

Guidelines for Crisis Management and Prevention

Including Working in High Risk Areas

INTRODUCTION TO GUIDELINES

The Global Connections Guidelines for crisis management and prevention are designed to assist dealing both with critical incidents and also when working in high-risk situations. They are designed to apply to any UK based organisation or UK churches sending staff or volunteers overseas. The principles should be applied to all types of staff such as mission partners, volunteers working overseas, national staff and UK staff visiting field locations. Agencies and churches should also apply them in all contexts, both long and short term, although some different procedures might be needed in each context. Some of these guidelines have been formed specifically with high-risk areas in mind, but most of the principles can also be useful in lower risk situations and wherever or whenever crises arise.

No area of the world or working situation is completely risk-free and crises and accidents can happen in any location. However, some mission partners live in high-risk areas of the world where they could be susceptible to insecurity, violence and even kidnapping. They do not normally carry weapons or have guards and this can add another dimension to any proposed response.

Quite obviously, if an attack on mission partners were to be successful, with money being handed over or political demands being conceded, cross-cultural work in some areas of the world might become more impracticable.

Anticipating and preparing for crisis situations is an essential first step to dealing with them. Safety and security is extremely impor-

tant and therefore Global Connections has formulated these guidelines in consultation with its members. Safety and security must be the responsibility of all staff and they must be equally committed to the process to ensure success.

It is impossible to provide “off the shelf” policies and procedures that fit all locations, circumstances and the needs of all groups. This set of guidelines has therefore been developed which are designed to help agencies and churches think through and develop their own agreed policies and procedures.

All UK agencies should appoint a representative (or team) who is responsible throughout the agency for the management of a crisis situation. They should also ensure that the agency develops and implements its Crisis Management policies and procedures which should be consistent with the standards set out in these guidelines. Agencies that are part of an international structure should ensure the Head Office has appropriate policies and procedures in place and that the UK office is an integral part of any procedures.

Section 1

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF A CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY

A Crisis Management and Prevention Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a responsibil-

ity and commitment to staff and national workers of agencies and churches based in the UK but sending staff or volunteers overseas. It helps to create the safest and most positive environment for staff and to show that the agency/church is taking its responsibilities seriously.

1. All UK agencies and churches should have a Crisis Management and Prevention policy regardless of whether or not they work in a high-risk area, as situations can happen unexpectedly. Policies and procedures should be written with a holistic approach in mind across all departments.
2. The policy should be written clearly and should be easily understandable. It should be integrated with all other personnel and member care policies.
3. The policy should be given to all staff and volunteers who work in or visit overseas locations. It should be an integral part of the staff handbook, orientation and training programme.
4. Crisis Management and prevention

Global Connections, UK



issues should be an integral part of personnel and member care practice. It should also be an integral part of an agency's risk management analysis. Therefore the policy should be reviewed on a regular basis, preferably every year, in view of continual change in legal legislation, or when there is a significant change in the UK agency/church.

5. In situations where a staff member is seconded to a local partner, the local partner should also be encouraged to develop Crisis Management and Prevention policies and procedures.
6. Clear overall procedures should be developed and then adapted as appropriate for each overseas location and be based on the overall policies.
7. One of the aims of the policy should be to identify clear management structures so that everybody knows who should be informed and involved so that the best standards of member-care can be offered.

Note:

The use of the term "staff" throughout this document is a generic word, which is used to include all categories of people working overseas, including volunteers and those who are self-supported.

Section 2

SELECTION & APPOINTMENT, INDUCTION & ARRIVAL AND ONGOING SUPERVISION

Taking potential crisis situations into account during selection, induction and supervision is important in all settings. However, in high-risk situations especially, where there are serious external risks as specified in Appendix 2, it is especially important. As a result each agency/church should:

- Appoint a Crisis Management Coordinator who has overall responsibility for developing, completing and implementing its Crisis Management and Prevention policies. In each location, a local Crisis Management Officer should be appointed.
- The Crisis Management Coordinator should keep knowledge, policies, procedures and best practice requirements up to date and ensure local Crisis

Management Officers are adequately trained.

- Agree about and ensure that there is clarity on whom to contact overseas and in the home country.
- Review regularly security procedures at staff meetings and ensure all changes in the security situation are communicated to all staff.

Procedures relating to selection and appointment

- All potential personnel and volunteers working overseas should be informed of any possible risks associated with a placement at the start of any recruitment, appointment or re-deployment process.
- The application process should ensure basic health screening of applicants.
- During the interview process, applications should be asked about previous high-risk areas and crisis situations in which they have been involved as appropriate.
- Any additional criteria relating to a person's suitability for being appointed to work in a high-risk area should be clearly set out in the selection process.
- The Crisis Management policy should be integrated into the staff handbook or appropriate document and all personnel should be required to acknowledge in writing that they have received and understood the Crisis Management policy.

