

Agape International Missions Short Term Mission Trip Handbook



Thank you for considering a short term mission trip with us. We love to have groups come along beside us in the battle against sex trafficking. In order for this trip to bless you and us, please read through the following best practices.

NOTE: Please refer back to this document frequently prior to your trip to answer questions you may have as you start planning your trip and to refresh your memory of requirements and guidelines.

Pre-trip:

Qualification and Expectations of a Team Leader

- Served on a previous short term mission trip
- Strong leadership skills
- Meet with your team on a regular basis
 - Meet at least 3 times as one group
 - General Planning
 - Develop team behavior/expectations and review conflict resolution
 - Team bonding activities
 - Review guidelines
 - Dress code
 - Cambodian/Vietnamese culture/history (see Required Reading and FAQ)
 - Safety precautions
 - Other codes of conduct (drinking, smoking, language, interaction with opposite sex, and cultural sensitivity, etc.)
 - Track required reading material
 - Review the Guidelines and budget with your team
 - Share individual spiritual gifting/talents
- Confirm additional ministry team meetings take place:
 - Plan the details for the different ministries you are involved.
- Set a meeting for team packing of supplies:
 - Done as a group this helps with organization and prevention of having to repack at the airport due to weight restrictions or forgetting something
 - Mark the bags with what is packed (Suggestion: Day 1 supplies)
 - Check with your airline for baggage restrictions
 - Most first timers over pack their personal belongings. We suggest:

- 2-3 capris, pants, shorts or skirts
 - 4-6 tops
 - 1 light weight sweater or jacket
 - Most hotels provide inexpensive laundry services
- Team Lead In Country
 - Lead daily devotionals and prayer time
 - Lead with an exemplary behavior.
 - If issues arise while serving in the ministry, please act as the liaison between the team and AIM staff. For individual team conflicts, please resolve this within your team.
 - Be flexible in changing your plans if requested by AIM

Qualification/Expectation of Team Members

- Individual has been approved by the sending organization and team leader. The organization is to use their own application and process to screen candidates, however, AIM requires that the following be conducted as a minimum:
 - Face to Face individual Interview by church/organization and team leader
 - Fingerprint and Live Scan
 - Agencies providing fingerprint screening in California can be found at <http://ag.ca.gov/fingerprints/publications/contact.htm>
 - [If Live Scan is not available, please contact your local law enforcement or federal agency for fingerprinting and background check.](#)
 - Spiritual gift evaluation: this will be used for determining your ministry itinerary.
- **Required Reading for EACH team member:**
 - Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationship by Sherwood Lingenfelter
 - Cambodia's Curse by Joel Brinkley
 - 30 day AIM devotional

General Team Requirements

- Age requirement
 - 18 years is the minimum age
 - If under 18, you must get pre-approval from AIM and must travel with a parent.
- Team Size limit
 - 10 or less is preferred.
 - Teams that have served with us previously and want to bring over 10 must be pre-approved.

Itinerary

- The team leader will receive a request to provide specific information on your team members that will help us determine your itinerary.
- Your itinerary will be confirmed approximately 10 weeks prior to your trip.
- The itinerary is based on the makeup of your team. The usual ministries participated by teams are Kids Klub, Music lessons, Computer classes, Medical clinic, and Lord's Gym.

Budget

- You will be responsible for funding EACH ministry in which you participate.
- Since you may not know which ministries you will be involved with right away, please start planning your budget based on the ones listed above under Itinerary.
- Make sure every aspect of the trip is covered in your budget (see Sample Budget)
- Over-estimate when you don't have the exact numbers
- Ask for donations for supplies whenever possible to help keep your costs down
 - Costco, Sam's Club, Grocery stores, etc. are very generous with donations
- Lunches: If serving in Svay Pak, you will be charged per day to cover the cost of water and lunch for your team (\$4/day per person). Additionally if you opt to supplement the lunch of the AIM staff and volunteers, you can opt to pay an additional \$120/ day (60 staff x \$2/day).
- Kid's Klub snack: \$40 - \$60 per session (see Kids Klub section for more details)

Travel Planning:

- You are responsible for all your travel plans including airfare, all transportation in country and booking your hotel.
- We will provide you a document with hotel, bus, and van companies for your reference after your application has been approved.

