Venture Team Manual
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Cover: Dominican Republic. Photo by Mark Gsellman, 2011.
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“Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen:
To loose the chains of injustice
And untie the cords of the yoke,
To set the oppressed free
And break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
And to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
When you see the naked, to clothe him,
And not to turn away from your own
flesh and blood?
Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
And your healing will quickly appear;
Then your righteousness will go before you,
And the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
You will cry for help, and He will say:
Here I am.”

Isaiah 58:6–9
Part I

General Venture
Team Guide
Chapter One: COTN Overview

CHILDREN OF THE NATIONS

Section Goal: To educate Venture participants about the mission and vision of Children of the Nations (COTN).

Vision
Raising children who transform nations

Mission (COTN–International)
Partnering with nationals to provide holistic, Christ-centered care for orphaned and destitute children, enabling them to create positive and lasting change in their nations

Mission (COTN–USA)
To mobilize a movement of people and organizations and their God-given resources to raise children who transform nations

Strategy
Movement vs. Organization: Children of the Nations sees itself as a “movement of people” gathered by God to provide quality care to children under His guidance. He has created a worldwide body of people with a common passion who deny themselves to care for children. Children of the Nations is not a “missionary sending” agency but utilizes individuals from around the globe, tapping into their talents in a professional manner, which strategically assists in accomplishing the goals of the overall mission.
Philosophy
Many people are involved in making this mission/movement a reality. Local governing boards oversee local ministry staff in each country. Our international country directors and management committees work closely with staff to provide the best for our children. US and other international staff work alongside our in-country staff on specific tasks serving as consultants and providing empowerment. And we can’t underestimate the impact of the thousands of individuals from churches, specialty groups, and youth programs who sponsor our children and visit our sites to offer support and encouragement.

Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible to be God-inspired—the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.
VENTURE PROGRAM

Section Goal: To educate participants about the Venture strategy.

Venture Program
The Children of the Nations (COTN) Venture Program exists to expose participants to the COTN mission so they may utilize their skills, resources, and relationships to accomplish the vision: raising children who transform nations.

We call it a “venture” because it is the beginning of an undertaking that regularly results in an unforeseen outcome. Many people are compelled to participate in our Venture Program out of compassion or a desire to serve the poor. Yet, in the midst of serving, it often happens that we are the ones to receive.

“Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurances in their faith in Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 3:13

COTN’s Venture Program offers you the opportunity to know the children you have heard about and meet the in-country staff who are faithfully raising these children. During the venture you will partner with the in-country staff to see that thousands of children are given the opportunities to be transformed and in turn transform their nation.

While in country, you will be exposed to the great needs of the children and staff. We encourage you to take note of these needs and to consider creative ways to use your influence at home to help in meeting them (e.g. sponsoring a child, volunteering, donating resources, hosting SmilePacks® drives and meal packaging events, etc.).
Our desire is that our children become your children and their needs become your needs. Accomplishing true transformation will take a movement of people just like you.
CURRENT MINISTRIES

Section Goal: To educate Venture participants about current COTN ministries.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT MINISTRIES
COTN currently has ministries in five countries: Malawi (Southern Africa), Sierra Leone (West Africa), Uganda (East Africa), the Dominican Republic, and Haiti (Caribbean).

COTN has two specific programs—Village Partnerships and Children’s Homes—with the purpose of caring for each child physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Below you will see many examples of how COTN and its partners are seeking to raise children who live balanced lives. For more in-depth information on our programs, visit us at cotni.org.

SOCIAL:
Community-Based Ministry
COTN partners with villages and area leaders to care for the needs of children in their communities. Working together, our facilities are built and maintained, and programs are developed. Parents encourage children to attend school regularly and often serve as volunteers or staff in our programs.

Culture
Our children are raised by parents of their own culture, in their own country. Traditional ethnic music, dance, storytelling, and dress are encouraged as an important part of their heritage. Children in our homes begin learning cultural music and dance at a very young age.

Counseling
Our goal is to help restore emotional health to each of our children. Group and individual counseling provides
opportunities for the child to process their trauma and loss, enabling them to integrate past hurts and move into their future as a whole, unique, and special individual. Children are given the opportunity to work out their grief and trauma in group discussion and through play therapy.

**Family**
A sense of family is cherished by children who have lost everything. In our homes, having someone to call “Mommy” and to share joys and sorrows with is priceless. The security of having parents who care for and comfort each child can not be underestimated. It has lasting psychological and social benefits for children who otherwise would be lost to society.

**Village Visitations**
Keeping children connected with living relatives gives them an identity and a sense of belonging, with the knowledge of where they’re from. Our children are given the opportunity to visit the village they came from. This keeps relationships open and reinforces familiarity, which will be important if they ever desire to move back to their village after graduating from our program.

**MENTAL:**
**Education**
Our children’s mental needs are addressed through quality education (preschool through university), skills training for those geared toward vocational careers, and a Challenge Children’s Program for our children with special needs. Education is a key in raising children who will someday transform their nations.

**Vocational Skills Centers**
As children grow into adulthood, their future livelihood depends on training. In some of our countries COTN operates skills centers where young men and women can
learn such skills as automotive training, sewing, computer training, business skills, and other tools that will allow them to grow and become productive citizens in their country.

**Tutoring**

What a miracle to see our children soar to the top of their classes! Class standing (ranking) is very important. In Africa, our children oftentimes come to our homes extremely malnourished. This can permanently affect the development and growth of the brain. Yet, despite the uncertain outlook, we are so proud that a large portion of our children excel in school. Our house parents and staff have been committed to helping this happen by tutoring our children after school and providing a positive learning environment.

