



Values and Standards

Global Connections have established a set of values and standards for NGOs or mission agencies engaged in short-term projects.

Core Values... These are as follows: • the importance of partnership; • a commitment to excellence; • biblical mandate; • biblical attitudes; • discipleship of the participants; • facilitating of senders; and • long-term vision. These set the context within which the standards are framed.

Standards... These fall within seven clearly defined areas where the NGO or mission agency should be working towards excellence. These are as follows: • aims and objectives; • publicity and selection; • orientation and placements; • legal issues; • field management and pastoral care; • post-assignment support, evaluation, and programme development; and • responding to the challenges in today's culture and climate change.

Amor Europe

Amor Europe emerged in 2017 as an independent charity out of the Global Development team of Urban Saints (charity no. 1144923), which enjoyed a long and beneficial relationship with the "Code of Best Practice" team at Global Connections, as it was then. Hence working to the principles of best practice has been part of our formative culture.

In this document we explain how Amor Europe demonstrates its Commitment to Best Practice as defined by Global Connections.

Amor Europe has three sectors of ministry which engage in short-term mission trips, each distinctly developed to meet the needs of children in challenging places, in the name of Jesus.

BUILD Short-Term Mission Trips

Amor Europe is committed to best practice in all areas of its ministry. Here we highlight how our BUILD initiative aligns with Global Connections "Commitment to Best Practice" standards.



Amor Europe



Standards

Alignment

Section 1: Aims and Objectives

to ensure: • a biblically-based, long-term vision for all partners; • a purposeful project that has measurable goals.

a. All short-term mission programmes have clear aims and objectives. These are realistic, measurable and reflect the long-term objectives of all the partners.

BUILD teams operate according to the instructions and within the overall objectives of our overseas partner's plans to meet housing needs in subject communities. The partners use housing poverty relief to demonstrate the 'no strings attached' love of God.

b. The aims of all projects clearly reflect that this is distinctive Christian mission.

BUILD teams operate as a tool in the hand of local churches reaching out to their communities.

c. The benefits to and responsibilities of all the partners are clearly identified and stated in the programme outlines / summaries.

The overseas partner is responsible for facilitating all aspects of the trip from arrival in country. The team serve the partner's development aims and are invited by the partner to do so.

Info on the website lays out who is responsible for what in the 'About your Trip' documents.

d. There is clear evidence of consultation between the senders and hosts in establishing the aims and objectives of all short-term programmes.

We do not set the agenda for the partner. The partner has a vision which they invite us to serve.

e. Projects will be sensitive to, and developed around, the context and environment into which participants will be received.

Our partner requires us to follow their code of conduct — very carefully established over 40 years of ministry into the communities in which they work.

f. The participant is developed and disciplined throughout their experience.

A wrap-around discipleship journey using three discipleship weekends, small groups and materials is offered to every participant.

On mission there are daily meetings to process the

justice in which participants are engaged and to worship God and reflect how what is being experienced impacts their relationship with God and the world around them.

g. Where a short-term mission programme is organised by a sender that is not the participant's home church, appropriate support from the participant's local Christian community is sought.

Most BUILD trips can only be accessed by local groups with the support of a sending church or organisation.
For the few BUILD trips that are available to individuals we encourage them to involve their local community in getting behind them.

Section 2: Publicity and Selection

to ensure: • clear communication of aims and objectives; • appropriate matching of people to projects; • adequate briefing and equipping of all partners.

a. Publicity materials accurately describe the programmes without omission of what might be considered the 'harsh reality' of circumstances with the host, and are targeted appropriately, and used with integrity.

Info on the website provides video, photo, and written descriptions, and a detailed itinerary with testimonies.

b. All forms of communication with participants will clearly represent the ethos and vision of the sender, and will define the purpose of the programme in terms of service, discipleship and vocation.

Every part of the process explicitly communicates the Christian ethos of the team, and what spiritual engagement is required from each team member.
Documents detailing exactly what is involved are part of the booking process.

c. The application process is clearly communicated to the participant, and includes full disclosure of timescales, financial responsibilities and time commitments.

