



PATH – REQUIREMENTS FOR STM TEAMS

REASON – In order for a short term mission (STM) trip to be a success, it is extremely important to communicate, organize pre-plan, research and carry out advanced scheduling. The rewards of short-term missions can be great, but they are not automatically guaranteed. Good planning and thorough research can make all the difference in having a successful trip – or not. There are challenges and blessings faced by those who are considering such an endeavor.

It is necessary to examine **WHY** you're doing it, **HOW** you can do it effectively (without actually doing damage to the culture or host you visit) and **WHAT** should actually occur that makes sense for both the participants and those being ministered to.

Detailed, advanced planning is usually not the norm for most short term mission projects. It is not something that is attempted on a regular basis for a large percentage and therefore the risks are high for all involved. **This adds unnecessary burden on your host missionary.**

WHY are you doing it? There should be no other reason than a leading directly from the Lord. This can come through various circumstances and timing, but you should be able to identify when and why the Lord spoke. If you are considering a trip to Uganda as an adventure, a retreat from your daily life, an escape from personal difficulties or a chance to renew yourself spiritually, you will be sadly disappointed and at the same time add difficulty to your hosts.

HOW you can do it effectively? That is what this outline is all about. If success is to be achieved, then a blend of suggestions, experience, desire, requirements, research, timing and communication is absolutely necessary.

WHAT should actually occur? These final questions will have to be answered. “Was Jesus Christ honored by everything that was said and done?” Did careful planning become a compliment to both the host missionaries and the team? Did the projects make Uganda/Otino Waa a better place? Did I come home with a desire to share my experience? If I came back with a new desire to share and promote Otino Waa and PATH Ministries, how will I do that?

It is equally important to determine what a short term mission trip is not.

It is not:

1. An opportunity to vacation and add to my travel experience.
2. An exercise in life planning - “I don't know what God wants me to do. I'll go on a mission trip and God will show me what to do”. This is not likely to happen unless there have been some indicators from God, *prior* to the trip.
3. An escape from personal problems. They tend to follow and extend to fellow travelers.
4. A great way to grow spiritually. Not likely this will happen. The stress of travel, the change in climate, the absence of comfort zones, the interaction of team mates and the sensory overload, generally, do not advance spirituality. Your growth begins BEFORE and can grow tremendously AFTER.
5. An opportunity for the host missionaries to serve your needs. Quite the opposite is necessary.

6. An exercise in just being led and not becoming a leader who plans. Please do not say, “I will come and do anything. I just want to be lead by the Lord.” That inevitably becomes a burden for the host missionary and frees you from leadership and accountability.
7. A dependence on myself to get by and get things done my way because I know best. Are you willing to focus on someone other than yourself?

PATH MINISTRIES REQUIREMENTS

1. **FIRST** - *STM Date Request Form* will be submitted no later than six months prior to requested dates to determine:

Dates: You are not guaranteed the dates that you request, but all efforts will be made to honor your request. PATH Ministries pre-schedules available blocks of time throughout the year. You will be assigned dates that most closely correspond with your available dates.

Number of team members: Because of limitations in transportation and accommodations, the total number of members can not exceed ten. Eight is ideal.

Projects: It is necessary to determine the nature and extent of the projects to pre-plan the schedule and materials needed (in country).

Communication: It is necessary to determine who the team leader(s) is and how to best communicate via email.

Long range planning: PATH Ministries will no longer accept short term mission teams that have not participated in at least five months of planning. The application process will help determine this timing.

Please note: Acceptance of the application dates should come *before* the purchase of your travel tickets.

2. **SECOND** - *PATH Ministries STM Individual Application Form* will be required for all team members within two months after the Date Request Form has been approved. This form includes personal contact information, medical history, career and education résumé, a faith statement, hobbies and interests, prior mission experience, references and an endorsement from your local pastor.
3. **THIRD - Deposit and payment Dates:** As a team, an outline of necessary deposits/payment dates will be included from the PATH USA office to ensure accommodations and supplies are obtained in a timely manner. Refund information for changed or cancelled plans should be included in your own team outline.
4. **FOURTH – PATH Liability Release:** Required to be signed by all team members and forwarded to the PATH USA office.

PATH Ministries has developed a **suggested outline**, that when followed, will ensure you have maximized the potential for your STM trip. It educates your team about Uganda and PATH, and gives travel details and suggestions that could be very helpful. Team meeting outlines, suggested reading, PATH requirements, health and travel tips, documentation and team structure are included. The outline is available on the web site www.pathministries.net or can be obtained, by request, at PATHUSA@bendbroadband.com