

2.4 Visits to the Developing Country organisation



In this Chapter:

- Who should be involved?
- Visit duration and time off
- Preparation for the visit
- Practical information for visits and Link Induction Pack
- Dos and Don'ts overseas
- Follow-up after visits

Training visits are likely to be a key part of your Link which will help you to achieve the Link objectives.

Working face to face, sharing ideas and collaborating with others can be a very enriching experience for all those involved. This Chapter talks you through some of the logistical issues when planning visits from the UK to the Developing Country (DC) organisation. While this Chapter is mostly aimed at UK partners, issues around planning are also relevant to the DC. Chapter 2.5 looks at visits from DC partners to the UK.

Colour coding has been used throughout the Manual to highlight the sections which are most relevant to each:

-  green for the UK
-  and yellow for the Developing Country (DC) partner.

2.4 Visits to the Developing Country organisation

Who should be involved?

"There are so many [within the hospice movement] who still feel that coming to a Developing Country to lecture is sufficient. However their lectures are frequently not suitable to our conditions here. Also, the attitude of "we know it all and are giving it to you" is not accepted too well."

Dr Anne Merriman,
founder of Hospice Africa.

During the initial planning visit (as described in Chapter 2.2), objectives and activities for the Link will have been agreed. These will give the UK partner an indication of the areas of expertise needed by the Developing Country (DC) organisation. But how do you go about selecting the appropriate people to support the plans?

Recruiting the right people will primarily be the responsibility of the UK partner, but it is important to share their CVs with the DC partner, who can ensure their expertise is what is required.

In some cases the appropriate person to go will be obvious. In other cases the objectives or work-streams of the Link may be broader than the expertise of those on the UK Link Committee itself. In this case, one option is to openly recruit

interested people from within the organisation, creating an opportunity for those with the appropriate expertise to apply. This is also a good way to get new members of staff involved and promote your Link. Candidates should be interviewed and selected according to their suitability for the work and environment.

In addition to expertise, some personal qualities to look out for in potential candidates are:

- Flexibility to adjust working arrangements and plans according to demand
- Personable, sensitive and open-minded
- Happy to work in a difficult environment
- Accepting of different cultural practices.

UK

CASE STUDY

Recruiting for overseas visit participants

"We wanted to make the recruitment process open, to allow new people to be involved with the Link. An email was sent to everyone in the Trust, advertising the Link and the expertise required at the time. Those who were interested were asked to fill in an application form which detailed their experience in key areas: training, teaching experience and overseas work. We got an overwhelming response: over 75 people expressed an interest and 45 submitted an application form.

The main advantages of recruiting this way was that we became aware of people who had the skills, experience and passion for this sort of work. Shortlisting and selection was difficult but we recruited both junior and senior staff from various disciplines. We also found that a significant number of applicants were willing to pay for all or part of their visit costs in order to be involved.

Of the eight involved in the first year, seven of them have remained very involved in the ongoing development of the Link as Committee members.

The one mistake that we made was not engaging the unsuccessful applicants in the work of the Link. Maybe we should have been clearer that applicants who were not successful at this stage would potentially have the opportunity to go later on, or could be involved in other aspects of the Link Committee."

Dr Dave Baillie, East London Foundation Trust - Butabika Link

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When you are recruiting, remember that:

- The visit will not just be a case of turning up and giving lectures about how things could or should be done. It is about **working closely with colleagues**, understanding their environment, their constraints and supporting them to make the changes they want to make.
- It is not always necessary for only the most senior staff to be involved. Those at the beginning of their careers may have a lot to contribute as well.
- The work of the Link is likely to involve the whole health team (from lab technicians to hospital managers), so **get the most appropriate expertise** to respond to the demands of the partners.
- Visits should usually be undertaken in teams of 2 to 4 people. On the initial visits it is recommended that at least one member of the team was involved in the initial planning visit (Chapter 2.2) or has experience of working in a developing country. After the Link is established, at least **one member of the team should already be familiar with the DC partner** to brief the others.
- Each member of the team should have their own **individual objectives**.

- **Longer visits often have the most significant impact.** If individuals with the appropriate expertise are interested in taking time out (e.g. 3 months to a year), this should be encouraged.
- Change happens slowly and those that are prepared to be **involved in the Link in the long term** (not just through visits) are most likely to make an important contribution.

