

Host a Global Partner

Short-Term Hosting Opportunities

*Invite a global partner to live, work, and worship
in your congregation, presbytery, or Conference
for 10 days to two weeks.*

The United Church has made it a priority to be engaged in partnership as a way of being in God's mission. "Partnership" means becoming involved with others in God's mission for wholeness of life, especially on behalf of the poor and powerless. Partnership brings people together in community to build relationships.

By supporting short-term hosting programs with global partners and United Church communities, United Church people have an opportunity to

- live out a faith commitment to justice and peace by learning more about partners and their work around the world
- deepen their understanding of the connection between justice issues in Canada and globally
- explore and celebrate God's mission by living, working, and worshipping with global partners in the Canadian context

With the support of the Mission and Service Fund, these programs create opportunities to personalize the church's engagement in global mission through a direct relationship. It is an opportunity to share Canadian life, work, worship, and context with a global partner who brings another set of experiences and background to the conversation.

Participants in relationships with global partners speak of having felt a deep need to make a North-South connection in order to make sense of their own experiences. Relationships enable us to continue our work in Canada, when we are connected to others engaged in the same work in their own contexts. We are part of something bigger than ourselves. We are able to see things more clearly here by being informed from outside of our own experience.

Learning from and worshipping with people from another culture and different life and faith experiences can alter forever the way we look at the world, think about our faith, or read scriptures. New possibilities are opened up.

Witnessing our partners speak and express their faith and their hope can also give us confidence to speak about our own faith. Often a hosting experience opens an opportunity for a deep and long-lasting relationship.

Beginning Steps

Signal your congregation's interest in being a host by contacting pip@united-church.ca. We can let you know of existing opportunities and point you to some helpful resources to assist your planning process.

Appoint a planning committee that will co-ordinate the discernment and planning processes for the visit. Planning to implementation may take between six months and a year, so be prepared for the long haul!

The committee should be prepared to develop a brief proposal outlining the purpose and goals of the visit, including a description of the local issues your group is concerned about, and identifies a tentative timeframe.

Responsibilities of Host Community

There are four main steps for the host community:

1. Discernment
2. Planning and preparation
3. Implementation
4. Debriefing

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The planning committee should be prepared to organize, or delegate to another group, each of these key steps.

Discernment

It is important that your congregation or other United Church community be clear about why you are inviting a global partner to spend time with you, and the issues you'd like to explore together. Some of the things you'll want to consider include the following:

- As a host community, what are your hopes and expectations for a visit?
- How will this visit further the long-term mission interests of your community?
- How does this visit link to local concerns?
- What faith issues could be central to your experience?

Summarize these discussions in a one-page proposal and send it to pip@united-church.ca. We will be in touch to confirm possibilities and dates with you.

Planning and Preparation

You have a name, some dates, goals and objectives! What's next?

While the General Council Office will coordinate the formal invitation and visa process (and please be aware these can be complicated and time-consuming), the host community is busy planning the itinerary and logistics for the visit.

The itinerary should be built around the goals and objectives of the trip and include opportunities for the global partner to experience the diversity of life in your community. The committee will be working with the global partner to ensure they are comfortable with the kinds of activities being planned. Don't forget to reach out to the broader community and United Church structures. There may be a chance to connect with sister United Church congregations, presbytery, or Conference structures. There may also be a chance to invite ecumenical partners in your community to events. And be sure to build in a little relaxation time for the partner so they have a chance for refreshment and rejuvenation.

Part of the planning process will include preparation for orientation.

- What does your community need to know about the global partner? The country they come from? The issues and concerns the partner organization deals with?
- What does the global partner need to know about Canada? The United Church of Canada? Your community? Local concerns?

Materials to help in planning orientation are available from General Council Office.

When planning logistics it will be important to take several things into account.

- *Language*—Is translation support required? How can that be managed? Are those skills available within your community? Even if the partner has good skills in the language(s) used in your community, you should still see if speakers of the partner's first language live in the community. It is tiring to operate continually in a second language and comforting to speak your own language!
- *Accommodation*—For short-term guests, accommodation is usually arranged by billeting. Consider how to balance the number of hosts with the comfort of the global partner. It is difficult to sleep in a different bed and fit in with a different family environment every night!
- *Transportation*—How will the global partner get to the different venues planned in the itinerary?
- *Accompaniment*—Have someone from the host community accompany the partner to each event. A familiar face is important.
- *Fundraising*—While costs can be shared with the General Council Office, the host community will also have expenses. How will these be covered?

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Implementation

They are here at last! Plans are in place and ready to roll out. Be prepared to be flexible. Plans sometimes need to change. Have back-up strategies in mind and ready to go.

Debriefing

It's important the global partner, host community, and General Council Office take a moment together to talk about the high and low points of the visit, what went well, what might have been done better, and where to go from here. A creative use of face-to-face and conference call should make a personalized check-in process possible.

It is also important that General Council Office understand how the visit accomplished the established goals. Each host community will be asked to write a one-page summary of how the goals and objectives of the visit were met, and a 200-word story (accompanied by a picture) of a high point during the visit.

Interested? The General Council Office can provide you with more information on possibilities for hosting a global partner visit. Contact **pip@united-church.ca**.

"We are not alone. Thanks be to God."