITIONAL PAPER ON POVERTY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

can be accessed here: <http://acci.org.au/resources/5.JusticeForThePoor.pdf>

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TEAMS (Chalmers Center)

can be accessed here: https://www.chalmers.org/images/uploads/premium-resources/HWH-STM-social-guidelines.pdf?utm_source=iContact&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=info@chalmers.org&utm_content=

WEBSITES

BETTER VOLUNTEERING, BETTER CARE

<http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/bcn-in-action/better-volunteering-better-care?id=32465&themeID=1002&topicID=1017>

The Better Volunteering, Better Care website includes:

- short videos outlining the potential harm that can be caused by international volunteering in residential care centers; and
- academic and institutional literature focused on international volunteering in residential care centres.



KINNECTED

<http://www.kinnected.org.au/volunteering>

The Kinnected website includes:

- information on ethical volunteering with vulnerable children
- videos including those telling the stories of children and families part of family strengthening and foster care programs, and
- other useful resources, checklists, guidelines and links.

FAITH TO ACTION

faithtoaction.org/

The Faith to Action website includes:

- downloadable resource guides and small group study materials
- targeted resources and tools for students, mission groups, churches and field practitioners
- a guide to research and updates on new findings regarding best practice
- examples of these strategies in action
- inspiring stories of how churches are getting involved
- updates on key conferences, videos, publications, and other news, and
- an instructional webinar series and podcasts.

BE A CHILD-SAFE VOLUNTEER, CHILD-SAFE MOVEMENT

thinkchildsafe.org/when-i-volunteer/

The ChildSafe website includes:

- information about how to protect children when travelling, at home, working, volunteering and donation
- information and links on how best to volunteer when travelling and the harm caused to children when supporting and visiting orphanages, and
- other tips and suggestions for volunteers wanting to serve overseas.

GLOBALSL.ORG

<http://globalsl.org/>

Globalsl.org website includes:

- research articles on topics such as reflective practice, global civic engagement and power & privilege
- blog articles, and
- practitioner tools.

CHALMERS CENTER

<https://www.chalmers.org/hwh-stm-participant>

This website includes links to the “When Helping hurts” resources as well as a number of related videos.



CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE FOR ORPHANS (CAFO) Webinar and Resource Library

<https://cafo.org/resource/child-protection/>

The CAFO website includes:

- a resource library
- monthly webinars
- videos, and
- blog articles.

WORLD WITHOUT ORPHANS

<http://www.worldwithoutorphans.org/>

World Without Orphans is a global movement advocating for every child to grow up in a nurturing permanent family. The website includes resources, videos and information on the movement globally.

They have developed a helpful animation depicting the reality of orphanages and the need for children to be in families, which can be accessed at:

<http://www.worldwithoutorphans.org/video/videos/world-without-orphans-animation>

BETTER CARE NETWORK

<http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/>

The Better Care Network website includes:

- information, resource libraries and toolkits related to residential care and children who lack adequate family care; and
- country and region specific literature and resources.



WHEN HELPING HURTS

Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, Chalmers Center

‘When Helping Hurts’ is focused on equipping churches to develop effective and long lasting approaches to poverty alleviation. It covers the holistic definition of poverty and unpacks the difference between relief, rehabilitation and development. It includes strategies on how to effectively help low-income people, moving from good intentions to sustainable change. There is one chapter focused solely on short-term mission teams, and they have also developed additional resources from the original book including:

- a) When Helping Hurts: The Small Group Experience – A six-part study for small groups, and
- b) Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions – An eight-part study for STM teams (see below).

HELPING WITHOUT HURTING IN SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert with Katie Casselberry

This resource teaches teams how to support lasting change in low-income communities, and in their own life, through a short term mission trip. The Participant’s Guide prepares and debriefs team members through eight group sessions built around online video content accessed using the code provided in the guide. The separate Leader’s Guide coaches the leader through facilitating the course for a team, and also includes a detailed introduction section unpacking this approach to short term mission trips and how to develop an effective program in line with this approach.

TOXIC CHARITY: HOW THE CHURCH HURTS THOSE THEY HELP AND HOW TO REVERSE IT

Robert D. Lupton

‘Toxic Charity’ looks at the reality that good intentions when it comes to charity and giving are not enough, and often have devastating consequences for the people we try to help. Lupton explores how giving can undermine initiative of the materially poor, diminishing their dignity and leading to dependency. The book urges individuals, organisations and churches to reconsider the way that give and invest in community-driven development that produces real, measurable and lasting change.

PURSUING JUSTICE

Ken Wytsma

‘Pursuing Justice’ explores how Christians can find true happiness and abundant life when they pursue a life of justice. Using clear evangelical theory, Wytsma explores biblical justice, the redemptive nature of righteousness and the connection between our own joy and the gospel. The book explores how Christians can be empowered to truly act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

THE DANGERS OF VOLUNTOURISM: WHEN GOOD INTENTIONS JUST AREN’T ENOUGH

Tania DoCarmo, Charlie Smith-Brake and Julia Smith-Brake

<http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/library/particular-threats-to-childrens-care-and-protection/child-abuse-and-neglect/the-dangers-of-voluntourism-when-good-intentions-are-not-enough>

This article published in Prism Magazine and found on the Better Care, Better Volunteering website provides a well-researched and concise overview of the harm of orphanage tourism, using Cambodia as a case study. It highlights that while short-term teams often have good intentions, visiting orphanages is rarely in children’s best interests and can be extremely harmful.





