

Short-term Missions Team Leader Guide



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This 'Guide' may seem long, but it contains a wealth of information to help you plan and prepare effectively for your short-term mission trip. The information is an accumulation of the many years experience of NLI staff. Please read it thoroughly before you begin any preparation with your team and as early as possible in the mission planning process. If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact your NLI representative or STM coordinator.

ABOUT NEXT LEVEL INTERNATIONAL

Next Level International (NLI) is a registered charity in the UK, Canada, USA and New Zealand. We are a mission organization that connects local churches around the world with different ministry projects in Europe. We partner with churches from all over the globe. Our mission is to *"Empower a whole new generation of radical leaders to equip, transform and expand the Church in Europe."* This is accomplished through three main areas of ministry - leadership development, church planting and mobilising mission teams.

Since 1991, NLI has been involved in developing leaders across Europe, including Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Spain. Church Planting initiatives have been launched in many of these nations, with a strategic plan to have church planting movements erupt in Europe over the next decade. Our short-term mission and prayer teams have mobilised between 500 - 800 people into Europe each year since 1999. We are passionate to see a new generation of 21st century missionaries rise up as a result.

We are firmly committed to the local church and our dream is to help train and empower national church planters to reach their towns and cities with the life-changing message of the Gospel.

SHORT-TERM MISSION

WHAT IS A SHORT-TERM MISSION?

The aim of NLI church planting initiatives is to help establish new church plants in strategic locations. This is done mainly through the sponsorship and training of national workers. To this extent, partnering churches become a resource base in the area of teaching and training workers, serving the national vision for church planting, and providing some financial help for the national workers. Short-term mission (STM) teams and Prayer teams are mobilised to assist in these church plants.

Europe is diverse: most is classified as post-Christian and unreached, and the younger generations have no knowledge of their rich religious heritage, believing the gospel has no relevance to their life. Post Communism, many Eastern and Central European nations hope to usher in prosperity by joining the European Union. This roaring common market is accelerating in growth, often developing in just a few years what took decades to attain in the West. The massive exchange of technology, information and ideas is astonishing, but no amount of mere ideological achievement can repair Europe's decaying moral foundation.

STM's are all about helping people find faith in God. There are countless millions in Europe who do not have a relationship with God or even know this is possible. On mission you and your team will be challenged and stretched through personal and public ministry. Our prayer is that you will see God at work in you and through you, reaching out to the people of Europe with God's love and compassion.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SHORT-TERM MISSION?

A natural result of going on STM is a greater understanding of God's heart for the world and an increased passion to play a part in reaching this world with His Gospel. Many people who have been on STM have gone on to become missionaries or taken some kind of role within mission.

The church plant gains from receiving a mission team. Their profile in the community is enhanced, good contacts are made, the church community is encouraged, and most importantly, many people in their community have an opportunity to respond to the Gospel message.

The sending church also reaps immense benefits. After seeing God's power at work on mission, those returning from STM will be more passionate about reaching out to people in their own community. It is vital that the sending church capitalizes on the impact of the mission on the team, through an appropriate debriefing process.

WHAT ARE THE KEY INGREDIENTS OF SHORT-TERM MISSION?

In general, a short-term mission trip will incorporate the following elements of ministry: -

Social Activities

Aimed to help raise the profile of the church plant within the local community, and to create long-term opportunities for evangelism. Activities may include visiting hospitals, orphanages, rehab centres or practical manual work. We go to serve, not to be served!

Street Evangelism

Street evangelism enables the team to be seen by the community as they share the Gospel, and gives them the opportunity to invite people to outreach meetings and other special events.

Various Outreach Events

Outreach events/meetings, of different styles and nature, allow the team and church planter to connect with different people groups in the community and local church.

Schools/Kids/Youth Work

Teams may be involved in schools work depending on the time of year and opportunities available. Even if the authorities don't allow overt sharing of faith, teams may be able to take English or culture lessons and thereby bring a positive influence into the schools. This can open doors for other outreach opportunities, for both the team and church planter. During local school holidays teams may be involved in running kids/youth activities.