Best practices for ministries:

PLEASE NOTE: We need you to fund all the ministries that are assigned to you. In general, the ministries below are the usual assigned ministries, but this will be finalized once we have your final team list with everyone's skills, talents, and gifts. Please refer to the "Sample Budget" for general cost estimates.

General best practices:

- Team devotion and prayer each morning
- Organize the supplies you need for the next day the day or night before
- Make sure everyone knows their duties for that day before arriving
- Quick debrief each night if possible (Suggestion: on the way home or at dinner)
- End of trip debrief and team affirmations before everyone goes home (allow 2 hours).

Kid's Klub:

Number of kids:

- Expect around 150 in the morning session
- Expect around 150 in the afternoon session

What is needed:

- Lots of energy and a steady flow of activity
- Patience! They are not use to the same rules you may expect in your home country

Helpful ideas:

- Introduce yourself on first day and tell something about yourself (keep it short).
- Have an attention getter (clap, freeze, etc.) to quiet them down or bring them back to the large group after crafts, games, etc.

Bible story:

- Remember everything will take longer due to translation
- Dramatize
- Don't be afraid to go overboard with your animation
- 1st-2nd grade level (ages range from 3-14 but this grade level works for all ages)
- Keep weight and bulk in mind when planning props

Bible Memory Verse:

- Keep short
- Use hand motions where possible
- Repeat several times in English and Khmer

Craft:

- Bring everything you need. Don't plan on the stores in Cambodia having craft items
- Keep weight and bulk in mind when planning
- Kid culture is different: they don't wait patiently for fear that they will miss out. They throw trash on the ground, etc.
 - o Break into stations or divide into small groups only if you have enough supervision
 - o Utilize the disciples to help pass out and collect
 - o Assign children as special helpers if they are quiet and helpful
- Pre-assemble wherever possible
 - o Example: if you are doing bracelets, but the beads, string already with knot to start, etc. in one bag.

Snack:

- Include in your budget for each session (both morning and afternoon if applicable)
- This can be brought or purchased there
 - o Please let us know if you plan on bringing the snack
- They prefer you provide healthy snacks at least 2-3 times each week (fruit one day, milk another day)

Music/Songs:

- They like to learn simple songs in English
- Have at least 5 songs in your repertoire
- Use hand motions and lots of animation

Don'ts:

- **NO PHOTOGRAPHY** in Svay Pak. This has become a distraction and for the safety of the children no photos are allowed while in Svay Pak.
- Please try not to single out a favorite or have 3 or 4 sit on your lap. It causes jealousy, a feeling of being left out, and problems for the staff to keep the peace.

Medical Clinic:

- Bring as many supplies as possible as we are always in need
- Pharmaceutical drugs cannot be brought through customs
- Pharmaceutical drugs can readily be obtained there without a prescription at a low cost.

Lord's Gym:

- Emphasize team spirit
- Lay out the rules the first day and enforce them
- Think outside the box for activities (ex: tire-flipping contest in the street)

Computer Lab:

- Be prepared with alternative activities for times when internet service or power is down
- Different levels will be in the same class so allow time for one on one help
- There are currently 7 PCs in the lab

Important Do's and Don'ts:

- Do obey all the guidelines regarding boundaries while in Cambodia. They are there for your safety as well as ours.
 - Do refer questions on what to do to when you arrive to serve to the Cambodia staff (Kids Club, clinic, music lessons, etc.). They run the programs when you are not here and they know what works and what doesn't.
 - Do leave their cameras in the hotel safe or in their back packs. There is **NO** picture taking is allowed in Svay Pak.
 - Do follow the Dress code:

- Men
 - No tank tops other than in Lord's gym
 - Shorts to the knees
- Women
 - No tank tops or sleeveless tops
 - Make sure cleavage is covered at all times
 - Shorts, skirts and dresses need to go below the knee
- Do NOT make promises: "Maybe" to them means "yes"
- Do NOT give gifts to individuals. This causes jealousy and division. If you want to give a gift, please give to each individual or give it to the entire group. Please give gifts for the AIM staff to Pastor Chan Tha to present it to the staff so that he is aware of what is being presented and is involved.
 - Do NOT enter rooms with a red sign. These are doors into personal living space or AIM offices. Red means stop: please do not go in until someone turns the sign over to Green which means it is all clear to go in.
 - Do NOT enter the school classrooms without receiving permission from Don, Bridget, or Alf. If they aren't available, please ask one of the the American teaching staff. Please note that this is extremely distracting for both the students and the teacher.

