

HOW TO CHOOSE AN OUTREACH LOCATION

By Craig McClurg

SUMMARY:

- Pray and invite God into your process & submit your will to him
- Consider your personal passions—you'll be calling youth workers and they respond to passion
- Consider your base's vision and history
- Consider meaningful and strategic opportunities for your groups
- Consider financial feasibility.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

For us YWAMers, we tend to understand that any and all outreaches are valuable and worth doing. Certainly every person deserves to hear the Word of God and be invited into relationship with Him. As such, we go anywhere and everywhere to be ambassadors for Christ. However, when we invite guests to go on an outreach, choosing the location becomes important. Sometimes when we think of Mission Adventures, we think about all the cool training and all the cool extras we give the kids, and certainly this is part of what we're selling, but I think the primary issue in the minds of our customers is the outreach--they're buying an experience in a certain place, that just happens to include some cool training etc. So, just like in real estate, it's location, location, location.

1) PRAY - INVITE GOD INTO YOUR PROCESS & SUBMIT YOUR WILL TO HIM

Of course the first thing we do is submit ourselves to God and ask Him to speak to us. He is interested in lining up outreach locations with churches that you will recruit. Paul writes in Ephesians: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Eph 2:10 (NIV) He's prepared good works for the church to do, and we have the privilege of partnering with God to prepare those works for them. So it's critical that we get His mind before we do anything else.

2) CONSIDER YOUR PERSONAL PASSIONS - YOU'LL BE CALLING YOUTH WORKERS AND THEY RESPOND TO PASSION

I also believe that it is by God's great design that you are in the position you're in, and that it is your privilege to work with God to determine where to go. I'm convinced that God has dropped dreams and visions in your heart--passions for certain peoples and places. These are God given, and should be considered as options to take your youth groups to. Part of the reason for this, is that when we're convinced of the rightness of doing an outreach, people can respond to our passion. So if you don't weep for the people you're sending teams to, chances are not a lot of teams are going to get fired up about going there.

3) CONSIDER YOUR BASE'S VISION AND HISTORY

Often times God calls our bases to long-term strategies for reaching people. YWAM's global leadership has issued challenges to bases to adopt nations, peoples, and now Omega Zones. So your base may already be called and anointed by God to go to certain places already. If you're new to the base, I encourage you to find out what sort of history your base has, what sort of relationships at outreach locations you may already have. It's a powerful thing to line up your Mission Adventures program with what God is already doing with your base.

4) CONSIDER MEANINGFUL AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR GROUPS

In addition to figuring out where to go it's important to consider what the group will be doing there. We want to be able to provide an experience that is both inspiring and varied. We know that not everyone will be totally into evangelism, so we offer mercy ministry opportunities as well. The idea is to help the participants understand that there are many different things they can do as missionaries--ideally they would be able to visualize themselves participating in the Great Commission on a long-term basis. Everyone wants to do something meaningful, something that makes a lasting impact. People want to do something strategic--so it's imperative that we think through what the team will be doing. This will be a huge part of what draws the team to our outreaches.

5) CONSIDER ITS APPROPRIATENESS FOR GROUPS AND ITS FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY.

Even the most strategic and meaningful thing might not be the right thing. Yes, it's very strategic and incredibly meaningful to pioneer a church planting movement among the Kurds in Northern Iraq. In fact, your base may have a sense of God's calling to do this sort of thing, and you yourself may have it in your heart to go and do this. Most likely, however, this wouldn't be all that appropriate for a group of teenagers to participate in. It's different for our staff and even for our DTS students. They are like family. But the Mission Adventures participants are more like our guests, and so it's important to consider what would work for them. So the practical considerations of distance and time, the danger factor, etc. should be taken into account.

So there you have it, get praying and ask God where you should take your teams and what sorts of things they should do there. This is the basis of your "product."