Info on the website lays out all terms and conditions and payment stages and rights of participants. A set of clarifying documents is produced for every expedition.
The online booking system which takes each participant through all necessary responsibilities.

d. The selection process is based on clearly defined selection criteria and all screening is transparent and reflects the nature of the programme being applied for.

Almost no screening is done. This is a very practical expedition. If there was a DBS block on an individual this would be explained.

e. Placement decisions are clear and transparent, will be made with integrity, and will be communicated to all involved (including when changes are made).

We do not operate any placements. Participants choose the location of their mission.

f. Those not selected, are given clear feedback on why their application was not approved and will be offered short-term pastoral support if needed.

We would normally only deselect if there was a DBS issue.

g. The home church is involved in the selection process (as appropriate).

Teams are generally selected by their home church or participating group. For the very few expeditions

offered to individuals, no engagement is necessary from local church.
No Christian commitment is needed for participation thus we do not assume a local church connection is present.

h. There is clear evidence that all relevant preparatory information (between selection and formal orientation) is provided to the participant as early as possible.

'About your trip' documents are provided from pre-booking.
Preparation is organised around monthly online or in-person meetings, small groups and training or discipleship weekends.

Section 3: Orientation and Placements

to ensure: • adequate briefing and equipping of all partners.

a. Orientation prior to the project and induction at the start of the project is given to all participants. This should include all procedures outlined in 5(e); for example:

- Project brief, location, and tasks.
- Structures and lines of accountability.
- Biblical mandate.
- Job descriptions.
- Child and vulnerable adult safeguarding measures.
- Health and safety, security, and issues arising from the risk assessment.
- Team dynamics and conflict resolution.
- Finances, legal liability, and insurance.
- Cultural considerations.
- Guidelines on behaviour and relationships.
- Communication policy with home.
- Expectations regarding debriefing.

All team members are required to complete interactive online safeguarding and health and safety training.
Each team has a Safeguarding Coordinator and an H&S Coordinator. These roles are provided with a briefing sheet, the relevant policy, reporting forms, code of conduct pocket guides.
Insurance information including emergency helplines are provided.
The charity Safeguarding Lead and H&S Lead are available for consultation 24/7.
Each expedition has a budget signed off by the CFO and agreed with the overseas partner.
Briefing and debriefing protocols are part of the programme.
All team members aged 18 or over for any part of the trip undergo enhanced DBS checks.
One mobile phone number is made available to friends and family at home. Communications to and from team members are directed through that number or email address.
A WhatsApp group to key UK contacts is updated daily to keep interested parties informed.
Liability and travel insurance in place for all travellers.

b. When a team is being placed, there are clear processes for the selection, screening, training, responsibilities, and support for team leaders. This takes account of both the nature of the team and the type and location of the placement.

Team leaders are drawn from the pool of veteran BUILD Expedition travellers and depends on their visible character, chemistry, and competence and its intentional development.
Coaching in role is provided by the BUILD Lead.

c. Responsibilities of all partners regarding practicalities, job descriptions and supervision are made clear and agreed prior to placement.

BUILD expeditions run with strictly agreed roles and responsibilities for each partner.
Briefing sheets for key roles are provided.

Section 4: Legal Issues

to ensure: • diligent handling of all legal issues relating to short-term programmes.

a. Where participants are working with vulnerable groups including children, 'fit person' checks are made: Enhanced DBS checks or other regional equivalent.

Each participant aged over 18 at any time on the trip undergoes an enhanced DBS check prior to travel.

b. Any participant under 18 years of age, is required to provide documented parental consent.

Legal consent from parents is collected and securely digitally held.
Affidavits for crossing borders are obtained where this is deemed helpful or mandatory. These are notarised when necessary.

c. Senders clearly define their lower age limit and who is responsible for underage participants. Specialist legal advice and insurance cover is sought for groups including participants under 18 years old.