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING MONETARY DONATIONS IN COUNTRY:

- We are often blessed by mission teams leaving a gift to help fund the ministry. We are very grateful for your support. However, to maintain the highest level of transparency and accountability we **must** have the team report the amount of the gift and to whom it was given by e-mail to our USA office. Please use both of the following e-mail addresses to report your gift. The USA office will then issue you a receipt for your records. Also, please do not take requests for personal items or needs from the staff or the disciples.
 - Nancy Gugino - Accounting: nancy@aim4asia.org
 - Julie Harrold - Development: julie@aim4asia.org

Post Trip:

- Be prepared for sharing
 - Have a quick "elevator pitch" (about a minute and half long story of what you experienced).
 - Have a longer story to share with those who want more
 - Be prepared that not everyone will share your passion about what you experienced.
- Prepare and give a recap presentation for your church/organization
- Evaluations
 - Team Leader(s)

-Please provide us with feedback, both good and bad. We are happy to accept suggestions, we want to make this a God honoring program, and there is always room for improvement.

PLEASE DO NOT POST PICTURES OF ANY OF ANY CAMBODIA CHILDREN ON FACEBOOK, OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA OR PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE SITES. MANY OF THESE CHILDREN ARE TRAFFICKED, AND IT MAKES IT EASY FOR THE STALKERS TO FIND THE SPECIAL ONES THEY LIKE.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Costs:

Q: How much should each person on the team raise?

A: This will depend on your individual traveling costs as well as the ministries you will

be asked to provide. Please refer to the "Sample Budget" to get a general preliminary cost estimate.

Q: What does the cost of lunch include at Svay Pak?

A: This includes lunch and water for your team.

Q. Can we buy lunch elsewhere or bring our own lunch?

A. No, this is part of the ministry of spending time with our full time volunteer staff to get to hear their testimony as well as to encourage them. The lunch provided is very safe to eat and the Pastor's wife is a great cook!

Q. If we decide to opt for supplementing the staff lunch what does that entail?

A. When a team blesses AIM with this food budget line item, this allows us to help others in need in the community as well as keep the protein and fruit content higher for the AIM staff of volunteers when teams are not here.

Kids Klub:

Q: Are there different children at the morning session and afternoon session?

A: About 75% of the children will be the same kids.

Q: Do we provide a different program for the morning and afternoon sessions?

A: No, it is fine to do the same program as this reinforces the message for the children to

hear it a second time.

Music Lessons:

Q: Are there instruments there for the students to use?

A: Yes, we have some guitars, keyboards and a drum set in Svay Pak. In Siem Reap

there are a few guitars.

Q: Can we bring our own instruments?

A: Absolutely, but please check with your airline on baggage restrictions and charges.

Q: Can we bring instruments to donate?

A: Yes, but again, take into consideration the airline charges. Sometimes it is cheaper to purchase the item in Cambodia (see donations list). Please see the do's and don'ts above regarding gift giving.

Q: Can I send instruments before or after we get home?

A: You can send via FedEx, however by the time you pay the shipping costs, you might be able to purchase the item cheaper in Cambodia.

General:

Q: Are translators provided?

A: Yes, translators will be provided for each of the ministries at Rahab's House, Lord's Gym, ARC, etc. in Svay Pak. If you are team that goes to Siem Reap, a translator may need to be hired.

Q: Is a translator needed for our time away from AIM/Rahab's House?

A: No, both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap are tourist areas and English is spoken at most restaurants, hotels, and shops.

Q: What currency should we bring?

A: US dollars are accepted in Cambodia; however, they must be in new and excellent condition. They will not accept bills that are wrinkled or torn. Even their banks will not accept damaged bills. Otherwise, the currency in Cambodia is Riel. Change could be given in Riels if less than a few dollars.

Q: Should we bring traveler's cheques instead of cash or can we get cash in country?

A: No, they will not accept traveler's cheques. There are ATMs, just be aware of the

transaction fees. Also, the bank hours are usually during the time you are serving in Svay Pak. There are no banks in Svay Pak.

Q: Is it okay to give money or buy books/videos from the street children in the city?

A: This is difficult to give a yes or no answer. You should refer to the AIM Cambodian staff once you arrive.

Q: Is it safe to walk around the city at night?

