

Village Baptist Church Case Study

The short-term missions program of Village Baptist Church includes three crucial elements: an extensive goal, strategic long-term partnerships, and an intentional process. Each contributes to the success of the development of long-term missionaries.

Extensive Goal

The extensive goal of developing missional Christians who have a heart for the world drives Village's short-term ministries, not the recruitment of long-term workers. To accomplish this goal, we rely on three key components: group based trips as opposed to sending out individuals, a thorough training process, and the participation of missions staff on each trip whose responsibilities include team member follow-up.

Strategic Long -Term Partnerships

Strategic partnerships nurture the development of long-term missionaries by exposing people to real needs. Few people return from our trips without an increased burden for reaching the lost as our teams only minister in areas with a critical need for the gospel (i.e. unreached people groups in restricted access countries). *Long-term* partnerships with national workers allow for key relationships to develop between team members and potential hosts for long-term assignments. Long-term partnerships also provide opportunities for national believers to learn how to work more effectively with North Americans allowing them to become allies in our goal of developing missional Christians. In addition, visits to our church by national partners broaden the connection between our whole church and the ministry overseas garnering support for sending them future missionaries.

Intentional Process

The process of cultivating long-term overseas workers includes extensive training, multiple trips, and individualized follow-up.

Every team completes a 4-month training process that covers ministry skills and cultural information as well as the history, strategy and the biblical perspective of missions. Reading assignments, cultural experiences, simulations, and in-depth instruction formulate our training program.

Team leadership are trained to do debriefing during and after the trip. Following the trip, people are encouraged to take the Perspectives course, become involved in Village's missions program, and to go on additional trips. For individuals who follow through on these challenges we begin to help them develop an individualized plan for future missions involvement. This plan may include additional education for ministry skills, cultural understanding, language acquisition, and leadership development.

Assessment is a crucial part of the follow-up process. Missions staff observe team members in regard to their ministry skills, cultural adaptability, and spiritual maturity. By a second or third trip some people are starting to recognize their calling to a long-term ministry. As staff confirms this calling we begin looking for a particular role, agency, and country that best fits their passion and abilities. Sending people on a mid-term assignment (i.e. one to two years) solidifies the details. For assistance with this step we send our mid-termers out with only a few organizations in whom we are confident will mentor and guide them in an effective and productive ministry. By the end of the mid-term assignment most of these people are ready to go long- term.