

4. Does this program portray the people who will benefit from their intervention as lacking the skills to do it themselves?
5. Is the program cost effective?
6. Does the organization provide accountability for its overhead administrative expenses?
7. **Does this group have any connections with the UCC partners in the country where the projects take place?** If so, you can find out through our national Regional Relations Coordinators in the General Council Office what the opinion of our partners is towards this organization and their work. For example, this is how we identified the concern expressed throughout the world by our partners to the Operation Christmas Child program, more commonly known as "Shoebboxes".
8. **What is this organization's assessment of the reasons why the target population of their activities are poor; in other words, does it ask the question "Why are these people poor?"**
9. Does this organization go beyond mere charity or short-term interventions to work on the tougher issues of systemic injustice?
10. Does this group invite us to consider how our lifestyles contribute to global systems of oppression and injustice and does it call us to work for change here at home as well as internationally?
11. **Is this request coming as a result of one person's experience overseas?** While this often gives an opportunity to respond directly and personally to a need that was encountered on a trip, it also leaves the donor open to possible exploitation.
12. **Does this group have an agenda to evangelize that it not named as its primary purpose?** If so, what relationship does it have to the national church in that place?

Criteria and Questions

for Engaging in Mission in The United Church of Canada

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Principles and Criteria

A review of The United Church of Canada's statements and practice of mission over the last several decades surfaced a number of principles that have guided our church in mission in the world. These practices can also be viewed as criteria to help us in our churches and Presbyteries as we seek to engage strategically and faithfully in mission today, and also discern among the many opportunities that come our way.

In 1988, the United Church of Canada embraced Partnership as the basis for mission, and the **principles and criteria** which flowed from that include:

- We take on mission **with** our partners, rather than **for**;
- Activities based on relationships, not passing acquaintance;
- Activities based on a long-term commitment;
- Sharing includes all kinds of gifts, not just financial;
- Sharing should be mutual, and must flow in both directions;
- Priorities for mission activities are determined in dialogue and primarily by those most affected by them;
- While affirming the role of charity, we always seek to move beyond charity to a more systemic or justice response;
- Being accountable for the use of resources that we have.

- Recognizing that we can do far more together as a church in relation to other churches and organizations than we can do alone or individually, therefore choosing to work as a larger church and/or ecumenically wherever possible;
- Suspending our desire for individual achievement and lending our efforts instead to shared commitments in mission;
- Always asking the justice question, “Why are these people poor?” rather than assuming that material resources alone will resolve their poverty;
- Being prepared to look at our own way of life and how it fits into global systems of injustice, and then work for change;
- Knowing and being informed about the work that our church is engaged in both in Canada and with partners around the world;
- Supporting the Mission and Service Fund, not only through our gifts but through active promotion of it within our churches.

This document was written by Nan Hudson, Bay of Quinte Conference Minister for Stewardship and Mission, with the involvement of the former Conference Division of World Outreach Committee. It was endorsed by the Bay of Quinte Conference Executive in 2006 for use in guiding our Pastoral Charges and Presbyteries.

Questions We Can Ask

When We Receive Appeals from Organizations Outside The United Church of Canada

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The following 12 questions flow from the principles and criteria for engaging in mission of the United Church of Canada. We believe that they can in turn help you or your Church or Presbytery evaluate other groups or organizations outside of the United Church of Canada who may be requesting your time, energy, or financial resources. Applying these questions will reveal those groups whose work is consistent with our mission theology and commitments from those which are not.

1. **Is the work being done by this group fulfilling a need that is not being addressed by United Church of Canada mission partners?** Or is their work duplicating the work of the UCC’s partners supported by the Mission and Service Fund, and thereby could be seen to be in competition with the M&S Funded work?
2. **Is the practice or approach of this group consistent with the UCC’s theology and practice of partnership in mission?** We suggest that the criteria listed above can be your guide. Sub-questions that could be asked include:
 - i) Does this group work *with* the people, or develop programs *for* them?
 - ii) Does this group have a long-term relationship with communities or groups overseas, or is its work premised on short-term acquaintances?
 - iii) Is this a relationship of respect and mutuality, or one where one party is clearly the donor and the other the beneficiary, which creates dependence and destroys self-esteem?
 - iv) Is there an advocacy component to their work?
3. **Who benefits most from this program?** (Many groups offer programs that cater to the needs and desires of the donors rather than the articulated priorities of the so-called target beneficiaries.)