Mandatory minimum age is defined. Exceptions are made for those accompanied by their parent(s) with the parent primarily responsible for their welfare.

d. Waivers and disclaimers are not used, unless on the explicit direction of legal advice (details provided where applicable).

Terms and conditions are made clear at the time of booking (Franchised ATOL mandatory requirement). These include Package Tour industry standard waivers and disclaimers.

e. Compliance with the Package Travel Regulations, including promotional material, use of contracts, booking conditions, and appropriate insurance cover is clearly demonstrated (if applicable).

PTR compliance is achieved through relationship with Protected Trust Services and their Trust Bank account.

f. Requirements of the ATOL regulations are implemented, if organising flights.

ATOL compliance is achieved through the charity holding Franchised ATOL Certificate 11524.

Section 5: Field Management and Pastoral Care

to ensure: • aims and objectives are met for all partners; • care and development of the participant is provided for.

a. Systems and processes are in place to review task aims and objectives with participants, and to emphasise the ongoing responsibilities and expectations.

The team travels with the main specific task of building a house. The review is therefore self-evident. No team has ever failed to complete their house.

b. Suitably skilled and experienced supervisors are in place to support participants and maintain clear lines of authority, supervision, communication, responsibility and accountability.

Each team is led by (an) experienced leader(s). Pastoral supervision is sub-divided into small groups each led by an appointed leader. Supervision of these sub-leaders is given by the team leader(s).

c. Pastoral care and support structures are established and implemented.

Pastoral care flows through the Team Leader, who has access to the department lead or their delegate, 24/7 while in the field.

Team members are subdivided into small groups for daily check-ins.

d. Opportunities for personal and spiritual development of the participant are provided.

Daily meetings to reflect on the process of building the house, linked to personal journeys with God every evening.

Daily prayer and worship sessions for all group leaders at the start of each day.

e. Appropriate policies and procedures are established, communicated, and implemented. These would include:

- Healthcare, medical contingencies, security, and evacuation.
- Identifying and managing risks.
- Stress management and conflict resolution.
- Misconduct, discipline, and grievances

Policies in place:

- Risk management: expeditions.
- Whistleblowing
- Anti bribery
- Finance
- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Grievance
- Disciplinary
- Code of conduct abroad

Section 6: Post-assignment Support, Evaluation and Programme Development

to ensure: • participants are supported post-assignment; • systems are in place to allow all partners to give feedback; • feedback received is assessed without prejudice and used proactively to enhance future programmes.

a. Debriefing and support for the participant is seen as an integral part of the short-term programme and the process involves all partners.

Formal and informal debriefing including guidance around reverse culture shock in the form of an online form.

b. Post-assignment preparation, including placement appraisal, begins before the end of the project.

Programme time set aside on final day and check-ins regularly through the trip.

c. Debriefing and support of team leaders is seen as an integral part of the short-term programme.

Debrief weekend scheduled as part of the package.

d. Senders assist participants through post-assignment readjustment.

11-day assignments require little readjustment. Debriefing helps counter reverse culture shock.

e. Advice and guidance are offered to participants to find the next step in their Christian life following the programme. Where appropriate, this is done in liaison with the participant's

Debriefing encourages and enables participants to process their progress and explain it to their sending churches and supporters.

home church.

We offer access to our new and developing "Road Less Travelled" programme to signpost and produce resources for discipleship development of people involved in Amor.

f. An evaluation of aims, responsibilities and procedures is undertaken, inviting comment from all partners. Culturally appropriate ways of providing feedback are sought from the host.

Concluding wash-up makes room for mutual honesty and invites suggestions and appreciations.
Evaluation meeting with the partner at the end of the trip allows mutual appreciation and adjustment feedback.

g. The results of evaluations are communicated to relevant managers, for the improvement of future projects.

Feedback is viewed as a precious resource. Hub Lead enables BUILD Lead to feedback regularly what learnings and improvements will be carried forward
Digital feedback forms allow the management chain to see the detail on what is being said by partners and by participants.