INITIAL MISSION PLANNING

Travel

The best way to arrange your suggested 10-day mission is to cover two weekends; arriving on a Friday or Saturday with at least 2 Sundays in the same church.

Dates

NLI does not set specific mission dates, although we do recommend your mission is between March and November. Generally we ask partner churches/team leaders to submit proposed dates to their STM coordinator who will then discuss these with the church planter and dialogue with both parties until suitable dates have been confirmed.

Passports

Make sure each team member has a valid passport. Please don't leave this to the last minute. Give close supervision to ensure that passport applications are submitted promptly as it can take up to 6 weeks for these to be processed by customs/immigration departments.

Visas

Please check with the embassy of the country you are visiting to see if you need a visa. If you need a visa you will need to contact NLI to obtain a letter of invitation from the host church. Again, visa applications can take up to 6 weeks so you should begin the process in good time.

Fundraising

Give careful attention to individual and team fundraising. This is a great faith-building opportunity for everyone. NLI provides a 'Recruitment Toolkit' if you would like help you with this.

Age Requirement

The usual minimum age requirement for team members is 16 years. However, we will consider applications from those under 16 years as long as suitable supervision, usually a parent, is present and the demands of mission are understood by those involved.

Working with children

The STM Team Member Application form contains information about the NLI policy for working with children. Each team member must sign a form and return it to NLI. For STM missions (not Prayer Teams/iTeams) it is the responsibility of the STM team leader and sending church to ensure that all team members are fit and proper persons to be working with children and young people on mission.

Travel Insurance

NLI does not cover you with any type of travel insurance. We advise that each team member ensures they are suitably covered by some kind of travel insurance and carries the details with them on mission. If you are bringing any musical instruments or technical equipment, please ensure these are fully insured.

Travel Injections

We recommend every team member has an up-to-date tetanus vaccination prior to travelling. Please check with your own health provider to see if there are other required vaccinations before travelling to certain countries in Europe.

Flights

Please consult your STM coordinator before booking any flights. We will advise you of the most suitable airport to use for your mission location. It is vital to organise flight times to fit in with any internal travel required to get you to your host church plant. The STM coordinator will help you organise this internal travel and advise you of the relevant cost, which is **not** included in cost of mission. (See 'Mission Finance' for more information.)

Research

Plan well for your trip: Delegate research topics to team members. These can include the culture, church, dominant faiths and history of the country you are visiting. You will find travel 'hotsheets' and project guides for most countries on the STM resource pages of the NLI website (www.nlieurope.com).

Team building

As team leader you need to be intentional about building the team before you go on mission. The most effective teams on mission are already a 'team' before they leave home. Have times of worship and prayer together, practice songs and dramas, discuss skills and gifts, socialise and have fun. (See 'Training Tools' for further help.)

Prayer support

Being on mission is like being on the frontline during battle. Attack will come! It is vital to have good prayer support for your trip - before, during and after the mission. We suggest each team member finds 10 prayer partners to pray for them and the team during this time. You can keep the prayer partners up to date with progress as you prepare for the mission, and let them have a copy of your mission itinerary so they can pray for you whilst you are away.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Packing Information and mission conduct guidelines

A suggested packing list and mission conduct guidelines are found in the Team Member Guide.

Power adaptors

Will be needed: non UK teams will need a plug changer and may also need a voltage converter (these are sometimes built into video or camera chargers; check first). Hairdryers etc will need a voltage converter.

Arrival/immigration

Most EU countries are relatively straightforward, but some countries still require visas and will issue boarding cards to those entering their country. Boarding card info: -

- These are usually handed out in-flight or can be found in customs area of arrival hall.
- Every team member must complete one and hand it to customs official with their passport.
- You may be given half of the card back: keep it safe with your passport as you will need it for your departure
- When filling out form or answering questions about your visit, please explain that you are visiting a church to help the pastor and community (kids, charity, etc): Keep it simple and avoid using the word 'work'.
- You will need the pastor's address to write on the card (will be supplied by NLI)

Money Exchange

You should have an early opportunity to exchange money whilst on mission. The church planter or local project staff will help you with this. It is often better to exchange money in one lump sum, or several larger amounts, as this makes it easier and more economical. Exchange bureaus are not always in plentiful supply so you don't want to be wasting time looking for one every day. We would not advise changing money at airports as you may not get the best rate. Another option is to use your ATM/debit card at cash points, which can be found in larger towns but not in rural areas. Please check with your bank for any charges. We advise against bringing travellers cheques as these can be hard to exchange in some countries. When bringing foreign currency please ensure that notes are as new as possible and unmarked. Some banks/exchanges will not accept torn notes or notes with handwriting on them.