UK

REMEMBER!

Once your Link has selected people with the skills required by the DC partner, share their CVs and application forms with your DC partner to get their approval.

UK

CASE STUDY

The benefits of including younger doctors in a visit

Alexander Finlayson and Simon Little, a house officer and a senior house officer from King's College Hospital, took part in a visit to Link partners in Somaliland. Part of the remit of the Link was to work with junior doctors.

"During early years as a doctor it is very difficult to pursue any interest in international health without disrupting training. This trip gave just that opportunity", says Simon.

Alexander agrees, "As house officers we worked closely with interns, something which was particularly useful as we could share our cross-cultural experiences of being a junior doctor. To be surrounded by such an inspirational selection of colleagues and students was a real privilege for someone at my age and stage in a medical career. I have always wanted to pursue a career in academic medicine in developing countries. This trip has served as a significant boost along that trajectory. I have learned about the application of western medicine in a minimal resource environment and the role of innovative idea conception and execution in contributing to medicine in that context. As if this was not enough we also had a tremendous opportunity to learn about tropical medicine."

Their work has led to the launch of an e-learning resource for interns in Somaliland.

Visit duration and time off

Duration:

For new visitors it takes at least a week to become familiar with the environment and understand what their contribution can be. Many find that a lot of their work takes place in the second week. Remember you need to factor in time to debrief with partners and plan for future work. A visit of less than 2 weeks may not always be appropriate. The exception might be when the person or team who are going are:

- Very familiar with the partner organisation
- Going with very specific objectives and the partner has agreed the work can be delivered in a shorter time

Time off:

Some NHS Trusts and universities allow staff to use study or special leave for Link visits. If so, you should have an agreed policy with the management on staff entitlements to take paid time off. Organisations that do not make any special leave arrangements for their time overseas will jeopardise the sustainability of the Link. If an agreement on leave arrangements is made, bear in mind that different ranks of staff may have different leave entitlements. This may affect their ability to get involved with the Link. If those involved have clinical responsibilities, locums may need to be found, so visits need to be planned well in advance.

UK

DID YOU KNOW?

The Wales Assembly Government instructs all NHS organisations to demonstrate their commitment to overseas Links and Millennium Development Goals by allowing visits, secondments and exchanges to be options available to all the NHS employees.

See:

[www.wales.nhs.uk/documents/WHC\(2006\)070.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/documents/WHC(2006)070.pdf)

Longer visits:

DC partners often report that longer visits are the most useful, but it is often difficult for UK partners in full time jobs to get more time off. Some Links combine short, targeted visits with longer-term placements, where volunteers may go out for 3 months or more. Individuals may choose to do this through a career break or after retirement.

UK

CASE STUDY

Study leave processes, the Sefton/Chiro Health Link

Undertaking a 'health needs assessment' to assess the viability of developing a partnership between NHS Sefton and Chiro Hospital, West Hararge, Ethiopia required an overseas visit of two weeks. Such an organisation-to-organisation partnership required NHS Sefton to follow internal human resources processes.

The project was funded by NHS Sefton with support from THET's seed corn funding. It fulfilled the organisation's external training and development policy, particularly in relation to general career development and fulfilment of personal goals.

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UK

CASE STUDY

What can be achieved in just two weeks?

"Sometimes people are sceptical about what can be achieved of real benefit in a two week visit, particularly if it is your first visit. If the visit is properly planned the answer is an awful lot. You have to remember that the people working in skilled positions in your partner organisation may be carrying out multiple roles single-handedly; roles which would be carried out by a team of people in the UK. They may, for example, be well capable of carrying out specific periods of training for their own staff, but because of their workload, just do not have the time.

People from the UK can provide short periods of very necessary training in a variety of subject areas, as long as they are ready to undertake such tasks immediately following arrival and are able to complete the task prior to their departure. All this takes planning and the establishment of regular communication between the UK and the overseas hospitals.