**PHYSICAL:**

**Food**

Farming is a valuable resource in our countries. COTN operates farms in some of our African countries, which helps us to not only train our children in this important area but also to provide food for all of our programs. We have developed gravity irrigation systems that allow us to now grow three crops a year. With this additional food source, coupled with nutritious meals packaged in the USA, COTN is raising healthy, fully developed children.

**Medical and Dental Care**

The vision of COTN is not only to care for the needs of orphaned and destitute children, including their health needs, but also to train them to become the doctors, dentists, and leaders of their communities in the future. Our medical clinics in the Dominican Republic provides a way for American doctors to come and give care to our children, and also serves as a local center where those who have formerly been recipients of our program may receive training and experience in the medical field.
Sports
Physical activity is an important part of the growth and development of our children. Sports, such as soccer and baseball, are an integral part of their lives. Sports tournaments provide not only much-needed activity and fun, but also serve as social events for the communities. Athletics help our children learn to live balanced, healthy lives.

SPIRITUAL:
Evangelism
Led by in-country staff, our ministry provides evangelistic tools to reach the local children and villages with the gospel. Often after they’ve received Jesus as their Lord and Savior, our children become actively involved in evangelism in their communities. They can often be found visiting neighboring villages to share the good news of Jesus Christ! It is amazing how God has changed the lives of our children, and even more, to see them extend His love to reach others!

Discipleship
Children who attend COTN schools not only get a great education, but training in the Bible as well. In addition, the children who live in our homes participate in daily devotional and worship times together. We are eager to see these children grow to become godly men and women who will positively affect their culture!

Developing Spiritual Habits
Our children are taught the importance of developing healthy spiritual habits (disciplines), which are designed to produce specific characteristics. These habits include: devotions, prayer, fasting, meditation, giving tithes, and active participation in local church fellowship.
Worship
When you visit one of our Children’s Homes, you will often hear the sound of drums and children’s voices singing praises to God. Worship is an integral part of the lives of COTN children, as they praise and glorify God daily for their lives and express their desire to live wholeheartedly committed to Him.
Chapter Two: Training

Meeting #1: TRIP OVERVIEW

Section Goal: Venture participants will begin preparing physically (medical check-up and vaccinations) and begin gathering required travel documents (passport and visa).

At the end of this chapter you should:

- Know the dates and approximate cost of your trip
- Receive contact information for your leader
- Know all future training session dates
- Be prepared to apply for your passport and visa (if applicable)
- Schedule an appointment for all necessary vaccinations
- Write and send your support letters
### VENTURE TRIP INFORMATION

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Throughout this manual, you will see the COTN logo, which represents an action point for you to consider.

Below are four ways to jump-start your Venture Trip:

**Jump Start 1 – Training Schedule**
These training sessions are vital to your understanding of the experience you will have in country. We ask that all participants attend all of the training meetings prescheduled by your team leader.

**Jump Start 2 – Passport Application**
Apply ASAP! It can take up to three months to obtain a passport. Applications are available at most large U.S. Post Offices. You may also go online to: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html or http://www.unitedstates.org/passport.php to begin the process. Give your leader two photocopies of your passport. (For more information, see page 18.)
Jump Start 3 – Vaccinations

Start early! Several vaccinations are required for travel to Africa and the Caribbean. Some vaccinations may need to be completed over the course of several months prior to travel. Some vaccinations may require more than one dosage. Copies of vaccination records must be given to your team leader in case of any emergencies. (For more information, see page 19.)

Jump Start 4 – Fundraising Schedule

As you prepare to write your support letter, please keep the following payment schedule in mind. A non-refundable $100 application fee is due with your application. Airfare payments will be due in full prior to purchasing the itinerary. The remaining in-country costs are due 30 days prior to departure.
VENTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

Over the course of the next several months, you will be meeting with your team/leader in preparation for your trip. We ask that you review the material to be covered prior to the meeting, complete all action points, and then come to the meeting prepared for discussion.

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<td>Meeting #2 – Cultural Prep</td>
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<td>Meeting #6 – Reunion</td>
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<td>Meeting #7 – Share the Vision</td>
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“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25
PRE-TRIP PREPARATION
Below are some guidelines you should use in preparation for your trip. COTN strongly recommends participants do research using the Internet and other travel resources as they prepare for this trip.

Passport Application Information
Apply ASAP: It can take up to three months to obtain a passport. Applications are available at most large U.S. post offices.

Processing Your Passport
- You will need a certified birth certificate and a form of present identification (driver’s license), as well as a front and back copy of each.
- Include with your application two recent passport photos (available at some post offices, Costco, FedEx Kinko’s, and AAA).
- Naturalized American citizens must present naturalization papers.
- Applications may be mailed in or brought to a U.S. courthouse.
- Adult passports are valid for 10 years.
- Sign your passport as soon as you receive it, just as it appears on the passport. Then give two color copies to your team leader.

If You Already Have a Passport
Be sure your passport is valid for at least six months after you are scheduled to return home.
A person may renew a passport by mail if:

- They have been issued a U.S. passport in their own name within the past fifteen years.
- They were issued their most recent passport after their 16th birthday
- They submit their most recent U.S. passport with a Form DSP-82 (Application for Passport by Mail), which may be obtained from one of the offices accepting applications.

**Vaccinations**

Children of the Nations does not provide medical recommendations as to the types of vaccinations you should receive. The following guidelines are only intended to give you a starting point in seeking professional counsel and up-to-date information from your doctor or local travel clinic/pharmacy. Ask them for current information and advice.