Interpreters

You will have a number of interpreters working with you during the mission. Our goal is to have 1 interpreter per every 4-5 team members. If you have never worked with an interpreter before we recommend you follow the guidelines given in the 'Eight' training package (see 'Training Tools'). Interpreters' costs are covered in the mission budget. However, some interpreters might've given up a week's work to be with the team so it's always nice to bless them at the end of the mission. You could also bring a gift(s) from your own country.

Telephones

UK team members should be able to use their mobile phones, but check tariffs and coverage with provider before you travel. Non UK teams may not be able to use their mobile phones, but can buy international phone cards in most towns/cities or set up an International Phone before leaving home. Internet access is unlikely on mission, and unless they offer, please don't ask to use the pastor's internet (if they have it) as it may be very expensive. If you really can't manage without the Internet for a few days, we suggest you find an Internet café or McDonalds on your day off.

Day Off

On a 10-day mission you should have a complete day off. Plans and costs will be discussed with the team leader during the lead up to the mission. You can then follow this up with the church planter during the Orientation Meeting.

Orientation Meeting

Shortly after your arrival you will have an Orientation Meeting with the host church planter. This is a very important meeting and will give you a chance to ask any outstanding questions regarding the itinerary, ministry events, location, community etc. We also suggest that at the end of each day the team leader has a short meeting with the CP to discuss plans for the following day. As a team you should also have time each day (usually in the morning) to pray and prepare for the coming day. We will ensure time is given in the itinerary.

Contact details

These will be supplied by the STM coordinator before your mission.

Security

Whilst on mission you should take extra care to look after your possessions. Criminals look for any opportunity to steal bags, phones, etc. Be watchful and do not leave equipment unattended whilst doing street outreach/drama etc.

Mission costs

NLI requires a non-refundable deposit of GBP 300/USD 500/CAN 500 (please ask for NZ/AUS/Euro equivalent) upon registration of the team. For maximum benefit to yourselves and to assist us in preparing for your mission, it is imperative that you book early, preferably no later than 4-6 months before the trip. The deposit will be deducted from the total amount due.

The balance of payment for the mission must be sent to NLI no later than 10 weeks before the start of the mission. You will receive an invoice from NLI indicating the relevant 'due date'. Teams from Canada or USA can forward their monies through the relevant National Office. Cheques should be made payable to 'Next Level International'. We also accept International Money Orders and credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Delta with a 3% fee). No refunds can be made once the final payment has been paid.

Breakdown of mission costs for teams going into Europe

65%-70% On-field Project Costs: This covers accommodation, food, internal mission transport, interpreters, advertising, and ministry costs for the mission. It also covers national admin costs and visit by NLI project staff.

30%-35% Project costs: This covers administration costs between the NLI International Office, the host nation, and yourselves in setting up the mission. A portion of this is also invested into recruiting teams for future projects and missions. A portion also contributes to the broader organizational costs that support the overall NLI mandate of training leaders, developing church planting projects and facilitating mission teams.

Mission costs – what is not included

Please note the mission cost does **not** include any flights or internal travel between the airport and host location, as the latter can vary depending on where the mission is to be held and its proximity to a suitable airport. NLI staff will look at the most cost effective options for this travel and discuss these with the team leader prior to the mission.

Also, mission costs do not include sightseeing costs on your day off, including meals, transport and entry into tourist attractions, and any personal spending money. Please be prompt in paying for any costs incurred either on the day off or when travelling to and from the host church.

Mission budget administration

The mission budget (money for on-field costs) will be sent to the field in good time before the mission. It will be administered by the host church planter who will cover all the necessary on-field costs on behalf of the team. The CP should not ask the team leader for any further money in this respect.

