

## FCO Mission Trip Intro and Planning Guide

The decision to lead or go on a short-term mission trip during your four years of optometry school is a decision to consider prayerfully. Mission trips provide an awesome opportunity to serve, learn, change, and grow in your faith and can have a lasting impact on your life and God's Kingdom. In addition, trips offer the opportunity to foster and strengthen relationships, support and encourage the full time missionaries, and meet and work with Christian ODs with practices in the US.

As you can imagine, the different calendars of the schools and missions can make it challenging for FCO plan and coordinate all of the details of each trip, but it is our goal to make sure every student chapter has the opportunity to go on a trip. We hope to help serve as a trip match-maker for your school and provide one source that links you to all of your options. If your FCO chapter already has a long-standing relationship with a certain area, that is awesome! For those chapters that are looking for a mission opportunity or looking to offer an additional trip, we hope we can be of service in your efforts.

For those of you considering full-time mission work after you graduate – this serves as a great way to ‘get your hands dirty’ and see what it's like to use your skills as a platform to live out and share the Gospel. FCO serves as a sending organization for Project MedSend (<http://www.medsend.org/>), a Christian organization that will cover your student loan payments as long as you agree to serve for a certain period of time and can raise enough support to live on through your own efforts. It is also our goal to expand the number of residency positions offered for those who would like to spend a period of months to two years in the field after they graduate.

Please utilize the FCO website links to the mission-trips that FCO sponsors or has partnered with and familiarize yourself with the different opportunities. You can go to the sites and look at their mission calendar to make sure they can host you during an available break or give us the dates you have open for the year and we will do our best to link you with a trip. Each mission site has contact information, resources for you to help plan, and forms that will need to be printed, filled out, and returned.

Below you will find a list meant to assist you in your mission trip planning. This is just a start to get you thinking:

1. Pray for your trip throughout
2. Plan your trip
  - a. Where? When? How many? Can spouses come? Approximate cost?
3. Promote your trip
  - a. Fliers, Info meetings
4. Prepare for your trip
  - a. Team meetings:
    - i. Prayer, connecting, sharing, logistics, cultural/language prep, goals, expectations, safety, trip devotion leader schedule
    - ii. Fill out proper school forms - leave from class, lab, clinic
    - iii. Packing: type of dress, equipment, food, donations, etc
  - b. Plane tickets: Earlier = cheaper, purchase as a group or individually?
  - c. Immunizations: Hep A&B, Chloroquine, Flu?
  - d. Passports: ([http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html) ), make copies
  - e. Register group with US embassy: (<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>) – will need first and last name, passport number, DOB, and address of team members
  - f. Travel Insurance: through school or mission host
  - g. Packing party: Pack donated items needed by the mission, snacks, candy, etc
  - h. Be in contact with your host missionary or guest coordinators
5. Pay for your trip
  - a. Plan and carry out fundraisers
  - b. Send out support letters (see sample support letter)
  - c. Where are checks sent? Who are they made out to? Due date? Tax deductible?
  - d. How will support money be divided?
6. Participate in your trip
  - a. Enjoy! Consider journaling
  - b. Be flexible, patient, and look for ways to serve your team, the missionaries, and the native people.
7. Pause after your trip
  - a. Have a meeting that concludes your experience, share pictures and stories, challenge each other, how has the trip affected you?
  - b. Send thank you notes and follow-up letters to donors, churches, missionaries, and others who helped make the experience possible
  - c. Share a note and pictures with FCO International so we can include it in our newsletter or Facebook page (email to [kevgharrisod@gmail.com](mailto:kevgharrisod@gmail.com))