*Note: Many local health departments have stopped issuing vaccinations and recommendations for travelers. Please start your vaccination process SIX months prior to leaving, by visiting your doctor or a travel clinic/pharmacy. Take your immunization record if you have one.*

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

You MUST obtain a YELLOW FEVER VACCINATION to:

1) travel to Sierra Leone
2) go on safari in Zambia (Malawi trips) with particular safari companies
You may also consult the following websites where you can get more information on what would be prudent for your travel needs.

**RECOMMENDED TRAVEL AND MEDICAL WEBSITES**
Information regarding specific immunizations:


UK: [http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/africa.htm](http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/africa.htm)

**Notes:**
FINANCIAL PARTNERS
One of the most common concerns of those seeking to serve God through a Venture Trip is the question of how to raise the money.

First, God wants us to ask and to depend on Him to see our mission through. The best way we can do this is by praying. It has often been said by former participants that raising their support was one of the most beneficial experiences during their preparation. Why? Because it forced them to honestly rely on the power of God and the power of prayer in a situation that was beyond their own control. They learned that fundraising becomes an opportunity for growth because when we stretch ourselves, counting on God to provide the resources to accomplish His goals, we grow stronger in our ability to trust Him in everything.

Second, God wants us to invite. He wants us to believe so much in the mission we are given that we go out and make sure it has every opportunity to happen. He wants us to invite others to join us in this exciting opportunity and gather those who will support us in many ways, including prayer and financial support.

Also, by telling others about your plans, you involve them in becoming concerned for the children you intend to serve. Not only will you raise your financial support, but by getting the word out to others, you will be educating them about the needs of the children.

We hope that you'll look at raising your support as an opportunity to experience growth in your own faith by seeing God at work and as a time to gather a community around you that can be actively involved in your life and mission.
“The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”
1 Samuel 30:24

In addition, fundraising is a biblical principle. Here are a few examples:

Is it biblical to be supported by others to serve God?
(1 Cor. 9:1–18; Luke 8:1–3; Phil. 4:10–20)

Is it biblical to make financial appeals for your own ministry?
(Rom. 15:20–24; 2 Cor. 1:16; 16:5–6)

Is it biblical to raise financial support from people you don’t know well?
Should support come primarily from those to whom you’ve ministered?
(Rom. 15:20–24; 2 Cor. 12:13; Matt. 10:5–15)

What about making financial appeals to non-believers and family members?
(Acts 10:2–4; 3 John 5–7)

What about financial appeals to those who are not as well off as you?
Or to those who are already giving heavily?
(2 Cor. 8:2–3, 9:7; Phil. 4:17)
LETTER WRITING

Developing financial partners definitely takes effort on your part. A popular method is to write letters to friends, family, and others and share with them about the opportunity to partner with you through prayer, finances, or other resource needs. Many people can’t take the time to go on a mission themselves, but they do value the opportunity of being an important partner with you.

In order to generate a genuine letter, it is important that you provide an honest description of your reasons for going and your need for their partnership. Don’t feel like you have to be formal or that you must stick to a particular format. Write using your own voice and style.

Here are some tips for writing an effective letter:

Developing a List
Make a list of potential partners. Try to list at least 100 names of family, friends, and acquaintances.

Tell a Story
Write from your heart as well as your head. Give people dry statistics and they yawn. Tell them a story and they respond. Share about the children you will be serving and the ways in which you hope to make a positive impact on their lives.

Keep It Simple
Keep the letter to one page only. Be sure to tell them about the vision of COTN and how you will be participating in that vision. State what you will be doing, the dates of the trip, your financial needs, and the deadline date for funding the trip. (Note: You may want to put the deadline date and repeat the amount you are seeking in a handwritten P.S. at the end of the letter, as this is often read first.)

23
How to Give

Make the procedure for giving very clear.

• By check, made out to Children of the Nations
  o Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope, so the check will be mailed to you. (This allows you to log your balance and to send thank-you notes.)
  o Be sure to tell your partners NOT to write your name in the “memo” portion of the check, but instead to include your personal fundraising code. (A six-digit number associated with your application—found in your team member approval email.)
  o COTN will send each partner a receipt after your checks are received and processed by COTN.*

• By donating online at cotni.org
  o Direct people to your online donation page, which is associated with your trip application and includes your personal fundraising code within the web address.

• Partners may also donate resources. Your team leader will assign your team specific resources to gather which may include resources for your project or items needed by COTN. Ask your team leader for more information on resources so you might invite your partners to give.

*NOTE: You are responsible for mailing your checks to COTN in a timely manner, especially at year-end to ensure tax receipts will be issued for the current year.

Thank Them

Before concluding your letter, be sure to thank your partners in advance. As your donations begin to come in, be sure to send timely thank-you notes. When you return from your
trip, remember to take time to send each partner an update about your trip.

List Specific Prayer Requests in Your Letter
COTN is committed to prayer, believing it is an essential source of support for every Venture participant. Many people are unable to provide financial support, but are more than willing to pray.

Send Your Letters
The next step is to send out your letter and response card. Feel free to use the sample letter on page 27, or ask your team leader to email you a customizable letter template from COTN. Be sure to give people ample time to respond. If you would like someone to look over your letter for you to confirm that it is clear and communicates all these aspects well, send it to your team leader and s/he can proofread it for you and respond with any comments.

Call Them
Oftentimes, the most effective method for raising support is through a phone call. When you send the letter to people, this is informing them about the opportunity to give; a phone call may encourage them to take the opportunity.

Other Forms of Support
As the date of your trip approaches, you will want to begin collecting items to be used during your time in country or for general COTN needs. This is a great way to involve people. Be sure that you make people aware of the needs and how they can help.