The resources necessary to transfer a small team to your partner organisation can be considerable, so it is important to make it worthwhile! Talk, plan and prepare. "

Dr Ian Holtby, involved in the Middlesbrough-Lilongwe Link

Preparation for the visit

It is important to plan well in advance of a visit, ideally at least 3 months. Objectives will have been set for the visit but you will need to agree on activities and plan them. Here are some tips on planning:

Planning checklist for visits to the DC organisation

	DC DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTNER	UK UK PARTNER
Planning for the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on the work of the previous planning visits (see Chapter 2.2). Review objectives and agree activities to be carried out during the visit. Put these down in writing and share them. Agree on an appropriate time for the visit to take place that suits both your timetables and does not coincide with a busy time when everyone is tied up in other work. Avoid religious festivals, public holidays and exam times. 	
Before arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share details of the planned visit with colleagues throughout your organisation including the Director's office. Discuss the best use of the visitors' time. Ensure that staff who will be involved in training from the Link partners are informed at least two weeks before the visit takes place and take measures to ensure that people can attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend time talking to some of the people you will be working with overseas. Exchange emails or talk on the phone. Share objectives and the activities of your visit, along with your dates of travel with the UK Link Committee and colleagues overseas. Your visit will form part of a previously agreed objective or workstream of the Link. Make sure you are familiar with why these areas have been prioritised, what visits (if any) have taken place in the past and speak to those who have been involved previously.

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Planning checklist for visits to the DC organisation

	DC DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTNER	UK UK PARTNER
Before arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with your partners and let them know what exactly you will expect them to do - ideally with a timetable that they can feed into - so they can prepare adequately. • Arrange accommodation for the visitors - ideally in a guest house close to your organisation. Inform colleagues when you have done this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your Link has a pre-departure induction meeting make sure you take part in this. • Ensure that all participants sign any documents that are a requirement for undertaking visits as part of the Link.
On arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If colleagues are arriving at an airport close to your organisation, arrange to have a vehicle meet them on arrival. But if the airport is some distance away inform them of the best way to reach you (e.g. taxi and bus) with directions and ideal times of travel. • Once they arrive, arrange for them to meet key people and become familiarised with the organisation. • Review the objectives of the visit, the timetable of activities and ensure that you agree and that they are realistic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are being collected, make sure you have the person's contact details in case you can't find them on arrival. • Appoint one member of the team as the visit leader. They can act as the main point of contact and should keep note of any general issues about the Link raised during the visit. • Have the address of your partner organisation to make your own way there in case of emergency.
Planning workshops and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind people about any activities they will be involved in and the times of any formal trainings to ensure that they attend. • Help visitors prepare any handout notes or any stationery they need. • Work with partners to discuss what teaching methods will be the most appropriate. • Discuss feedback forms and other monitoring methods you are going to use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare to be flexible and adapt along the way. Things do not always go to plan. • Be ready to listen to your host, acknowledge what inputs they make and how the prepared objectives/ activities will be best carried out. • Conditions on the ground may be very different to the scenarios constructed from previous correspondence. Be prepared to be flexible. • Support rather than direct.
Feedback on visit and future planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of each week make time to review what has been done so far, what has been successful and what has not worked so well • Use the planned outcomes as a basis for evaluating the visit and learning for the future (jointly with your partners) • Discuss how to take work forward • Agree and plan future activities 	

2.4 Visits to the Developing Country Organisation

Practical information for visits and Link Induction Pack

Each Link should have its own Induction Pack which is updated on a regular basis and provides specific information to visitors. Once the Link is established, the Induction Packs should provide all the information necessary to plan a visit. For new Links and those developing Induction Packs, the following table has some useful advice:

UK	INFORMATION	TIPS	TO INCLUDE IN THE INDUCTION PACK
Context assessment	You will need to have an understanding of the context in which your partner or potential Link partner works in order to have an understanding of the operating environment. This is to minimise risk as well as to see how you are best able to engage with your partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with local partners and international NGOs for contextual information. • Websites such as FCO, CIA factbook, Reliefweb, Reuters Alertnet and other news sites are good sources of up-to-date contextual information. • Ensure that partners will give a contextual briefing on arrival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a summary of contextual information in the Induction Pack, to include geopolitical, historical and economic information, as well as background to any conflict dynamics. • Complement this written information with a pre-departure and arrival contextual briefing.
Risk assessment	The risks in an environment are a function of both the context and the role you and your partners are perceived to play in it. Accurate risk assessment allows you to prepare for and mitigate against risks. This both reduces the likelihood of being exposed to a particular threat, as well as helping you to deal with it should the risk occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THET's <i>Risk and Security Guidelines for THET staff</i> and Links give details of how to conduct a risk assessment. • Inform your insurance provider of risk assessment procedures. This can sometimes reduce your insurance premium. • Ensure staff are aware of the risk environment they are entering, and know what measures to adopt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an overview of risk assessment within the Induction Pack. • The Induction Pack should list the most prevalent threats identified by the risk assessment along with measures to mitigate. • Include a security overview/advice pack.
Passports	You will need to check well in advance that you have a full, valid passport with at least three months validity. If a visa is required you will need at least one blank page remaining.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can check the entry requirements of the country that you are travelling to on the FCO website www.fco.gov.uk. • The FCO website also provides useful information for what to do if your passport is lost or stolen during your visit. • Scan or photocopy your passport and either email it to yourself or give it to a colleague. If your passport goes missing this will make it easier. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell staff if the country they are travelling to requires their passport to be valid for a certain period of time after the trip or have a certain number of blank pages in it. • Include information in the Induction Pack about what staff should do if their passport goes missing. Include contact numbers for the British Embassy in the country.

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UK	INFORMATION	TIPS	TO INCLUDE IN THE INDUCTION PACK
Passports		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are going to a potentially dangerous area, it might be worth registering your trip with the British Embassy in country (or relevant embassy for non-UK nationals). Where a British Embassy is not present, all EU countries have reciprocal arrangements with each other, so registration at another EU embassy would be possible. 	
Visas	<p>To enter most countries outside the EU you will require a visa. Notable exceptions are: Malawi, South Africa, Gambia and Botswana, but check before travelling. You may be able to get a visa on arrival, usually payable in US\$, or you may be required to get it in advance from the embassy. UK nationals are rarely rejected in response to a visa application, but the process could take several weeks (and require you to submit your passport) so plan in advance. Some travel agencies can arrange this for a fee. If you have the choice of getting the visa on arrival (e.g. Uganda, Ethiopia) this is usually easier and sometimes cheaper.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will often be given a tick-box option to choose tourist or business visa. A business visa is for any individual undertaking business or any work (this usually includes voluntary work). If your Link travels overseas many times a year you may want to develop a relationship with the embassy of your partner's country. Inform them of your work, share MoUs and they may grant you free visas. Some countries, such as Malawi, have an exit fee. Ensure you have enough money set aside for this. Consult the embassy website for details on obtaining visas and costs. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website provides contact details for all foreign embassies in the UK, both in London and outside: www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/what-we-do/building-strong-relationships-ol/foreign-embassy-uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information on whether a visa is needed, the best way to get it and how much it costs. Have copies of the visa application form accessible. If you have a special arrangement with the embassy, let people know what they need to do to get the visa. Provide embassy information and contact details.

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UK	INFORMATION	TIPS	TO INCLUDE IN THE INDUCTION PACK
<p>Booking flights</p>	<p>As money for flights will generally come from fundraising activities using public funds, it is important to get the best deals. Book in advance, and search around for the cheapest flights. Avoid peak seasons, such as the end of December and July and August which tend to be more expensive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out travel comparison websites such as www.travelsupermarket.com for the best prices. • When booking flights check if it is a flexible fare, allowing you to change the dates if necessary, or if you can get a refund if the visit can't go ahead. • Some specialist travel agencies can occasionally offer discounted tickets and extra baggage allowance. See www.keytravel.co.uk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a guide on how much flights should normally cost. • Provide details on the booking arrangements - should the individual travelling do it or will the Link coordinator arrange travel? • Ensure that different members of the team all travel on the same flights. • Include specific advice on where to check for flights and who should be responsible for purchasing the ticket.
<p>Injections and prophylaxis</p>	<p>Ensure that your immunisations are up to date and appropriate for the country you are visiting. The nurse at your GPs office will be able to tell you what you need. The full range of injections can be a significant expense so ensure that you are clear who is paying for this. Has your Link agreed to cover this or will you pick up the cost?</p> <p>In a malarial area, prophylaxis is recommended. There are many different drug types to choose from - get advice from your GP. Barrier prophylaxis such as mosquito nets and repellent should be used in conjunction with antimalarial drugs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit your GP for your injections -they can provide some injections free of charge while a travel clinic will not. • Many injections may need to be given up to 2 months in advance to be effective so don't leave it to the last minute! • Injections such as rabies are optional. If you are working in a hospital setting you may not need this. • Some countries may require you to show your yellow fever certificate on entry. It is valid for 10 years so ensure you keep it safely. If you have lost it you may be able to get your practice to re-issue a certificate. • Some antimalarial drugs require you to start treatment a few weeks before departure, so plan in advance. This will also allow you to see if you suffer from any adverse side effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have a policy on who pays for injections - is it the individual, the Link or a shared cost? Bear in mind that many injections last for several years and those who are well travelled are likely to already have the full range of injections needed. • Have a Link policy about whether optional injections such as rabies are necessary. It is expensive and is only recommended for those travelling to endemic areas or those who will be based in remote areas.

