

- **Harnessing Skills** – the worker will have gained new skills and the church can benefit from them. This is particularly important if the worker is unable to return overseas
- **Supporting the Children** - children experience the same emotions as their parents during transition and the country may not be as familiar to them as to their parents. They may be coping with major educational as well as emotional adjustments

QUESTIONS YOUR WORKER SHOULD ASK

1. With whom are we working? Age, social or ethnic background, faith links
2. What is my theological background? What assumptions do I make about how people come to Christ and the basics of faith?
3. What has worked for me in the past?
4. Will that work here? If not, why?
5. What questions do I need to ask?
6. Are people curious about me? What is different about me?
7. What connections can I make that indigenous Europeans cannot?
8. Where can my gifts be best used?
9. Who can mentor me in this situation?
10. With whom should I build relationship in order to be more effective and better supported?

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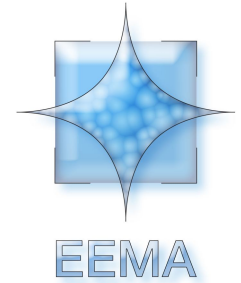
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“The European Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EEMA) has the vision to foster the welcome of non-European mission workers into Europe to join with us in our mandate to evangelistic mission”

What Every Church Should Know Sending Mission Workers to Europe



The Context

- **The Social Climate**
What shapes Europe? Here are 10 identified trends:
 1. Globalisation
 2. Service society – we look to be served
 3. Performance-orientated
 4. Media crazy – media shapes as well as informs
 5. Superannuation – population is getting older
 6. Loneliness – break up of the family unit
 7. Individualisation – loss of community
 8. Mobility – employment-driven
 9. Fun Society – live for today
 10. Fast-lane factor acceleration – speed of life
- **The Political Climate**
 - The European Union is enlarging
 - There is a growing Nationalism
 - Relations with Muslims have been strained
 - Elections produce apathy
 - Ecology is an important issue
- **The Religious Climate**
 1. Faith is a journey, not an overnight experience
 2. Experience not truth orientated
 3. Lack of Biblical background for the younger generation
 4. Peer group influence – youth churches
 5. Spirituality is OK, religion is not
 6. Pick and mix spirituality – consumerism
 7. Lack of purpose in life

8. Desire for relationship and belonging
 9. Inclusive not exclusive – no ‘one-way’
 10. Desire for authenticity, life-style and belief
- The Financial Climate
 - There is much material prosperity
 - Inner City poverty exists
 - Debt levels are high
 - Property owning is a strong value
 - The cost of living is high
 - Transport is expensive
 - Access to social benefits is being restricted
 - The Church Climate in Post-Christendom Europe
 - The Church is at the fringe not the centre of society
 - Values are political – the church must help shape them
 - Tolerance is the big value in a multi-faith society
 - Discovery of new ways of doing/being church
 - Disillusionment amongst older church-goers

In addition to all the above, you will need to investigate the particular characteristics of the country in which the worker will be serving.

Evangelism – What works?

- Relational, including virtual relationships rather than proclamational
- Seeker-oriented rather than programme-oriented
- Web-based evangelism
- Social action/compassion evangelism
- Networking across churches for ministries, e.g. youth, elderly
- Immigrant/asylum seekers/international student communities

All of the above is only the first part of a guide to working in Europe as an evangelist. Someone has spoken of “the charisma of the foreigner”. As a stranger to these shores, there may be openings that do not exist for the rest of us. It is important, too, to know the audience and develop cross-cultural antennae to pick up the shades of meaning in the spoken and unspoken communication.

- Parents who express negativity to the new culture make it difficult for children to settle.

Supporting Mission Workers in Transition

- Communication – maintain regular communication with your worker, by email, phone and where possible by visits. Send news, pictures and videos of the people and updates on national and local news
- Prayer – ensure the church receives regular updates of the worker and profiles them. Make regular prayer slots and send prayer news from the church
- Financial Support – ensure the worker has adequate direct financial support or the means to earn it whilst overseas for themselves and their dependents
- Family Support – keep the children informed about their country of passport and build links with the educational and social system and with their peers
- Extended Family Support – find out what obligations the worker has to the family left behind and how the church can help
- Fellowship – send messages and worship tapes in the worker’s own tongue. Establish links with more intimate groups who will listen, pray and support

Supporting Mission Workers in Re-entry

- Establishing a Base – it is important for workers to have a stable base during a home assignment from which to operate. The sending church is best agent for finding this and the worker needs to spend significant time with the sending church
- Debriefing - ensure there is someone who understands the cross-cultural experience with whom the worker can unpack what has happened whilst overseas. This ensures good closure on events and healthy integration of the experience in their life
- Time and Space to process –don’t fill the worker’s diary so full upon return that there is no time and space to rest, find refreshment, meet family and evaluate what has happened, what God is saying and what the next step should be

Culture Shock

- What is Culture? Culture is everything a group of people does, believes and values. It is like an iceberg, you can only see 10% of it the rest is beneath the surface. What you can see is food, clothing, and language. Beliefs, attitudes, values are all unseen and have to be observed and learnt.
- What is Culture Shock?
Culture shock has been defined as 'The anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse'. In other words we feel lost, we don't understand how life works on the social level.
- Cultural Transition
The movement between one culture and another has a characteristic shape which must be recognised and accepted. It begins with endings – saying goodbye and making good closures at the point of departure. It then goes through five stages:
 1. Fun: The excitement and adventure of experiencing new people, places and opportunities
 2. Flight: The urge to avoid everyone and everything that is different
 3. Flight: The temptation to judge people or things that may be different as bad or foolish
 4. Fancy: The willingness to learn and experiment with the new culture
 5. Fit: The ability to understand, embrace and participate in the new culture
- The Implications
It is important to understand that culture shock affects everyone who moves cross-culturally, that there are physical, emotional and spiritual reactions. Making a good ending is as important as making a good beginning.
Whilst change is immediate transition is a process and takes time. One secret of integrating well is to find a culture mentor.
- Coping with Transition
 - Time and Space - transition takes time and it is important not to try to do too much too soon. Space and time are needed to adjust.

- Realistic Expectations – people come with high hopes and expectations. It is important to set realistic goals of what is achievable.
- Coping with Stress – knowing personal reactions to stress, accepting the legitimacy of the new culture, escape valves for when things get too much, emotional security are important factors in coping
- Communication – having someone to spend time with and listen to the worker is vital
- Mentors - people who are willing to take the time to explain to how things work and accompany the worker into new situations are the best introduction to a new culture

Pre-Field Orientation

- Language Skills – evaluate the language skills the worker needs and plan how they will be acquired
- Cross-cultural Experience – ensure the worker has a short experience outside of the passport culture. This is good preparation for the coming culture shock
- Spiritual Skills – develop resources for sustaining spiritual growth where church may be different and lack of language may make it incomprehensible
- Relationship Skills – marriage and parenting skills are necessary for sustaining relationships in an alien culture. Spend time equipping the worker with such skills. Ask questions about the models of relationship they grew up with.
- Team Skills – most mission workers are operating in multi-cultural teams and need skills to appreciate the different ways of working together and doing ministry
- Practical Skills – there are many life-skills needed in a new culture to deal with housing, finance, occupation, government etc. The high cost of living in Europe may mean many will need to be employed. Do they have the skills to get a job?
- Children's and Family Issues – education, discipline, leisure pursuits, family expectations vary enormously across cultures and children also need help to make the transition. An understanding of the 'Third Culture Kid' identity is vital.