Track your Support
Keep a log of your donations. Once you receive a donation check and response card, add the amount to your log and keep their response card somewhere safe.
Mail checks to COTN
Lastly, mail the checks to COTN (or your church if directed by your team leader). Include an attached note with your name and personal fundraising code so that the funds are properly credited. Due to the nature of the content, we ask that participants purchase a tracking/signature option when mailing checks to COTN.

All checks should be mailed to:

COTN – Venture Program
P.O. Box 3970
Silverdale, WA 98383

Please see the sample letters and response card on the following pages for an idea of what to write.
Sample Support Letter

Date 0/00/00

Dear (name)

This [summer] holds an exciting journey. God has given me the opportunity to go on a [ten]-day mission trip to [destination], and I would like to ask you to partner with me through prayer and financial support.

I am going with a team of [ten] people, through a nonprofit organization called Children of the Nations (COTN). They provide care for some of the poorest children in the world, with the goal of empowering these children to enact positive change in their communities and their nation. I’m excited to be a part of the process of offering hope to these children!

Our team will be leaving [date] and returning [date]. The main focus of the trip will be [fill in, using descriptive phrases].

The total amount of funds I need to raise for this trip is [amount], which covers all costs, including transportation, housing, and supplies. COTN also uses funds generated through mission trips like this to directly meet the needs of the children we’re serving.

If you are able to send financial support, please make your check payable to Children of the Nations or COTN by [date]. For proper tax receipt from COTN, please do NOT put my name on the check. Instead, please put my personal fundraising code (enter code) on the memo line and return in the enclosed envelope. Or, you can donate online at cotni.org/add-unique-url-here.

Because I will be experiencing a new culture and living in conditions that I am not used to, I feel a strong need for your prayers. Please pray for our team as we prepare individually for the trip, and as we allow God to blend us together as a team.

Thank you for partnering with me.

Sincerely,

Vicki Venture

P.S. Whether you are able to help through prayers or a donation, I really do appreciate your support. Thank you!
Sample Response Card

Venture Participant Name: ________________________________

Personal Fundraising Code: _____________________________

_____ I will be praying for you, keep me informed on your progress.

_____ I am enclosing a gift of $______ to help you with your trip.

Name: ________________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Phone: ______________________________________________

* Make check payable to Children of the Nations for a proper tax receipt.
Sample Resource Donation Letter

Date 0/00/00

Dear (name),

Your company has the chance to make a difference in the lives of needy children. According to a 2006 UNICEF report, there are 132.7 million orphans in the world. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, 48 million children are orphaned due to war, famine, and AIDS.

You can help these children by partnering with Children of the Nations (COTN). COTN is a nonprofit organization serving orphaned and destitute children in five countries that have been affected greatly by poverty: Sierra Leone, Uganda, Malawi, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Our vision is to see all children equipped and able to live balanced and disciplined lives. To accomplish this, COTN is building and operating children’s homes, medical centers, schools, and more to care for children physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Over 4,000 children are in COTN’s daily care.

COTN collects items that are sent to the countries in which we serve. These items may contain hygiene products, clothing, school supplies, or medical supplies. **Would you partner with us by donating supplies or funds to purchase these items?**

Be assured that your donation will be used effectively. Recipients will not be billed for donated supplies, nor will we submit claims to third-party insurance programs for donated items or services. COTN has IRS certified 501(c)(3) tax status.

If you would like more information about Children of the Nations, please visit cotni.org, or you may contact me at 888-555-1234. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

For the children,

Vicki Venture
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do my supporters get receipts?
Any support check you receive should be made payable to Children of the Nations, to ensure tax deductibility for the donor. After collecting and recording the donations, send them to COTN for proper crediting to your account. Make sure all checks and cash contributions are properly identified with your personal fundraising code and that the donor’s correct name and mailing address are identified. COTN will send the donor a receipt for any checks properly made payable to COTN, but cannot send receipts for checks made out to you.

If a check is mistakenly made to you instead of COTN, sign the back of the check and mail it to COTN. As long as you’ve signed it and it has your personal fundraising code on the front, we can process it as a donation to your trip.

All funds for your trip must come through COTN in order for your donors to receive tax receipts.

What if I receive cash as a donation?
If someone gives you a cash donation to put toward your trip, please do not send it in. Rather, cash should be turned into a money order (through your bank), before mailing to COTN. Do not mail cash, as it may get lost, misplaced, or put into the wrong account. We are not able to manage cash donations.

Along with your money order, include a note with the address of the donor who gave you the donation, so that COTN may send them a receipt for their gift.
How much money do I need to raise for my trip?
Estimates are available through your team leader for your trip based on the country, program, and length of stay. A final invoice will be issued after all paperwork is submitted, a project is selected, and excursion options are confirmed.

How much money should I bring with me on the trip?
All participants must bring $100 in case of a medical emergency (the insurance deductible) and should bring between $100 and $200 for food in airports, souvenirs, snack items, optional church offerings, and occasional tipping. You may also need to pay for the cost for your entrance/exit visas to some countries. Ask your team leader for more details on these costs as this amount may vary based on time in country.

What if more than my invoice amount is contributed?
Since tax-deductible receipts will be given, the IRS does not permit COTN to give individuals the “surplus” for personal use (with the exception of reimbursements – see below). Any extra funds that are raised will be applied to ministry needs for the country in which you will be serving. Please contact COTN if you have any further questions.

There are many costs associated with traveling to our countries. Generally, all surplus funds received as part of your support raising go directly toward financial needs in the country where you are serving. However, if you raise surplus funds, you may be reimbursed for certain out-of-pocket expenses, according to the following guidelines:

- Any request for reimbursement must be made within one month after returning from your Venture Trip.
- Reimbursements may be issued for the following expenses when a receipt is submitted:
  - Airfare / Airport Tax
• Passport Application and Photos
• In-country visas
• Immunizations (receipt must show type of immunization)
• Trip-related medications
• Postage for support letters
• Project supplies

Your team leader should collect the receipts for each Venture participant and submit them to COTN with the totals to reimburse each individual.