Money

At NLI we love to be a blessing, but we are also encouraging the CP to be self-supporting and not rely on Western 'handouts'. This might sound rather 'blunt', but unfortunately this has happened in the past with other missionary ventures and is not always helpful for the growth of the church or its leaders. We have no objection to teams blessing people with small gifts (financial or otherwise) or meeting any small needs as they find them. We ask that if the team sees any major needs in the church/community whilst on mission, and they want to help, that they make no promises to the CP at the time, but when the team arrives home they should discuss the situation with their own church leaders and contact NLI for advice. NLI project staff can then follow this up with the partner church and church planter so that the outcome is a blessing to all.

RESPONSIBILITIES

CHURCH PLANT

The central role of the church plant is to prepare for the arrival of the STM team by arranging: -

- A program of ministry opportunities shaped by the vision and needs of the church plant and local community. *The skills, gifts and experience of the mission team are taken into account when preparing the program. However, mission is supposed to take you out your comfort zone, so expect to do things that will stretch you and the team.*
- Post mission follow-up for people who express interest in the Gospel.
- Accommodation and food.
- Interpreters.
- Transportation.

This role is vital to the project. The impact that will be felt in the church and community is connected to the degree of preparation and participation.

SHORT-TERM MISSION TEAM

The role of the STM team is to:

- Communicate regularly with STM coordinator to ensure effective preparation for the mission. This includes completing relevant registration and application forms for the team.
- Be prepared to communicate the Gospel in various ways, e.g. music, drama, dance, preaching, sports etc.
- Determine how the team member's gifts and talents are best utilized.
- Generate funds to cover airfares and other costs in coming to Europe.
- Complete a post-mission report for NLI. As well as this formal report, we love to hear testimonies and see photos of what God has done through the teams on mission. We use these to challenge others to engage in STM trips.

NEXT LEVEL INTERNATIONAL

The role of NLI is to:

- Connect the STM team with their host church plant.
- Oversee liaison between the church planter and STM team leader. The mission will usually be coordinated by a STM Coordinator based in the host nation.
- Assist the team prior to the mission by answering any questions you have.
- Deal with any difficult areas.
- Assist with the strategic planning of the mission (program, travel, budget etc).
- Pray for you!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Team members can fill out the following information in their Members Guide. We have included this information in case a team member gets separated from the team, so they can contact the pastor to help them, for luggage labels, and to give to relatives whilst you are away (please note, these details should only be used in emergencies).

Next Level International (www.nlieurope.com) - UK (International Office) +44 2476 643 415

(Please fill in the following details yourself)

STM Coordinator email:

Church planter name:

Contact address (can use on luggage labels):

Emergency contact number:

TIMELINE

The following is a recommended timeline for you use whilst you prepare your team for mission.

Four to six months before your mission begins ... you should have:

- Contacted NLI to discuss mission dates.
- Confirmed mission dates with NLI and host church plant.
- Sent your STM Team Registration Form to NLI detailing confirmed dates and approximate team size
- Paid the required deposit (see 'Mission Finance').
- Started the fundraising process.

Three to four months before your mission begins ... you should have:

- Recruited STM team and sent the Team Member Application forms to NLI.
- Checked and if needed, sent off visa/passport applications.
- Inquired into flights – often you get a better deal by booking sooner.
- Raised at least 80% of the funds needed.
- Begun ministry preparation (dramas, dance, musical items, testimonies, preaching, schools/kids programs, witnessing).

Ten weeks before your mission begins ... you should have:

- Paid the balance of Mission Costs to NLI.
- Booked and paid for flights and sent flight information to NLI.
- Arranged travel insurance for your team or helped individuals do so.

Eight weeks before your mission begins ... you should have:

- Received the draft mission itinerary/program from NLI. We aim to get this to you 7-8 weeks before the mission so you can be more specific in your ministry preparation.
- Delegated roles to team members, ensuring each one can share their testimony effectively.
- Where appropriate, received passports/visas from consulate/embassy.