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UK	INFORMATION	TIPS	TO INCLUDE IN THE INDUCTION PACK
<p>Health and Safety</p>	<p>Most trips run smoothly and your partner organisation is likely to do everything possible to make your stay an unforgettable experience. However it is important to take some precautions just in case and ensure not to put yourself at unnecessary risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sensible but not neurotic about the food you consume. Try to drink only bottled water and do not eat reheated food. • Take the necessary precautions in hot climates. Drink lots of water. • Consider the risks you may encounter and how to reduce these, see Chapter 2.1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have HIV PEP packs/ 1st aid kits for staff to take if they are likely to be at risk. • Ensure that the Link Coordinator is signed up to FCO updates for your partner's country to be up to date with security issues. • Ensure that your Link has considered risk and due diligence issues (see Chapter 2.10) • Where possible provide information on recommended local bus, car hire, taxis and in-country flight information.
<p>Money</p>	<p>Carry a mixture of cash (£ and US\$) and credit card with you - but if you are based in a rural area do not rely on your credit card. Travellers cheques may be an option if you are taking large amounts of money, but they are often more complicated to change and have a less favourable exchange rate than cash.</p> <p>For an average 2 week visit it is unlikely that you will need more than £400 spending money. You are likely to be staying in cheap accommodation, or be put up by the partner hospital, and be eating in local restaurants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In most countries £s are as easy to change as any other currency, although you may need some US\$ for on-arrival or departure visas. • Depending on the country, reasonable expenses may be around £20-£25 a day plus additional visa and travel costs, such as internal flights. • Some countries have official and unofficial exchange rates; find out where to get the best deals. • If expenses are going to be claimed back, it is essential for travellers to keep receipts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a policy on what costs are covered by the Link and which ones aren't: expensive hotels/ first class travel/ alcohol? • Tell visitors how visit expenses should be accounted for. Do staff need to record and keep receipts for all expenditures? • You may have different policies for different staff members e.g. higher paid staff members cover own costs, while lower paid ones have costs subsidised. • Information on best places to change money while in country. • Precautions to take when carrying money.

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UK	INFORMATION	TIPS	TO INCLUDE IN THE INDUCTION PACK
<p>Baggage and what to take</p>	<p>Find out from Link partners and previous visitors what is appropriate clothing and what you need to take.</p> <p>You will usually be able to purchase any personal items you need overseas and the lighter you travel the better. Remember to leave room for books, teaching equipment and resource material for your partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out what the airline baggage allowance is. The standard allowance is 25kg although some airlines e.g. Ethiopian Airlines give around 45kg - this will allow you to take additional books or equipment with you. • You may want to take a laptop to write up your work while there and prepare teaching and handouts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give guidelines on appropriate clothing, equipment to take and any necessary items that cannot be bought locally. • Provide information on limits to baggage allowance and excess charges that may apply. • Provide information on any import restrictions on particular goods.
<p>Insurance</p>	<p>Differing types of insurance will be required when conducting visits overseas. For nurses registered with the RW, indemnity and liability insurance gives worldwide coverage.</p> <p>Doctors are advised to contact their own professional insurance company (MDU or MPS).</p> <p>Appropriate travel and medical insurance that will cover the visit is required. See Chapter 2.11.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your current provider of indemnity insurance prior to the trip. • Consider taking out a Worldwide group travel insurance policy to cover your Link for visits and placements overseas. • Take out a group medical insurance policy that will cover your Link for visits and placements overseas. • Having appropriate risk assessment procedures in place can reduce your insurance premium (see risk assessment section above). • Some countries are excluded from most worldwide insurance packages. These are usually linked to FCO advice. Check with your insurance provider and FCO website for potential exclusion areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a policy on insurance and a trusted supplier. If visitors have their own yearly insurance policy check that it provides the appropriate cover. Refer to Chapter 2.11 for further information. • Induction Packs should remind participants of the need to contact their current provider of indemnity insurance. • Give details of travel and medical insurance cover and conditions • Give details of main risks associated with country/region of visits, along with mitigation measures. • Prepare quick reference cards as part of the Induction Pack, to include insurance details and key contact numbers and procedures.