Can I apply funds to another trip if more than my invoice amount is contributed?

No. Each donation given to a specific COTN Venture fundraising code is considered a designated gift and therefore is required to stay in said account. In addition, each new trip is given new codes and new transactions are required to fulfill those invoices. Any extra funds that are raised will be applied to ministry needs for the country in which you will be serving or may be used for reimbursements (see the FAQ on reimbursement policy, above). Please contact COTN if you have any further questions.

What if less than my invoice amount is contributed?
The COTN office may offer fundraising advice along the way and your leader will be tracking your progress; however, each participant should assume responsibility for the full payment for his/her trip. If your final payment deadline is not met, your Venture Coordinator can assist you to reschedule your trip or find other payment options.

What happens if I can’t go on the trip?
Due to IRS rules, contributions are generally non-refundable, except for special circumstances. In the event you are unable
to go on your planned trip, COTN can hold funds for one year for a future trip. However, there may be charges assessed to these funds to cover cancellation fees and other non-refundable trip costs including airfare. Due to the varying reasons for canceling a trip, please ask your Venture Coordinator for further clarification. After one year, any unused funds will be allocated to COTN’s general ministry.

**What kind of Internet/phone will there be?**
Your team leader will activate your team’s phone tree or email list when you arrive. Individual participants should not plan on regular Internet/phone access.

It is very expensive to make phone calls, texts, or use of data packages on cell phones during international travel. Cell phone expenses incurred during your trip are not approved for reimbursements.

**What additional expenses will I incur?**
In addition to the expenses already listed in the estimated cost of your trip, you may incur the following costs:

- Passport/Visas
- Passport photos
- Vaccinations
- Host country entry and/or departure taxes
- Prayer/support letter expenses
- Spending money for souvenirs, postcards, etc.
- All personal items you purchase for the trip
- Tips for airport services, optional meals at restaurants, excursions, and safari drivers

**When are my payments due?**
You should adhere to the payment schedule you receive from your leader.
• $100 non-refundable application fee is due with your application.
• Airfare payments will be due prior to purchasing tickets. These costs will vary depending on your departure city.
• The remaining in-county costs are due 30 days prior to departure. You will be responsible for tracking all of your support and donor information given to your leader.

Can I receive a tax deduction for costs for my trip?
Please consult the following web link to access information on this aspect of your giving: http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p17.pdf. Section 26 relates directly to your contributions.

How are funds from the Venture Program spent?
Funds generated through the Venture Program are used to cover the cost of room, board, transportation, communication, travel insurance, training materials, projects, and excursion options.

In addition, COTN’s Venture Program supports our children overseas through the finances generated through ministry contributions. Our goal is to utilize revenue from the Venture Program to ease the burden of funding essential in-country needs such as vehicles, home and building maintenance, and other programs (education, skills centers) for our children. Thus, your participation in the Venture Program provides direct financial support to the staff and children you will meet and serve.
What if I want to extend my stay in country for vacation purposes, or visit another country en route to or from my country?
Any Venture participant wishing to extend their stay before or after their trip with COTN, or visit a country while en route assumes responsibility for all additional transportation arrangements and costs, including but not limited to airfare and separate in country transportation to a bus station, airport, or taxi station. If you have any additional questions, please contact your team leader or call your Venture Coordinator prior to departure.

Will I have medical insurance?
All Venture participants traveling with COTN are required to have travel insurance to cover emergency medical care and, in the case of a major medical need, evacuation. This medical insurance will be arranged and purchased by your Venture Coordinator. The premium for this insurance is included in the cost of your trip. However, in the case that you need to use the travel insurance, the $100 deductible is not included in the cost of your trip. For more information, see Chapter Four: Emergency Procedures.

What medical services will be available?
COTN is affiliated with reliable medical clinics in each of the countries in which we serve. In addition, we have trained nurses on staff in most countries. For more information, see Chapter Four: Emergency Procedures.

Is there safe drinking water?
Yes. Venture participants generally drink store-bought, bottled water or filtered water in a five-gallon water cooler.

What are the accommodations like?
Please view the country specific pages in this team manual to learn more.
What is the average temperature in the summer?  
Please visit the *CIA World Factbook* website  
(www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/) to learn more about each country’s climate and geography.

Will Venture participants need to sleep underneath mosquito netting?  
In Haiti and most African countries, mosquito nets will be provided and all participants are advised to use them every night. In most cases in the Dominican Republic, you will not need to use mosquito netting.

Is there a dress code?  
Yes. Please review the dress code listed in this manual in your country specific section carefully before packing, as it is a primary way of communicating respect in each country.

Will there be contact with sick children?  
Yes, there will be some contact—it cannot be avoided when working with children in both the U.S. or abroad. Venture participants will not be expected to care for sick children (unless part of a trained medical or surgical team). Part of the COTN in-country orientation will cover how to stay healthy and avoid getting sick.

COTN has developed partnerships with several trusted medical providers and facilities in each country we serve.

- Write and send your personal support letters.
- Read Meeting #2 and the portion of this manual specific to your country.
- Purchase *Foreign to Familiar*.
MEETING #2: CULTURAL PREP

Section Goal: Participants will begin to understand the concept of culture and how their worldview will cause them to see their host country differently.