Four weeks before your mission begins ... you should have:

- Received the detailed mission itinerary/program from NLI.
- Received proposed accommodation, food, and internal transport details from NLI.
- Gathered props and costumes for the mission.
- Bought any souvenirs from your hometown for the people you will meet and gifts for church planter, host church, and interpreters.
- Practiced and refined dances, dramas, mimes, songs, testimonies and other activities.
- Begun packing preparation (see suggested items in 'Team Members Guide').

TRAINING TOOLS

NLI have put together a training pack, called '**EIGHT**'. This resource is a culmination of many years experience gained by NLI staff in coordinating effective short-term mission teams. It is for you and your team to use before, during and after the mission. The product consists of three components: -

- **Eight training DVD**
Visual 'discussion starters' introduced by NLI staff and former staff, sharing from their vast knowledge and experience.
- **The Essential Leaders Guide**
This is for the STM team leader and contains extra training material on each DVD session along with eight easy to follow meeting agendas which run alongside each DVD. This guide should be used alongside the other 2 resources.
- **Team Members Companion**
This is for the mission team members. It contains some notes on the training DVDs and some discussion questions for each team member to think through while preparing for mission.

The topics covered include: -

- **A for anomaly:** big picture of mission: why go on mission: Biblical basis for mission...
- **B for beginning:** belief systems: religion in Europe: preparing a testimony: speaking tips...
- **C for confound:** cultural sensitivity: communicating the gospel in another culture...
- **D for devout:** personal spiritual preparation: Lectio Divina – the art of holy reading...
- **E for essence:** how to work effectively with interpreters...
- **F for formation:** what makes a good team: three team dangers...
- **G for gap:** conflict resolution: a Biblical model...
- **H for hereafter:** after the mission – re-entry and debriefing guide...

It is vital to prepare your team thoroughly for mission and so we highly recommend you invest in a copy of the 'EIGHT' training pack which is re-usable for future missions.

The goal of the DVD training pack is to equip STM team leaders and teams in their training. We want to make great resources available, with the primary goal of producing better equipped, mission-minded ministers of the gospel.

The 'Eight' DVD pack is currently available free of charge for all NLI STM teams. The pack includes the 8 DVD set, Essential Leader's guide and access to personal notes for team members.

Please contact your STM Coordinator or the NLI office for information on how to obtain a copy of this training pack.

If you require further advice about team training then please contact your NLI STM Coordinator or the NLI office.

CONCLUSION

We understand there's a lot of information in this guide, and much to do before you are ready to go on mission into Europe. You don't have to do everything in the first week, but you must begin preparing now. Don't get so overwhelmed by all the things you need to do that you end up doing nothing. Preparing for mission can seem a daunting task, and sometimes the trip may start to look less exciting than it once seemed. Ask God to renew your vision for the people of Europe and your passion for mission. Remember, you don't have to do everything: delegate responsibilities to other team members where possible. A mission's trip is a great opportunity for everyone to grow in their gifts and experience.

The preparation period can either be a time of frustration and difficulty, or a time of learning, growing and fulfilment. It depends on your attitude. Check your attitude and willingness to serve others daily during this time. These months will give you the opportunity to work together with your teammates and develop lifelong friendships.

Pay close attention to the culture and people of the European country where you are going on mission. Examine your own habits and behaviour: be observant and objective. You are putting a lot of effort into this trip, but the impact of the mission can be reduced if people are offended by things you do. If you are normally a loud person you will have to be especially careful. You don't need to change your personality, but look for ways you can more quietly express the thoughts and feelings you have. You will be representing your country, your church, and Christ. You may be the first Christian that many people have encountered, so be careful how you present yourself.

We encourage you to savour your experience on mission. Each day will produce new challenges and changes in and around you. Notice these developments and enjoy them. Be sure to keep a journal of your mission experience, both before, during and after the mission. Encourage your team members to do likewise, as this will increase the impact of mission. Look forward to the opportunities you will have to tell people about what happened to you in Europe. Write your entries frankly, and allow them to be an encouragement to you when your life seems dry and normal after you have returned from mission.

We are excited you have this opportunity to go on a Short-term mission and look forward to the mission with you. We pray that God will use you mightily and prepare you for His service in the coming months.