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UK	INFORMATION	TIPS	TO INCLUDE IN THE INDUCTION PACK
<p>Communication</p>	<p>Any sizeable town is likely to have an internet cafe and you may be able to access it at your host organisation. But power shortages and slow internet speeds may interrupt you.</p> <p>It is a good idea to have a local mobile phone. All your partners will have one and it will allow them to communicate easily with you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a mobile phone that is not locked to a network and buy a local sim card. In most countries they are cheap and easily available and you will have a variety of networks to choose from. • Pass the sim card on to the next set of Link visitors. Bear in mind the cards often only stay active for between 1-6 months when not in use so consider lending it to a local friend to keep it active in between visits. • Much of the anglophone world has the same electrical plugs as the UK so you may not need an adaptor plug. Load shedding may mean that there is not always electricity though! • Constantly back up information on laptops and computers on flash drives. • Leave-in country contact details with friends and family at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a policy on how and when visitors should make contact. Who will be the contact person? Have an all-hours number in case of emergency. • Have a mobile phone and sim card for the Link so that visitors can be contacted when needed. • Copy of contact numbers in UK as well as contacts in DC should be left with the family/friends before the visit by the Link visitors.
<p>Accommodation</p>	<p>Get your DC partners to arrange this for you or make a recommendation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that your Link is using public funds and you cannot justify staying in the most expensive accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include tips on recommended hotels/ guest houses, price guides, etc.
<p>In case of emergency</p>	<p>Most trips run completely smoothly but it is better to take some precautions in case of an emergency.</p> <p>If you lose your passport the process of getting a new one will be made a lot easier if you know the passport number. Report it lost or stolen immediately and the Embassy or High Commission will be able to help you to get a replacement.</p> <p>If an accident or emergency occurs, it is important to know who to contact and the steps to take.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a copy of your passport to your Link coordinator and keep a photocopy yourself. You can even scan it in and email it to yourself. • Have an established emergency procedure to cover potential scenarios. • Ensure you know your blood type and that someone on your team is also aware. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an agreed emergency procedure which your Link staff should adhere to. • Include a list of in-country emergency contact numbers such as the High Commission, local hospitals covered by insurance, other local contacts, etc.

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UK	INFORMATION	TIPS	TO INCLUDE IN THE INDUCTION PACK
Professional registration	<p>If you are going to be doing hands-on work check whether you will need to register with the professional registration authority and whether your insurance covers you.</p> <p>Most countries have their own professional registration authorities and you may be required to obtain registration in the host country before being able to engage in any form of clinical practice. Where there is no registration system it is usual for UK professional registration to be valid.</p> <p>You will need to practise in accordance with the laws of the country to which you are going.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the Ministry of Health about this, your regulator in the UK or the Professional Bodies. Alternatively speak to other Links who have been involved in similar work in your partner country. • Inform your current provider of professional indemnity insurance prior to departure. • Verification of registration may be needed. Your professional registration authority can provide this. You should contact them well in advance to obtain this and they may charge a fee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with your overseas partner as to whether in-country registration with the professional registration authority is required, and if so include information on how this can be done. • Include information about whether verification of this is needed. • For non-English speaking countries it may be necessary to have professional registration documents translated in advance. • Include information about any codes of practice that apply and any limits to practice.

Dos and Don'ts overseas in the DC

Remember that when you are overseas you are an ambassador for your Link and the UK. Ensure that you conduct yourself in a respectful way. Most of this is obvious but....