Recommended Reading:
*Foreign to Familiar* by Sarah A. Lanier
*When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

MINISTRY AMONG THE POOR

As a person from another country, your empathy to the plight of the poor can create problems that might not be obvious at first; however, indiscriminate handouts may often foster dependency and expectation. In the end, what was meant for good often works against the long-term empowerment of the individual or group.

Children of the Nations asks that Venture participants refrain from giving personal items directly to anybody.

We fully anticipate that many visitors will want to contribute to the needs they see, but there is a helpful way in which to do that. We request that you give the item(s) to one of our COTN in-country staff members (specifically the in-country resource coordinator) to inventory and then disburse as needed. Feel free to communicate your intentions to this staff member and they will ensure the proper person receives the item. If you have brought items for your sponsored child, please notify the in-country sponsorship coordinator to learn the proper procedure for distributing them.

How to respond when approached by a child:
If a child approaches you asking for a gift, reply by saying “Not today.”
**Note:** If a child approaches you, please tell your COTN in-country host what the child asked for. We are trying to teach the children in our care not to ask for handouts. Please help us develop healthy habits.

**How to respond when approached by an adult:**
If an adult approaches you asking for a gift, respond by saying “No.”

Equally destructive is the habit of making promises. Visitors see the enormous needs and many times make promises while they are in country—promises to write, to send money, or send specific items, even something as simple as a copy of a photograph. In most cases the visitor has every intention of following through with the promise, but often, once they get home their promise is forgotten. If you promise something, the child or adult will wait expectantly and even return to COTN continuously to follow up on your promise.

If a child approaches you asking you to become their sponsor, simply smile and thank them for the invitation. Don’t make any promises or indications that you will sponsor them until you speak with the in-country sponsorship coordinator first to find out if the child is in one of COTN’s programs and/or still needs a sponsor.

If a child approaches you asking for your personal contact information, do not give your email, address, phone number, Facebook, or other social media information to them.

Giving your address or other personal contact information to individuals in a village may foster other expectations beyond keeping in touch. In many cases, you are indicating that you are willing to financially assist this person or even help them get into the United States/Canada/United Kingdom.
Venture participants who choose to ignore this advice and distribute personal contact information may receive emails, Facebook messages, and/or phone calls at all hours of the day and night. If you would like to correspond with one of our children or staff members, have them write to you in care of COTN. Be sure they include your full name on the letter and that COTN has your current address. We will be more than happy to forward correspondence both ways.

**INTERACTING WITH YOUR SPONSORED CHILD**

One of the most meaningful parts of your trip could be the opportunity to visit your sponsored child. It’s exciting when sponsors and children meet face-to-face, after sending so many letters and prayers each way.

We want to give you some practical tools for interacting and spending time with your sponsored child. In the following pages, please read about building healthy relationships, giving gifts, appropriate touch, and more.

**Building healthy relationships**

An important aspect of COTN’s mission is to empower our in-country staff to pour out love to the children and raise up a generation of young people who fit into their culture—not ours. The in-country staff is there to experience the highs and lows of daily life and, frankly, we visitors are not. This is important to understand, that although you are a sponsor, it is not your role to be a child’s savior or parent. You are more like an extended family member. As noted by COTN’s former counseling director, Sue Harrell:

“A family unit is responsible to care for itself, but extended family members are welcome to have a place in mentoring and leading by example to immediate family members. An aunt or uncle is valued and
of great worth to a family, yet is not called to be the primary caregiver to the children.”

As a visitor and a valued sponsor to your child, please understand that you are important, but remember that the children in our care are the responsibility of their family members, or in the case of an orphaned child, our in-country staff. It is therefore important that you develop a relationship with your sponsored child, but not a relationship that involves bonding with the child as a parent or immediate family member.

We ask that you respect the in-country staff and the authority structure they have put in place for all COTN children.

Please exercise caution with the following:

- When children are exposed to dreams that have no relevance within their own culture (dreams that they may never achieve) they may become frustrated and disappointed with their own lives. COTN kindly asks that visitors don’t give false hope to the children.
- If a Westerner tries to take the place of a child’s natural parent, the child may develop new parental expectations that will never be achieved due to cultural differences in parenting, thus causing authority structure issues.
- When a Venture participant spends exclusive time with one or two children to the exclusion of others, this creates jealousy and hardship on the child who is singled out for special attention. (As a sponsor, you will have exclusive time with your child, yet in a healthy way, surrounded by other children and team members).
**Communication**
When communicating with children or others in country:

- Refrain from trying to “fix” situations that you see in each child’s home. It is very tempting (from our Western viewpoint) to want to quickly fix the environment your sponsored child lives in. Rather, please seek to be a learner of their living environment by listening and observing.

- Ask questions of the COTN in-country staff regarding the living environment of your child rather than asking the child’s family members. When asking questions to your sponsored child’s family, please make sure the questions are honoring and respectful. Some examples of respectful questions include: “Did you grow up in this village?” or “How many children do you care for?”

- Choose your words carefully when speaking with your sponsored child—don’t give false hope or make promises you can’t keep.

- Use appropriate touch (like a firm handshake, side-to-side hugs, or high-fives) when greeting and visiting your sponsored child. It is important that both men and women use caution in this area, as touch carries a great amount of weight with children.

- Do feel free to ask our in-country staff if you have any questions regarding appropriate touch while visiting.

**Supervision/Authority**
While you are in country we do hold our children’s and our visitors’ safety as a high priority. Please note that all Venture participants will be required to visit children in the presence of COTN staff members. It is not appropriate for visitors to be alone with any child at any time. If you find yourself in such a situation, please speak with your host (in-country staff) to remove yourself from this situation.
Sharing gifts
While you are in country, we do invite you to bring small gifts to share with your sponsored child and their family. Gift giving must be done under the careful supervision and guidelines of our in-country sponsorship staff.

