

# HANDBOOK ON PARTNERSHIP

*Note: The specific name of the originating mission agency has been deleted and replaced with the word (Agency).*

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## **(Agency) and International Partnerships**

(Agency) is a nondenominational mission agency working in partnership with indigenous ministries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

### **The vision of (Agency) is**

- a partner in every part of the world (*partnership defined below*)
- a network of indigenous churches through every partnership  
*(by indigenous we mean self supporting, self governing, and self propagating)*
- a well equipped pastor in every church

### **Selection of International Partners:**

We will be guided in the **selection and development** of these partnerships using the following criteria:

- ministries which are indigenous
- ministries which are holistic in outreach
- ministries which are directed primarily at the poor
- ministries which are directed primarily at the least evangelized.

### **Partnership defined:**

- a working relationship between two or more autonomous entities
- whereby each contributes, by mutual agreement, some of its resources
- according to mutually established and clearly defined expectations
- toward the accomplishment of a common goal.

**What (our agency) offers its international partners:**

**A. As God provides, (Agency) offers to its partners:**

- a service and/or ministry through servant teams where appropriate and desired by the partners (see guidelines)
- training/equipping (see guidelines)
- financial support (see guidelines)
- a visit at least once each year from a staff member

**B. The financial resources offered our international partners will be directed primarily at the following areas of ministry:**

- Evangelism & church planning

*(All evangelism should ultimately lead to the establishing of a new church or the growth of an established church. While culture and language barriers obviously limits the participation of Western personnel in the evangelism/church planting process, they can be “involved” in such activities as passing our literature, door to door visitation, the sharing of person testimonies, etc. The activities will always be done in conjunction with indigenous personnel.*

- Leadership training/equipping

*(Leadership training/equipping will be carried out primarily through our pastor’s retreats at the invitation of our indigenous partners, through internet studies, and through the provision of tools such as study bibles, commentaries, etc. Training will also be offered to teachers in public and private schools as a tool of professional development and, in the case of public schools, as a tool of evangelistic witness.)*

- Children’s ministries, especially children in crisis, and including human trafficking

*(Children’s ministries will be carried out through our Children’s Ministries Department and will include such things as the training of Sunday School teachers, vacation Bible school workers, and the provision of curriculum ideas and materials for the local church.)*

- Economic development, including formal and vocational education

*(Economic development can take the form of provision of agricultural products, small business loans, special equipment such as sewing machines, vocational training, and formal education in Christian schools.)*

## **Seven Steps for Developing a Good Partnership**

- 1. Establish** Good partnerships are built on good relationships. Good relationships take work, especially cross-cultural ones. Relationships require good two-way communication. (Agency) will attempt to maintain good communication with its partners through e-mail and regular, on-site visits. Partners are expected to respond with regular up-dates on projects and as well as needs. This information will allow (Agency) to keep supporting constituencies well informed.
- 2. Listen** Good partnerships require that both (agency) and its partners listen to each other with both their ears and their hearts. We need to know and understand each other's dreams, vision, plans, and problems. This will create a stronger base for understanding each other as well as effectively praying for each other. (Agency) is always open to constructive criticism from our partners as well as suggestions for better ways of getting things done in the host culture.
- 3. Examine** Having listened to each other, we must then examine carefully what the other has said.  
  
Each then has both the task and the prerogative to decide whether or not they can or should respond to what they have heard positively or negatively. When it is not possible to respond positively to a request or need or when an action is determined not to be in the best interest of the ministry in question, both parties need to have the confidence that the relationship will not be broken or hindered by what is said. Saying "no" is never easy for (Agency) or a partner, but it is better to say no followed by an explanation of why that project or ministry can or should not be done than to say "yes" and have the proposed action have an adverse effect on the ministry or organization.
- 4. Research** When some action is agreed upon between the partner and (Agency), both organizations will then carefully research how that action can best be carried out., when, and who can do it best.
- 5. Respond** With a plan of action in place, both (Agency) and the partner will do its best to respond quickly and effectively.
- 6. Evaluate** On going evaluation is essential. This should apply to any individual project and ministry as well as to the partnership as a whole.
- 7. Adjust** Based upon continuous and intentional evaluation, adjustments will be made to make the project, ministry and partnership more effective.

## Guidelines for Choosing International Partners

1. Longevity. Ministries that have a “track record”. (This does not mean that we will not help new ministries “get started.” But it does imply that we will be very careful where there is no track record of previous ministry.)
2. Credibility. What do others say about this ministry? Is there a record of integrity? a good reputation, a favorable report by other Christian ministries/leaders?
3. Accountability. Is there some structure of accountability, especially with regard to the handling of funds?
4. Fruitfulness. Is the ministry bearing fruit? Is there a reasonable track record of ministry “success”?
5. In addition to the above, the potential partner ministry must
  - a. Be holistic in focus, ministering to body, soul and spirit.
  - b. Give priority to the poor and the least evangelized.
  - c. Be geographically strategic. In other words, we seek to avoid duplication and overlap where strong Christian ministries already exist.
  - d. Be indigenous. That is to say, they are not strongly connected to some mission agency in the West from which they receive help regularly.

