



Short-Term Missions Strategy

What is our Basic Philosophy for Short-Term Sending?

One of the ways we partner with our missionaries and church planters is by taking short trips to encourage, serve, evangelize, and disciple alongside them in their place of ministry. We are a family on our Father's mission together. When we take short term trips to come alongside our mid or long term missionaries and church planters, we are coming alongside our brothers and sisters in the work our family is doing in the world. Here are a few basic principles that will guide how we go about sending short term teams.

- ***Relationships always lead*** (1 Thess. 2:8). All mid and long term missionaries have advocates here in the life of the church who are regularly communicating with, praying for, and supporting them in their gospel ministry. These advocates will be the backbone for any short term trips taken to visit our missionaries.
- ***Short term always serves the long term*** (Acts 13-14; 15:36-16:6; 18:23; Galatians). Short term efforts ought to orient towards serving the missional objectives of the mid and long term strategy on the field, while maintaining a genuine sense of mutuality towards one another.
 - A short term trip can range from 3 days to 3 months.
 - Mid term is typically living as a missionary for a year to 3 years.
 - Long term is living as a missionary for more than 3 years, often for an indefinite amount of time.

The long term objective for any missionary is to achieve localized indigenous ownership for the fulfillment of [the missionary task](#) among their people or place.

- ***Focus short term efforts on strengthening, service to evangelism and/or discipleship to leadership training*** (Phil. 1:3-5; 2:19-30; 4:10-20). We are convinced that one of the best ways we can strengthen the work of our missionaries and church planters is by going to visit, care for, strengthen and encourage them in their place of ministry. Sometimes short termers can help a missionary church planter engage new communities of people to sow seeds of the Gospel more broadly. Other times short termers can help missionary church planters develop leaders through intensive discipleship.
- ***Keep our efforts simple and reproducible*** (Psalm 131; 2 Tim. 2:2). We want to equip our members to partner short term with our missionaries and church planters in a way that activates ordinary believers and requires minimal ongoing administrative support.

Where and When to Go?

We desire to offer to send one short term team from IDC to each missionary or church plant per year. Twice a year (in [January](#) and [July](#)), IDC will send a survey form to allow units on the field to request a short term trip for the following half of the year (e.g. asking in January of 2022 for July-December of 2022). Please see the timeline below. Through the survey form, our missionaries and church planters would be able to indicate when they would want to receive a short term trip, what the focus of the trip would be, who they hope would lead the trip, and other pertinent logistical details. The IDC elders still plan to take pastoral care visits to our missionaries averaging 2 trips a year (visiting 3 units per trip). IDC also plans to continue sending a group of the elders to host a missionary retreat every other year.

Who Will Go?

We want all short term trips to be built around our advocacy teams. This will allow short term teams to maintain relational and contextual continuity, since these advocacy teams already maintain regular rhythms of prayer, communication, and support for their assigned missionaries.

- Once the trips have been requested by units on the field, their advocacy team leader (ATL) will work together with them to identify a team leader for the short term trip.
- Once a TL for the trip has been identified, the TL and missionary unit should collaborate to solidify (a) trip dates, (b) number of participants needed, (c) a tentative plan for the trip, and (d) a [basic budget](#).
- Once there is a plan, a TL, dates, and a basic budget, the TL should build the trip platform on Managed Missions and begin to recruit others to fill out the team. As often as possible, trips are to be made available to the whole body.
- Once the trip platform has been built on Managed Missions, the TL should send that information to globalmission@idcraleigh.com. An IDC staff member will make short term trips available to the body in April (for trips the following July-December) and in October (for trips the following January-June).

How Will They Prepare?

Our hope is that all of our short term team members will be adequately prepared before they leave for the basics of whatever they are being asked to do by our folks on the field (e.g. if they are being asked to focus on broad seed sowing, they will arrive comfortable and competent to do so). However, we anticipate the need for our mid and long term missionaries to have some responsibility for orienting these teams to the particularities of the context in which they are serving.

- The IDC Missions Pastor (or his designee) will train all short term TLs (these four training sessions will take place in March for trips in July-December and in September for trips in January-June).

- TLs will set up a ManagedMissions page for their trip. Through this digital platform, TLs are able to recruit team members, communicate to their team, have a centralized place to store all relevant documents, and team members can set up a fundraising page.
- TLs and team members may [apply for scholarships](#), which will be offered on a first come first serve basis to those with greater financial need. All scholarship applications must be submitted at least one month prior to the trip departure date.
- All short term TLs will train their team members. They will lead three training sessions with short term team members; the last session should be completed no less than two weeks prior to departure date.

What Happens When They Return?

Our hope is to provide two levels of debrief and a reintegration training for those who participate in short term missions in the life of our church.

- First, for missionaries. We would ask for our mid and long term missionaries to build in an initial time for the short term team to debrief with them towards the end of their trip.
- Second, for team members. TLs will host a final debrief and reintegration training for the team within 3 weeks of their return. All team members are expected to attend this. TLs are to help members process what they experienced, integrate what they learned on the field into their lives so as to live missionally within their relational networks of friends, family and neighbors. Team members will also be provided opportunities to remain in regular contact with the missionaries on the field and consider going on another trip.
- Third, for TLs. All TLs will debrief with IDC Missions Pastor (or his designee) within one month of their return. TLs should bring a [one page](#) report to this debrief. TLs are responsible for [scheduling](#) this meeting. TLs will report how the trip went, the health of our missionaries, any discernible missional progress, turn in any financial information, and help identify potential TLs for future trips.

What Role Will the Advocacy Team Play?

[Advocacy teams](#) will be heavily involved in the whole process regardless of whether or not a member from the advocacy team decides to go on the short term trip. Ideally, a member of the missionary's advocacy team will always be leading these short term trips. The advocacy team should always be involved in helping with (a) communication with the unit about a short term trip, (b) recruiting a TL for the trip, (c) supplying at least one member for every short term trip, and (d) assisting in pre-trip training and post-trip debriefing.

How Do We Involve the Body to Support each Short-Term Trip?

While not everyone will be able to go, we want many in the church to be involved in each of these short term trips.

- Every team will work together to develop a daily (or in some cases, weekly) prayer guide which can be given to prayer partners. Teams are encouraged to identify a secure communication channel for prayer partners to receive daily (or weekly) updates from team members throughout the trip.

- Each team member will be expected to recruit at least five people who will pray for them daily while they are on this short term trip. For longer short term trips, between 2-12 weeks, team members are to recruit weekly prayer partners rather than daily.
- One page reports, developed by TLs, will be compiled, edited for security purposes, and made available to the body through the monthly newsletters.

What Would a Timeline Look Like?