- Before you leave for your trip, it is important for COTN-USA to account for what is being brought into the country to give as gifts to children. (Our sponsorship office tracks the gifts given to ensure the gifts are culturally appropriate, rather than letting you get to your destination only to be embarrassed or disappointed that they aren’t.) Make sure to tell your team leader what items you’re bringing and ask them to pass that information on to your Venture Coordinator.
- When you arrive in country, please notify the sponsorship coordinator of the gift you’ve brought to share with your sponsored child.
- Please remember that the children live in a culture where sharing with neighbors is the norm. When bringing gifts, please note that these items may be shared with the community or family members.

Appropriate gift ideas
COTN asks that sponsors who visit their child bring gifts that fit into a one-gallon Ziploc bag with no more than 3-5 gifts for their child and a few gifts for their whole family to share. Many sponsored children live in families with multiple children, so you might consider bringing extra gifts that can be shared with them as well. Appropriate gift ideas include:

- Hygiene Supplies: soap, shampoo, wash cloths, body wash, towels, dental floss, toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc.
• School Supplies: composition notebooks, Post-it notes, pens, pencils with sharpeners, ruler, backpack, calculator, etc.
• Family Gift Pack: small photo album with some pictures of your family, your pet(s), nature landscapes from where you live (mountains, rivers, etc.); a small toy; drawings and letters from children in your family; stickers; stationery to write on; crayons; pencils; children’s Bible; small musical instrument. Try to avoid giving pictures that display your material possessions (like vehicles, house, toys, etc.)
• Clothing Supplies: T-shirts, loose-fitting dresses or skirts that go to knees, socks, age appropriate underwear, hair accessories for girls (African girls often have very short hair), flip-flops, sandals, black dress shoes, black shoe polish, pajamas, pants for boys (no camouflaged clothing please)
• Fun Ideas: sports equipment (soccer equipment for Africa and Haiti, baseball supplies for the Dominican Republic), solar flashlight or headlamp, matchbox cars, children’s books, jump rope, hair accessories for girls, T-shirts (no camouflage, please), small photo album, Lego set, stickers, Band-Aids, coloring books, art supplies, umbrella, rain ponchos, blankets, purses, etc.
• High School/College: scientific calculator, school supplies, backpack, cosmetic bag for feminine products, new towel set, wallet/money clip, inexpensive watch, bracelet, necklace, etc.
• Items to Avoid: political/governmental items that show war, fighting, guns, camouflage, suffering; violent superheroes, action figures, playing cards; expensive items such as iPods, laptops, cameras, video game systems, jewelry, tennis shoes, etc., unless pre-approved by the COTN-International Office ahead of your trip
**TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS**

In many countries you can be harassed or detained for photographing such things as police and military installations, airports, government buildings, border areas, and transportation facilities. To avoid problems, please put your camera away when near these things. If you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs. Your Venture Host can orient you to the local attitudes toward picture-taking.

**SMARTPHONES, TABLETS, OTHER DEVICES**

We live in a wired world, where smartphones and other devices beg us to connect to social media, blogs, and email. It’s common for many of us to spend most of our day connected this way, staring at a screen. Yet, true connectedness happens when we put away our devices to listen, observe, and communicate with people face-to-face.

Although many of COTN’s guest housing campuses have Internet connectivity available, we ask that you refrain from using your smartphones, tablets, laptops, and other devices as much as possible. Doing so will allow you to engage relationally in a culture where people matter more than status updates and cute cat photos.

**DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

In general, team members should dress conservatively to demonstrate respect for the host country, our staff, and the children. It is a common misconception that people from poor countries dress poorly. Taking time to dress in a culturally appropriate manner can communicate respect when serving in other cultures. (See Part II: Country-Specific Information for more details.)
TRANSLATOR DO’S AND DON’TS

Part of learning to interact and serve in another culture will be overcoming the challenge of language barriers. Most likely, by the end of your trip you will know numerous ways to communicate without speaking the same language.

However, COTN will also provide translators for teams that need them. Translators are not there to interpret every word of every conversation; however, they are of great assistance in communicating in many situations. Many of the translators COTN hires are not COTN staff members, but have been contracted by a local translation business. They are typically not COTN staff members, and therefore are not responsible for your full experience. (If you need specific help regarding your trip experience, please ask your Venture host for assistance. Below are a few tips for interacting with your translator:

Do

• Get to know your translator!
• Be aware of your translator’s presence and be culturally sensitive in conversations.
• Practice with your translator.
• Pray with your translator, asking God to use you as a team.
• Use common language. Avoid slang (e.g. “dope”).
• Use short phrases.
• Speak up! Even if the audience can’t understand you, they still need to hear you.
• Remember, your message will be twice as long as it would be if you gave it alone.
• When you get to a Bible verse, let the translator read it directly from the Bible in the translated language. Your audience doesn’t need to hear it in English also.
• You should use hand gestures, and the translator should use similar gestures.

Don’t
• Give money or personal items directly to your translator.
• Look at your translator while speaking. Do look at your audience.
• Have a conference time with your translator while you are trying to give a lesson. You should be paying attention to your audience, not your translator.
• Make your phrases too short. They need to contain a complete thought.

Positioning with the Audience
Though the translator’s words are the words that will be understood, the translator is not the speaker. Therefore, he or she should not be in the most up-front position. The translator should stand to the side and just behind the speaker. If there is a podium, the speaker should be centered behind it.