Philosophy: The key to good partnerships is relationship. Seldom will we begin a partnership without on-site visits and extended conversations through which we arrive at mutually agreed upon goals and strategies. As we get to know them, and they us, that relationship (and thus partnership) will grow stronger. We will always seek to never break trust with a partner, and we expect the same of them.

In summary three key words will be our guide: relationship, communication, integrity.

## **Guidelines for (Agency) Servant Teams**

Short term servant teams have historically been a significant part of (Agency's) larger ministry. This is reflected in both the older phrase which appeared with our organizational name: *servicing across the street and around the world*, and with the new phrase which now appears with our organizational name: *short term missions through long term partnerships*.

In that tradition (Agency) continues to be committed to providing each partner with short term "servant teams" when appropriate and where desired by the partner. These servant teams are normally made up of composed of 10 to 20 individuals from various churches, or on occasion, from one church. The in-country time for each team can vary, but it usually ranges from 7 to 10 days. Each team will be led by a trained staff member from (Agency). The ultimate purpose of the team is to forward the ministry and outreach of the international partner.

While (Agency) offer a team to a partner, it is ultimately up to that partner to accept or decline a team. Likewise, the specific nature and work of the team will be worked out carefully in advance with the partner. In all cases what the team does should clearly be a part of a larger strategy as worked out between the partner, the office of Field Ministries, and the senior staff of (Agency).

Each team bears the complete cost of the team and ministry. At the same time it is expected that the partner/host will have significant spiritual and strategic input into the team while they are present in the host country.

(Agency) recognizes that the presence of such a team does represent a significant amount of work for the host nationals. We do not want the team to be liability. We do believe, however, that the ministry of nationals to the team can have a significant and long lasting impact on the lives of team members. History has proven this to be true over and over.

We do not want our national partners to view the team only as a potential source of money or labor. At the same time we recognize that the team does represent both possibilities for the partner. To that end partners will be given the opportunity to make needs known to the team. However, this must always be done through the (Agency) leader of the team, not directly to the team members themselves.

Details concerning lodging, food, travel, etc. for the team will be worked out with the international partner prior to the arrival of the team. The same is true for a budget for the team.

Teams normally will bring a budgeted amount of funds to be directed toward a ministry or project with which the team will be associated during their visit. However, the exact amount of those funds is variable and dependent upon the size of the team. Funds available for a project will be communicated to the partner in advance or upon arrival of the team.

Types of servant teams provided by (Agency) may include the following: construction, medical/dental, children's ministries, equipping, teaching English, evangelistic outreach, businessmen, exposure, college/seminary, etc. In some cases the focus of the team will be a single type of ministry; in other situations the team will ministry in multiple ways. When possible, it is always the desire of (Agency) that our teams minister along side nationals. And when advisable, the team will be more than willing to work in a support role leaving the leadership for the event or project entirely in the hands of nationals. It is not the desire of (Agency) to receive any credit or praise for the contributions of its teams. They are to be "servant teams" in the fullest sense of the term.

## **Guidelines and Philosophy for Equipping Events**

### **Purpose**

Recognizing the need and Biblical basis for well equipped, mature, indigenous leadership, (Agency) is committed to participating in leadership training events with our international partners and other indigenous ministries as those opportunities present themselves. We also recognize that, when carried out as “extensions” of the ministries of our international partners, these events may contribute significantly to both an evangelistic outreach and public good will toward the Gospel.

### **Types of Events**

The following are the types of equipping events in which (Agency) participates:

- Pastor’s conferences
- Children’s workers
- Indigenous missionaries
- Public and private school teachers
- Business Leadership events

### **Guidelines**

1. (Agency) will seek to provide qualified speakers for training events. The speakers can be members of the (Agency) staff, volunteers who have expertise in a certain field, and other indigenous leaders from around the world.
2. At times the equipping events will be carried out in conjunction with the presence of a servant team. At other times the equipping event itself will be the sole focus.
3. A budget for each event is to be prepared at least 3 months in advance of the event and presented to the Vice President of Administration and the Vice President of Field Ministries of (Agency). This budget will be prepared by a member of the (Agency) staff working in conjunction with the international partner.
4. A plan for raising the funds to cover the expenses of the equipping event will be developed and submitted to the Vice President of Development and the Vice President of Administration of (Agency) in advance of the event. Adequate funding must be on hand in the (Agency) before the event is convened.
5. A final report on the use of finances will be submitted to the Vice President of Administration by the (Agency) representative present for the event.
6. A summary of the accomplishments/problems encountered/projections for the future, etc. of the equipping event will be submitted to the Vice President of Field Ministries and to the senior staff of (Agency).

## **Guidelines for “Use of Money” with Partners**

Money is a two-edged sword. It can either empower or hinder the work of the Kingdom in the context of partnerships.