Procedures relating to orientation, induction and arrival

- Orientation should be provided for all categories of staff and volunteers relating to crisis management.
- People working in high-risk areas will be provided with appropriate specialist training, including personal security training.
- Induction relating to specific situations should be provided on site on arrival.
- Relationships with Embassies should be established and all staff members and families should be registered. Their guidance should be sought for those working in high-risk areas.
- Advice should also be sought from

10 Ways to Reduce Tension within the Community you Serve

- 1 Be sensitive to sound levels during meetings & services
- 2 Integrate into the village, without alienating yourself from the community
- 3 Be culturally sensitive in your conduct, especially when dealing with youth
- 4 Avoid high publicity programs on special religious holidays
- 5 Do not use relief or social programs as "bait" for evangelism
- 6 Adopt a simple lifestyle consistent with the village
- 7 Promote unity among Christian leaders in the area
- 8 Gather in a small congregation if hostility persists
- 9 Avoid promoting foreigners or outsiders to a prominent role in the village or Church
- 10 Avoid disrespectful comments towards other religions at all times

Used with permission from the Religious Liberty Commission of the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka

local Christian leaders and other agencies including international bodies. Appropriate use should be made of any UN traffic light system for entering restricted areas.

Procedures relating to ongoing supervision

- Staff working in a stressful situation should have regular periods of rest and refreshment away from their work place. This should be in addition to normal holiday entitlement.
- Reporting mechanisms should be in place for work-related injuries, sickness,

accidents and fatalities, and should be monitored to help assess and reduce future risk to staff.

- Anticipation of a crisis.
 - **External:** External crises can be predicted by regular monitoring of media, both international and local. Staff can alert their Crisis Management Officer of potential crises
 - **Personal:** Personal crises may be detected early by observation and interaction. Consistent pastoral care at various levels should facilitate this process. Individuals who observe behaviour, which may lead to individual crises should make their concerns known to their Crisis Management Office. Staff should be expected to use their common sense with regard to health and travel! Travel routes should be secure and others be advised of routes to be taken.
 - **Ministry:** It should be made clear to staff that their behaviour can affect their own ministry and the ministry of others. Staff may sense that their movements are being monitored. If so, they should inform the Crisis Management Coordinator, not using a home phone and be discreet in their contact with other personnel

Section 3

BEING PREPARED

It is easy to assume that everyone knows what is appropriate in a situation of crisis or potential crisis. This is rarely the case and there is often an absence of specific expectations. Clear guidance needs to be given to staff on many issues.

The following is a check-list for staff

- All staff should be made aware regularly of security, travel and health risks together with evacuation procedures for the specific country or region.
- Agency obligations and individual responsibilities in relation to possible risks should be clearly communicated to staff.
- Agencies/churches should provide adequate health and evacuation insurance cover. Local insurance options for local

staff should also be sought.

- Each staff member or family should appoint a current power of attorney for every adult family member.
- Each staff member should have an up to date will and its location should be known by their power of attorney.
- Each staff member or family should notify their agency/church about the details of whom to contact in an emergency.
- Each staff member or family should notify their agency/church of their wishes in the event of a death overseas, including guardianship of children.
- All staff should establish access to funds that will be adequate for emergencies. In the case of married couples, both partners should be able to access the funds in the event of an emergency.

Section 4

CRISIS PROCEDURE

Mechanisms must be put in place for actions to be taken when a crisis happens. While some procedures depend on the particular nature of the event, the following general procedures should be included:

- A verifiable source will identify the crisis.
- A list should be made of all key stakeholders to be involved, both at Field Office, Home Office and Head (International/Regional) Office level.
- A person should be appointed (normally by default the Crisis Management Officer or Team Leader) to co-ordinate the situation on the field. Delegation should be made to specific people regarding specific tasks so that everyone is aware of who does what and when and where to report back.
- Clear lines of communication should be established to ensure reliable and confidential channels are used.
- Depending on the crisis, the Crisis Management Co-ordinator may take overall charge on behalf of the whole agency. It is important that there are clear decision making processes over who has full overriding authority and whether it is the Head Office or remains at local level.
- The person taking the lead will be responsible for the following as necessary:

- Maintaining a chronology of events, during and after the crisis or critical incident
- Keeping a log of phone calls and notes of all relevant meetings
- Collecting relevant signed statements or testimonials
- Overseeing funds of team members if appropriate
- Overseeing return or burial arrangements for any deceased staff, including liaison over autopsies
- Seeing to the honourable discharge of any of the team's liabilities
- Overall liaison with:
 - trustworthy legal counsel
 - local government
 - embassy
 - family

Section 5

COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE IN A CRISIS

It is important to have clear procedures in the event of a crisis situation. The following may be helpful examples of some of the areas that should be covered.