DO...	DON'T...
<p>Be aware that English is likely to be a second language for many colleagues overseas. So if you are giving a talk or lecture remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak slowly and clearly • Produce handouts or visual aids to accompany any classes you teach. (Consider taking CD-ROMs with you rather than allowing others to download files from your computer to a memory stick as computer viruses are a major problem). • Do not use jargon as this may not be understood. • Where possible choose to work in smaller groups as it will be easier for people to follow. • Teach any classes in conjunction with a local counterpart, and they can help you understand the best ways to engage students. Local input also provides valuable insight into local contexts both in terms of presentation and management of disease. • Make an effort with the language and learn basic greetings. 	<p>Be critical of cultural differences in the treatment of patients, even if they are difficult or unfamiliar to you. For example in the UK, illness is a private affair and so confidentiality is of utmost importance. A visitor overseas may be surprised that this is not maintained to the same degree and want to encourage it. In some cultures privacy may not be held in such high regard and people do not mind sharing their problems more widely, or even expect to share things in a group. There may also be logistics to consider; if staff are short, a group consultation may be the only option.</p>

2.4 Visits to the Developing Country organisation

Dos and Don'ts overseas (Continued)

DO...	DON'T...
<p>Make an effort to build friendships with colleagues overseas, and spend time getting to know them and the local environment. Exchange contact details and continue to communicate in between visits. Taking photographs of your family with you can be a useful icebreaker and identify your personal role as well as your professional one.</p>	<p>Criticise your partner organisation or the work of colleagues overseas. They often do a commendable job within the available resources. This does not mean that you should not advocate change and change is not possible. See Chapter 2.7 for more on identifying and overcoming barriers to change.</p>
<p>Get a briefing from your local partner and other key contacts on arrival. Do some research on where you are going. Use resources such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.fco.gov.uk/en/internet resources • www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-World-factbook • www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc100? OpenForm • www.alertnet.org <p>You may also wish to contact local diaspora groups.</p>	<p>Get disheartened. It is sometimes easy to feel that you and the Link are not making any difference at all. In truth the Link is unlikely to be able to turn your partner's difficulties round even in a few years. The Link is only a small factor in a complex web, but your encouragement and motivation is important. Ensure that monitoring and evaluation are undertaken as part of the Link work as this will help you to understand the differences you are making.</p>
<p>Provide certificates for any training or new skills. In many countries, certificates are very important and it will help with morale. If your training doesn't fit in to any other formal arrangements you can produce certificates yourself with the Link logo on it.</p>	<p>Emphasise your holiday. If you are planning to prolong your stay after your visit be careful not to overemphasise this, as it could be seen as the only reason why you are visiting.</p>
<p>Be aware of cultural differences and norms. For example in a Muslim country it may not be appropriate for men and women to shake hands, and women may be required to wear head scarves. People tend to be formal in work contexts. Hierarchy is often also very important, so find out who you need to pay courtesy visits to at the beginning.</p>	<p>Make promises you will not be able to keep. This will raise expectations and cause disappointment when you have not been able to achieve these.</p>
<p>Ask colleagues to provide feedback on your work, what aspects have been particularly useful, and what has not been so good. This will help you to plan better for the future. Student and trainee feedback is as important as senior colleagues'.</p>	

2.4 Visits to the Developing Country organisation



FIND OUT MORE

THET has produced guidelines for ethical considerations when taking photographs as part of your Link. You can find these on THET's website www.thet.org.uk

Follow-up after visits

A single Link visit, on its own, is not likely to produce long-term and important changes. It will need to be integrated into a series of activities agreed by both partners which will contribute towards the achievement of a Link objective.

At the end of the visit you will need to jointly reflect on what has been achieved and what further activities the Link needs to deliver. This may include further exchange visits, mentoring, support or equipment provisions.

The follow-up report

It will be important to compile a visit report, both for the purpose of sharing information within your Link and for monitoring purposes. If possible, this should be jointly owned by UK and DC partners. You might want to develop a standard report format for all your Link participants to use. All visitors will need to produce a report.

It will also be important to share visit reports with overseas colleagues and other members of your Link Committee. Encourage those who have been involved in visits to give verbal feedback to the Link Committee and be involved in future planning of the Link. The end of a visit should not be seen as the end of the work. Indeed it confers particular

responsibilities on you to sustain the work that has been generated by the visit.