GLOSSARY

CHILD PROTECTION TERMS:

ATTACHMENT

The formation by a child of significant and stable emotional connections with the significant people in her/his life. This process begins in early infancy as the child bonds with one or more primary caregivers. A failure by a child to establish these types of important connections before the age of about five years may result in the child experiencing difficulties with a wide variety of social relationships for significant periods of time in her/his life.²⁰

CHILD PROTECTION

Measures and structures intended to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence affecting children.²¹

CHILD-SAFE ORGANISATION

Any organisation or institution that shows a commitment to child-safe practices and procedures, and takes a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on child protection issues.²²

Therefore, child-safe mission trips are those organised and implemented with the same commitment, practices and procedures in regard to child protection.

CHILD RIGHTS

A set of universal entitlements for every child and young person below the age of 18 enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These entitlements apply to children of every background and encompass what they need to survive and to have opportunities to lead stable, rewarding lives. They fall into four categories: the right to survive, be safe, belong and develop.²³

FAMILY PRESERVATION

Family Preservation Services are comprehensive, short-term, intensive services for families delivered primarily in the home and designed to prevent the unnecessary out-of-home placement of children or to promote family reunification.²⁴

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

A deliberate and sustained effort to ensure that parents have the necessary opportunities, relationships, networks and supports to raise their children successfully.²⁵

INSTITUTIONAL CARE

The short-term or long-term placement of a child into any non family-based care situation. Other similar terms include residential care, group care, and orphanages.²⁶

SAFEGUARDING

Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment; preventing harm to children's health or development; ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care; taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.²⁷

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TERMS:

RECEIVING ORGANISATION

Any on-field persons who receive and facilitate short-term mission teams whilst in the host country or community. This could include churches, community groups, Non-Government Organisations, volunteering companies or tour companies.

SENDING ORGANISATION

Organisations that mobilise volunteers from their community/country of origin and prepare them to go abroad or into a host community. This could include churches, travel companies, charities, mission agencies, schools, non-government organisations, or volunteer agencies.

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS (STM) TRIP

The period of time where short term teams are in the host country or community, usually ranging from one week to several months.

²⁰ Better Care Network, 2016, BCN Toolkit Glossary

²¹ Better Care Network, 2016, BCN Toolkit Glossary

²² Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013, Child Safe Institutions

²³ Better Care Network, 2016, BCN Toolkit Glossary

²⁴ CWLA Family Preservation Services: Fact Sheet

²⁵ Margaret Caspe, M. Elena Lopez, 2006, Lessons From Family-Strengthening Interventions: Learning From Evidence-Based Practice

²⁶ Better Care Network, 2016, BCN Toolkit Glossary

²⁷ NSPCC, 2016, Safeguarding Children



SHORT-TERM MISSIONS (STM) PROGRAM

A program designed to promote, recruit, train and send or receive Christians on short term mission trips. Includes the activities and actions taken before, during and after a short-term mission trip.

DEVELOPMENT TERMS:

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is the active support of an idea, or cause, expressed through strategies and methods that influence the opinions and decisions of people and organisations in order to create or change policies, laws, regulations, distribution of resources or other decisions that affect people's lives and to ensure that such decisions lead to implementation.²⁸ An advocate can be someone who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy and a person who pleads a case on someone else's behalf informally.²⁹

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Action taken by a group of people working together and combining their resources, knowledge and efforts to achieve a shared goal or common objective.

DISEMPOWERMENT

To deprive someone of power, influence, voice, or the opportunity to make decisions pertaining to their own life and future.

DUTY BEARER

Duty bearers are those actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realise human rights and to abstain from human rights violations.³⁰

DUE DILIGENCE ASSESSMENT/CHECK

An assessment of an organisation usually conducted by a third party for the purpose of understanding their functioning and identifying risks.

EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices, and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.³¹

POVERTY

Poverty is the state of pronounced deprivation in wellbeing. Poverty is multidimensional and can be experienced as spiritual, economic, social or a distorted sense of self-worth.

ROOT CAUSES

The underlying cause of problems, which if removed or addressed would prevent the problem from reoccurring.

SAVIOUR MENTALITY/COMPLEX

A psychological construct which makes a person feel the need to save other people.³² In the context of STM, it is often referred to as a 'White Saviour Complex' and refers to people from the global north who believe the survival and rescue of people from the global south depends entirely upon their charity and intervention.

SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE

Traditions and structures that give rise to profound injustices, such as use of the state's legal and political systems to violate the political, economic, and social rights of subordinate groups.³³

²⁸ Steve Buckley, *Advocacy Strategies and Approaches: Overview Paper*

²⁹ UNICEF, 2010, *Advocacy Toolkit, A Guide to Influencing decisions that improve children's lives*

³⁰ Gender Equality, *UN Coherence and You*

³¹ The World Bank, 2016- *What is Empowerment?*

³² *People Skills Decoded*, 2010, *Savior Complex Anyone?*

³³ Wehr, Burgess, and Burgess quoted in Maiese, Michelle, 2003, *Addressing Injustice, Beyond Intractability*





If you need more information, or have further questions,
feel free to contact ACCI Relief.

ACCI RELIEF

Email: info@accir.org.au

Phone: 1300 997 510 or +613 8516 9600

Operations Centre: 5/2-4 Sarton Road, Clayton, VIC Australia 3168