

7 Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission

by Hannah Nielsen

Want to make sure the short-term mission program you're considering is effective and high quality? **Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission** (SOE) was developed by several hundred people in the short-term mission community who saw the need for standards in mission trips. Today, entities show they are committed to excellent, effective short-term mission by adopting the Standards.

The SOE consists of Seven Standards: God-centeredness, empowering partnerships, mutual design, comprehensive administration, qualified leadership, appropriate training and thorough follow-up.

- 1. God-Centeredness** An excellent short-term mission seeks first God's glory and His kingdom, and is expressed through our:
 - Purpose—Centering on God's glory and His ends throughout our entire short-term mission (STM) process
 - Lives—Sound biblical doctrine, persistent prayer and godliness in all our thoughts, words and deeds
 - Methods—Wise, biblical and culturally appropriate methods which bear spiritual fruit
- 2. Empowering Partnerships** An excellent short-term mission establishes healthy, interdependent, on-going relationships between sending and receiving partners, and is expressed by:
 - Primary focus on intended receptors
 - Plans which benefit all participants
 - Mutual trust and accountability
- 3. Mutual Design** An excellent short-term mission collaboratively plans each specific outreach for the benefit of all participants, and is expressed by:
 - On-field methods and activities aligned to long-term strategies of the partnership
 - Goer-guests' ability to implement their part of the plan
 - Host receivers' ability to implement their part of the plan
- 4. Comprehensive Administration** An excellent short-term mission exhibits integrity through reliable set-up and thorough administration for all participants, and is expressed by:
 - Truthfulness in promotion, finances and reporting results
 - Appropriate risk management
 - Quality program delivery and support logistics
- 5. Qualified Leadership** An excellent short-term mission screens, trains and develops capable leadership for all participants, and is expressed by:
 - Character—Spiritually mature servant leadership
 - Skills—Prepared, competent, organized and accountable leadership
 - Values—Empowering and equipping leadership
- 6. Appropriate Training** An excellent short-term mission prepares and equips all participants for the mutually designed outreach, and is expressed by:
 - Biblical, appropriate and timely training
 - On-going training and equipping (pre-field, on-field, post-field)
 - Qualified trainers
- 7. Thorough Follow-up** An excellent short-term mission assures debriefing and appropriate follow-up for all participants, and is expressed by:
 - Comprehensive debriefing (pre-field, on-field, post-field)
 - On-field reentry preparation
 - Post-field follow-up and evaluation

Definitions

Intended Receptors:

the people on the field who will receive the Goer-Guests' service or mission activity. Intended receptors can also be aspects of God's creation (animals, natural resources, etc.) and aspects of human creation (civic or corporate structures, oppressive systems, etc.)

Goer-Guests:

those who go to the field to serve (i.e., all of the individuals or team members who are being sent, including team leaders)

Host Receivers:

the on-field persons who receive short-term missionaries (i.e., everyone at the on-field location: full-time missionaries, other expatriates, national pastors and local leaders, local nationals and any local organizations which they represent such as churches, civic organizations, NGOs, etc.)

Adapted with permission from materials provided by SOE. Hannah Nielsen is Content Editor for Mission Data International.

http://www.shorttermmissions.com/articles/standards_of_excellence