REMEMBER!

Draft the report very soon after, or, even better, during the visit and journey back - otherwise it can so easily get grossly delayed as normal life pressures reassert themselves!

Refer to Appendix 7 for a sample report templates

Useful headings for your report might include:

- Brief description of the Link
- Overall objectives
- Background to visit
- Visit objectives
- Activities undertaken (factual summary with dates)
- Results (data including number and names of people trained; analysis of pre and post test results) see *M&E Toolkit* for further information (p89)
- Were objectives achieved?
- Barriers or problems encountered
- Lessons learned
- Future objectives, planning and responsibilities.

Think about what follow up is needed: it may be appropriate for a colleague from your Link partner to come for training in the UK, or perhaps another visit is needed to follow up on the work in 6 months or 1 year's time.

Mentoring and communication should take place between visits and colleagues will appreciate continuing communication with you so that they can feel supported. If you do not follow-up with colleagues overseas it will cause disillusionment and undo any good work that was done during the visit.

UK

CASE STUDY

Health Link Malawi's debriefing process

"When staff return from visits to Malawi we offer each team member a post-placement health check and debrief.

During the debrief we encourage people to talk about their experience of the visit, both negative and positive. The feedback is used to inform and improve preparation for future groups. In addition, if any emotional support is needed we can refer them to the appropriate person.

This need arose from one of the first groups to go out in 2006/7 which comprised two midwives who had not previously encountered such high levels of maternal death. This identified that psychological preparation is vital to ensure that staff get the most from their placements as they will encounter significant cultural and health-related differences. Our experience has shown that when some group members do not know each other before spending 3 weeks in close proximity, having a chance to meet socially prior to travel can make a real difference to team bonding.

The debrief process also involves identifying any health issues that occurred whilst on placement, e.g. illnesses, use of HIV PEP pack, and ensuring any health surveillance is carried out where risks have been identified, e.g. schistosomiasis."

Jude Rowley, UHCW for Health Link Malawi

UK

CASE STUDY

Keeping up the momentum after visits

"The return journey from a visit to a Link hospital can be an exhilarating experience, particularly if this has been a first visit. Working for a short while in a different environment, meeting new people and taking in a new perspective on health care can help stimulate the creation of a list of good intentions, things to do on return to UK to help our African Link partners.

Then comes the return to work, the backlog of things to get through. The visit to the partner hospital becomes a distant memory and the need to carry out those promises becomes less than pressing.

You should try to avoid this situation; it will slow progress of the work and let partners down. When the next visit to the Link hospital finally comes round, little will have been done, which will demoralise you and your partners.

It is important to **establish a realistic timetable of actions needed on return to UK.**

Communication, support and mentoring in between your visits will be as important to colleagues overseas as the visit itself. Before you leave agree with colleagues what the best way to communicate with them is. Make sure you send them a copy of your visit report, your agreed actions, and continue to communicate and see how the work is going."

Dr Ian Holtby, involved in the Middlesbrough-Lilongwe Link

2.4 Visits to the Developing Country Organisation



CHAPTER CHECKLIST

- ✓ Start planning the visit well in advance - at the very least 3 months ahead.
- ✓ Discuss with your DC partner the objectives of the visit and whether they would benefit from senior or junior staff, new visitors or continuity of Link members.
- ✓ Have agreed and a written down set of aims and intended outcomes for the visit.
- ✓ Decide who will be going on the visit - consider carrying out an open recruitment process.
- ✓ Take out appropriate medical & travel insurance, or ensure that individuals have adequate cover. Ensure that staff inform their current provider of indemnity insurance of the trip.
- ✓ Create an Induction Pack for staff going on the visit including:
 - Practical advice for planning the trip.
 - Terms of Reference and Link Policies.
 - Contextual & Risk Assessment.
- ✓ Discuss cultural dos and don'ts with staff before they leave.
- ✓ Create a post-visit report template for returning staff to fill in and hold a debriefing session to collect feedback and updates. Write visit reports during visits and on the way home so they don't get delayed.
- ✓ Evaluate the outcomes of the visit and learn the lessons.

Photograph (right): Hannah Maule-ffinck, Uganda



The main currency of a Link is not money, but SKILLS. And each shared skill is a long-term asset for development.