It can empower by

- allowing indigenous partners to open new areas to the Gospel,
- train leadership,
- undertake new ministries,
- provide materials, etc.

On the other hand it can hinder if it

- creates patterns of dominance of givers over receivers,
- jealousy among indigenous workers,
- opportunities for those who seek only what Western wealth can give them,
- separation between the have’s and the have not’s,
- strategies which are not sustainable without foreign funding or which are not culturally appropriate,

To the end that the funds which (Agency) contributes to our international partners empower rather than hinder the long-term work of the Kingdom, the projects/ministries in which we make financial investment should:

1. be **sustainable** (and preferably replicable) without continued funding from us or other non-indigenous sources.
2. be based **upon national initiative**. That is to say that we expect the national ministry to make a substantial contribution (based upon their ability and their faith in God’s provision) both initially and on a continuing basis. This may be in terms of materials, labor, personnel, etc.

*While it is certainly possible we (Agency) make suggestions to our partners (i.e., we are free if not obligated by Christian concern) concerning ministries, projects, personnel, etc., we will be guided by the fact that we are (1) responding to their (i.e., enabling) vision and following (2) their modus operandi. (so long as it does not violate the principles by which we operate).*

- 3) be **ministries/leaders which have a “history” or a “track record.”** This is not to say that we will not help initiate or work with young nationals; it does suggest that we prefer to see some indigenous “confirmation” upon such ministries/leadership before we initiate a partnership.
- 4) have an **accountability structure**. While we recognize that not all cultures work with a boards director or other structures familiar to our culture, we do recognize the need for some type of culturally appropriate accountability structure as a prerequisite for receiving funds through (Agency). This “structure” must be willing

to cooperate with us in terms of what we need to keep faith with our constituency and governmental regulations for a not for profit organization.

*Note: This means that we do not channel funds to an “individual” national who does not have such an accountability structure.*

- 5) be **indigenous ministries which are long-term**. While individual projects have a limited life, the individual ministries with which we partner and invest are long-term. This distinguishes us somewhat from “relief” agencies and the kinds of work they do.

(Agency) never seeks to “control” a ministry or project through the use of money, nor do we enter into the “internal” affairs of an indigenous ministry. Likewise, we try to avoid developing any kind or level of dependency upon Western funds in our partners.

Our desire is to facilitate the spiritual and physical growth of indigenous ministries which are truly self governing, self sustaining, and self propagating.

### **Expectations of International Partners**

As stated in our definition, partnership is a two way street. Each international partner has the right to expect certain things from (Agency). In turn, (Agency) can expect the following from each partner:

- the willingness to host (Agency) servant teams
- financial accountability, including timely reporting to the Vice President of Administration of (Agency).
- regular communication with the Field Ministries office of (Agency), including stories which can be used in promoting the ministries of that field
- fervent pray on behalf of (Agency).

### **Evaluation**

While effective evaluation is a continuous and on-going process, a yearly progress report on each partnership will be made by the Vice President of Field Ministries and submitted to the Senior Staff of (Agency).

## Appendix A.

### Resources on Partnership

#### Books

*(Most but not all titles have links imbedded in them; just click on title to go to web page.)*

*Breaking Tradition to Accomplish Vision: Training Leaders for a Church Planting Movement: A Case in India*, Paul R. Gupta and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter

*Supporting Indigenous Ministries*, edited by Daniel Rickett and Dotsey Welliver

*Partners in the Gospel; The Strategic Role of Partnership in World Evangelication*, edited by James Kraakevik and Dotsey Welliver

*Global Partnerships for Local Mission*, Paul Groves

*Body Matters: A Guide to Partnership in Christian Missions*, Ernic Andicott

*Making Your Partnership Work*, Daniel Rickett

*Building Strategic Relationships*, Daniel Rickett

*African and Western Missionary Partnership in Christian Mission: Rhodesia-Zimbabwe 1897-1968*, Nathan F. Goto and Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa

*Funding Third World Missions: The Pursuit of True Christian Partnership* by Louis Bush

*Getting Beyond Money Problems in Missions Partnerships*, Daniel Rickett, Partners International

#### Articles

Articles available on the Partners International website:

“Accountability without Control” by Alex Araujo, Partners International

“Freedom and Dependency in Christian Partnerships” by Alex Araujo, Partners International

“A Covenant of Partnership” (guiding document of Partners International found online under Partners International <[www.partnersintl.org](http://www.partnersintl.org)> under “Partnership Resources”)

The following publications also generally provide helpful articles:

*Evangelical Missions Quarterly*

*Missiology*

**Check out the following websites for information on partnerships in missions:**

[COSIM](http://www.cosim.info/) (Coalition on the Support of Indigenous Ministries) <http://www.cosim.info/>

[Evangelical Missiological Society](http://www.emsweb.org/) monograph series. <http://www.emsweb.org/>

[Partners International](http://www.partnersintl.org/) <http://www.partnersintl.org/> look under “Partnership Resources”

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