Section 7: Responding to the Challenges of Short-Term Mission in Today's Culture and Climate Change

to ensure: • the church or agency adopts a considered and responsible approach to climate change; • participants are encouraged to consider UK based programmes; • overseas programmes focus on "listening and learning", over and above "showing and doing".

a. The reason(s) for continuing to run overseas / international short-term mission programmes are clearly communicated in all promotional material.

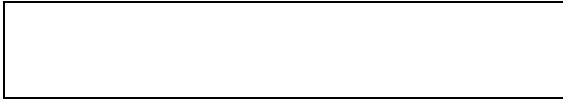
Housing poverty in the nations into which we work is continuously reviewed by our partners. This is communicated in all promotional material.
We do sponsor house building but have found over 40 years that actually going and building engages people in justice creation and poverty intervention, whereas promo materials and appeals are generally ignored.
Having travelled, people are more willing to sponsor houses once they have seen the interventions for themselves and recognised the quality of the work and genuine integrity of the partners.

b. The sender can demonstrate balance in their short-term programmes between overseas and UK based. If UK based programmes are not currently offered, the sender is able to articulate why.

Our teams primarily work into Mexico South Africa and Moldova. Our operation buys materials in the subject country, employs local people to facilitate the programmes, and seeks to operate as a tool in the hands of our overseas partners' ministries.
Without this approach, the 20,000 families that have benefitted from homes would still be homeless.

c. Where applicable, the sender is able to demonstrate an awareness of carbon off-setting, and can evidence the steps taken to offset international travel required as part of their programmes.

We do not believe in development for the current generation at the expense of the next.
We have and follow a Sustainability Policy, established with the consultancy from Hydrock, a highly respected environmental specialist company. Our team uses green electricity, reduces, recycles, and repurposes wherever possible. All necessary travel is properly calculated and offset by purchase of



sea grass through the Ocean Foundation — a highly peer reviewed and acclaimed carbon reduction programme.

d. The sender can practically demonstrate that their programmes focus on “listening and learning”, over and above “showing and doing”.

In every aspect of our work we listen and learn. Every participant is trained to cross culture humbly and with eyes open to learn from those we meet, serving and empowering rather than demanding and humiliating. However, some mission work is much more about teaching and doing than it is about listening and learning. It will always be so.
Our overseas partners and the families among whom they work are our instructors.
Approximately 5 years ago the US entity of Amor gave the entire operation to Mexican leaders.
We set our teams to learn, to serve, to follow the overseas protocols. Learning what it is like to experience poverty. To work intelligently and collaboratively with indigenously owned oversight is hugely beneficial and humbling. Personal transformation is much increased for our participants when they sit at the feet of those engaged in the struggle to survive and to share Jesus out of poverty.

Further comments.

In response to 7b (UK versus overseas trips):

Amor Europe exists to enable members of one country to work together with members of another. Global Partnership is one of our five values and a key reason for our existence. This is in keeping with the church’s activity in the New Testament, church history and prophetic encouragement both within the bible (Paul’s vision of the man from Macedonia, various international mission teams involving the early church members) and direct words and circumstantial encouragements that cheer us on today.

We do appreciate the need for mission in the UK — we operate on the Peace Line in Northern Ireland, but that is an exceptional response to a specific development need among school children. Almost everything we do is outside of the United Kingdom, most of it away from Europe. Our calling is to those in most need and to mobilise Europeans to become personally involved. Where we do operate in Europe it is in Moldova, reputed to be the European country most affected by poverty.

In response to the question of our values:

Amor Europe’s values are:

- **Knowing God** — everything comes from this and to this.
- **Local Relationships** — serving and loving those who are permanently based where we visit.
- **Global Partnerships** — mutual learning and resourcing from working together cross-culturally.
- **Dispersed Power** — whoever has power shares it with others.
- **Transformative Experiences** — travellers, hosts, and beneficiaries should all be transformed for the better. If not, we should not be going.