A: Yes, but we highly recommend that you be in groups of 2 or more at the minimum, and use the same precautions as you would in any other major city.

CAUTION: the main theft is cell phones, purses, and bags being snatched from your shoulder or lap by thieves on motos. Always be conscious of the placement of your belongings.

Q: Are there cultural manners I should be aware of?

A: There are many aspects of the Southeast Asian culture that are different from the American culture. You will see, hear, taste, and smell new things. Being a Westerner in a third world Southeast Asian culture can be a challenge as there are different priorities, beliefs, and practices. Sometimes it might be fascinating, and sometimes it might be frustrating.

However, it's important to remember that the Cambodians have a purpose and reasoning for doing things the way they do them, even though we may not see it from our western cultural mindset. At times, you will need to let go of your learned expectations. As we love and serve the Khmer people, we want to make sure that we are honoring their culture and respecting their ways.

Here are some tips to keep in mind...

- **Relationships and people are valued over tasks.** Because of this, activities or visits could take longer than expected, and therefore, our schedule would need to be adjusted. It's important to be flexible!

- **Restaurant service is not the same as in America.** In the States, we expect quick service with each meal arriving at the table at the same time. For the most part, restaurants and cafes in Cambodia will serve each dish as it is cooked. So, one person could finish the meal before another person begins eating. Meals are more about taking the time to enjoy the people at the table.

- **Maintaining social harmony is important.** Cambodians wish to avoid conflict and not upset others, so will often tell you what they think you want to hear rather than what they may truly think or feel. This is especially true for their interactions with foreigners. You may get a “yes” to an answer even if they do not know or do not understand what you are asking.

Also, maintaining social harmony means keeping emotions in check. This includes showing anger as well as showing too much exuberance. Often, a Cambodian will smile in a difficult situation instead of portraying any discomfort. Keeping cool in challenging situations is important.

- **Cambodians are generally not used to bodily contact.** Cambodians do not greet one another with hugs, handshakes, high fives, or touches on the shoulder. They are typically conservative when it comes to physical contact with people they just meet. This is especially true with people of the opposite sex who are the same age.

The traditional greeting is to press both palms together in front of you while saying, “joom ree-up sue-uh,” which is the formal greeting of hello.

- **The head is considered a location of respect.** Touching the top of the head of an adult or child over the age of ten is considered impolite.

- **Shoes are not worn in the house.** Cambodians remove their shoes before entering houses and even some businesses that require it. Unless you are invited to leave your shoes on, plan on removing them outside the door. Sandals or flip-flops that can be taken on and off easily are helpful.

- **Feet are considered the least desirable part of the body.** It is considered impolite to show the soles of your feet to others. Avoid pointing your feet in the direction of another person. This means, when you are sitting in a chair, refrain from crossing your legs. When sitting on the floor, the most polite position is to sit with your legs to one side.

- **Pointing is impolite.** When you wish to point out where something is, it is better to use your whole hand. When calling a child over to you, do not point with one finger. Rather, use your hand palm down and beckon the child bending all four fingers toward you.

- **Use both hands.** In Cambodia, it is polite to use both hands when passing something over, or when accepting something. It shows your full willingness to give, as well as your gratefulness to receive. This is also true when passing money to a vendor or clerk. It is most polite to unfold the money and hand it over using both hands.

- **Cameras are not always welcome.** As was discussed before, there will be times when you will not be able to use your camera. When out in public, refrain from taking pictures of people on the street, unless you have asked for their permission. ‘

- **Cambodians are interested in finding out more about you.** This means they will ask questions about or comment on subjects that we might consider impolite in our culture.

Topics such as weight, age, and marital status are common for them to inquire about. For instance, they will probably ask your age. This is because they have different words of address that they use depending on how old you are. Have patience and remember that, while it may be uncomfortable for us, they are not intending to be unkind.

- **To a Cambodian, even a 'maybe' can be heard as a 'yes.'** Be careful to not make any promises, including those of future contact or assistance, that you are unable to follow through with. In our culture, we are used to sayings such as, "Let's get together sometime." We may never have any intention of doing that. A Cambodian may hear something like that as a guarantee, and be hurt when you don't come through.

You will come across many Cambodians who are in need. There are many organizations who are working to help them. Though it may be difficult to understand, offering money or promising future assistance may not be the best for the situation.

The more we can respect the Cambodian culture, the more positive of an impact we can have with the people.