Overall communication

- For security purposes, consideration should be given regarding what is the best communication channel to use in the case of emergencies

Communications with the family

- Contact should only be made with the contact specified by the staff member in the first instant and that there is clarity about contacts depending on the crisis and its likely impact on the family
- Ensure that the Crisis Management Team or responsible person has decided exactly what information is to be passed on, and that possible responses of the nominated contact or family are considered and prepared for:
 - How much you can say and why
 - Should the family go to site or stay where they are
 - Who can they inform and what can they say
 - How to handle media

- How to try to affirm trust
- The family will want time and attention and must feel that all is being done
- Be aware that the family may take action themselves

Communications with the authorities

- A decision must be taken as to how to deal with local and national authorities as well as the home authorities of the person/people involved.
- Complications may arise if they are not informed or if they are informed.
 - They will want to be seen to be assuming their responsibilities.
 - They may distrust mission/aid agencies.
 - They may accuse mission/aid agencies for not seeking their security advice.
 - They may not want mission/aid agencies to negotiate with their “enemies”.
 - They may try and resolve rapidly by using violence.

Communication with the Embassy

- Keep in touch with the relevant embassies. However, the extent to which they are involved depends on the nature of the crisis.

Communication with the media

- Generally try and exclude media as it may complicate matters.
- If the story is in the public domain, ask the media to limit what they say.
- Answer questions with minimal information (only facts).
- It may be necessary to use media at a later date so be aware of who they are and what they are reporting.
- Always use one focal person. Head Office should share with field exactly what has been said (and vice versa).

Communication with other agencies

- Incidents may increase risk, information needs to be shared, but with strict confidentiality
- Risk control may then be further discussed to ensure safety of others.

Section 6

DEBRIEFING AND POSSIBLE COUNSELLING

When staff members and their families come through a crisis appropriate counselling MUST be given. It is routine that they should receive debriefing and counselling, regardless of their apparent emotional well-being. This should not be at the discretion of the supervisor or the staff member.

- Staff should be aware of how to access emergency member-care and this should be facilitated by the agency/church
- Debriefing following an emergency situation should take place within at least 72 hours of the crisis
- Affected colleagues may also require counselling, for example in the event of the death of a colleague.
- It is common to attempt to shelter children from distress by trying not to mention concerns in front of them. Ensure that children are included in any debriefing.



Appendix 1

SOME DEFINITIONS

Kidnapping: Forced capture and detention for the specific purpose of obtaining some sort of payment (or political aim) from them, their organisation or a Government. Release and safety are usually dependent of certain criteria being met. The cause may be political in nature, economic (extortion) or ransom. Because of the negotiation skills

needed in this, a specialist will probably be needed.

Hostage-taking: This is more in a situation of siege, where the abductors, have taken a person(s) as part of their strategy for escape.

Abduction: This is the forced taking of a person(s) but with no demand made. (For example young men can be forced into the army). With no demand there may be another reason, often political statements, where examples of people are made. Very serious – response may be **only to give high level media coverage**. It may also require negotiation with advocacy groups and human rights groups.

Appendix 2

DEFINITION OF A CRISIS

A crisis may be external, individual or ministry.

External

- Kidnapping
- Civil unrest, accelerated military activity or war
- Terrorism
- Hijacking/carjacking
- Natural disaster

External crises can often be predicted by regular monitoring of media, both international and local.

Individual

- Disagreement between members in conflict
- Missing persons
- Serious accident
- Violence including murder or accidental death
- Major health problem (physical and psychological)

Individual crises may be detected early by observation and interaction. Consistent pastoral care at various levels can facilitate this process. Individuals who observe behaviour, which could lead to an individual crisis, should make their concerns known to their team manager. Early intervention may diffuse a larger crisis

Ministry

- Imprisonment or expulsion
- Refused re-entry
- House arrest

Individuals may sense that their movements are being monitored. If so, they should inform their team leader, not using a home phone and be discreet in their contact with other team members.

Appendix 3

Useful Resources

People in Aid

Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street
LONDON N1 9RL
Tel: 020 7520 2548
Email: info@peopleinaid.org
www.peopleinaid.org

RedR London

1 Great George Street
LONDON SW1P 3AA
Email: info@redr.org
Phone: 020 7233 3116
www.redr.org/london

International Health Exchange

1 Great George Street,
LONDON SW1P 3AA.
Email: info@ihe.org.uk
Tel: 0207 233 1100
www.ihe.org.uk

Crisis Consulting International

Email: tmercercr@cricon.org
Tel: 02891 457689
www.cricon.org

Member Care

Mrs. Marion Knell
Tel: 01509 890268
Email: marion@knell.net

List of UK Embassies

www.fco.gov.uk

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