- Read Meeting #3
- Read Chapters 1–4 of Foreign to Familiar. Answer related questions in Appendix B of this manual.
- Go online to cotni.org and learn more about the country you’re traveling to.
MEETING #3: PROJECT PREP

Section Goal: Before participants learn about how they will be serving in country, they must understand their role as part of a team. You will look at the dynamics of a team, various team challenges, and how your team will serve together. In addition, each participant will learn how to present their personal story.

Oftentimes, people prepare for a mission trip with the assumption that the children we see and the experiences we encounter will be the source of our greatest growth. Although these experiences will challenge and hopefully change us, it is often our own fellow team members who are our greatest source of growth.

Serving
One of the most important aspects of serving cross-culturally is understanding the way the host culture views authority and submission. Your submission to authority within your team and within various cultural contexts has the potential to greatly alter your effectiveness within that culture. Submission is not only a matter of will, rights, or privileges, but also a representation of your personal witness. Our example is Christ in His incarnation:

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

Philippians 2:5–8

If you find yourself questioning something that is clearly non-scriptural (e.g. witchcraft), it is not your place to confront it without the counsel of those in long-term ministry within the
community. Your short experience in country will not provide you with sufficient understanding of the language and culture to make any confrontation on your part appropriate. To speak out without first gaining the counsel of the COTN staff and/or leaders could be damaging to the long-term work of COTN, the developing relationships, and at the very least be misunderstood and confusing to those you are seeking to serve and love.

Avoid judging the effectiveness of COTN based on your short-term observations. Never override the input of your Venture host or team leader in your interactions with the people you are there to serve. Your input will be welcome as long as it comes from a place of love and humility, you have a practical suggestion to offer, and you are willing to accept the possibility that your suggestion may not be implemented.

**Flexibility / Patience**

Many Westerners value efficiency and productivity. Other cultures put much more emphasis on relationships. Most Venture participants have project objectives in mind before they leave on a trip. Having goals is great and gives everyone a sense of direction, but they should not be the most important aspect of the trip.

Make plans and then prepare to be flexible when things change. If your team can’t do the job it came to do, do what needs to be done.

**Relationships**

Use common sense in male/female relationships. In most countries you may visit, public displays of affection are considered offensive and inappropriate. Never flirt with a person in the host country—make sure you are clear on the rules for any interaction between the sexes. If you find
yourself attracted to a fellow team member or intern, don’t act on your feelings while you are on the trip.

You may find situations that are funny to you, and it can be difficult to suppress the clever comment, smirk, or burst of laughter. A good guest, however, places the feelings of the people he or she is there to serve ahead of his or her own amusement. Wait until the appropriate time to express your humor. Always be aware of the in-country staff, translators, and others from the host culture who may be around you.

**Common Courtesies**

- Be on time—for meals, projects, devotions, and departures.
- Respect the needs of others for privacy, silence, and sleep.
- Watch out for annoying behavior in yourself. You will find it very easy to identify this in other team members.

**Mission-Trip Veterans**

If you have been on another mission trip, especially in the same country, do not expect a replay of a past experience. Instead, go with the intention of expanding your view and learning new things. Resist the urge to compare experiences, leaders, and projects. Resist the temptation to be a self-appointed tour guide, keeping up a steady travelogue about the country, and answering all questions on behalf of the leader. Let others see and experience the country through their own eyes, not yours.

**Journaling**

Even if you have never kept a journal before, a Venture Trip is a great time to start. Journaling will be a great help in preparing to share with friends and family after your trip.
Telling Your Story (Testimony)
One of the most powerful spiritual experiences you may have is telling the story of God’s movement in your life. This is not only a way for you to remember and re-experience God’s faithfulness in your life, but also an extremely powerful tool in sharing the love of Christ with others. You may be given an opportunity to share your story in front of a group or in a one-on-one situation.

Below are a few questions to help you prepare your testimony:

- What was my life like before I put my faith in Jesus Christ?
- When/how did I decide to believe what Christ had done for me?
- What happened after I received Christ? How did my life change?
- Is there any pertinent Bible verse(s) that speak to what God has done/is doing in my life?
- What do you want people to remember about your story?

If you are a believer in Christ, write out your testimony. Practice sharing your story with people you know, and pray that God would help you share with those in your circle of influence.

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect…”

1 Peter 3:15
- Write your story. Be prepared to share it with your team or fellow interns.
- Begin collecting items for your in-country project(s).
- Send a scanned copy of your passport to your leader.
- Continue gathering funds for your invoice.
- Read Chapters 5–7 of *Foreign to Familiar*. Answer related questions in Appendix B of this manual.
- Read Meeting #4.
MEETING #4: FINAL PREP

Section Goal: To provide last-minute reminders and tips for participants preparing to leave.

STAYING HEALTHY ON YOUR TRIP
When traveling overseas, you are exposed to bacteria and infections not usually encountered in our culture. These bacteria are present in water, in food, on surfaces, and even in the air. Most side effects or illnesses caused by these bacteria are preventable and treatable. The recommendations below are to help make your trip as safe as possible.

Tips for General Health and Safety
Children of the Nations has water purifiers access to purified water at each location. We will ensure that you have access to clean, fresh water. You will not need to bring water purifiers, but do bring an empty water bottle to use.

Food and drink are common sources of infections. Avoid eating uncooked food unless you can be reasonably sure it is safe to eat. You will get instruction about this and how to deal tactfully with the locals who might be eager to show you hospitality by offering something to eat. Ideally, you should try to stay away from raw food and untreated drinking water. You will find that much of the fruit in these countries is very tasty! Use the same precautions you would at home; wash fruit and vegetables before eating.

Wash your hands often. Pack antibacterial lotion or hand wipes. Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes and mouth. In all matters relating to your personal health and safety, we ask that you consult the resident staff and leaders. Inform them of any illness you might experience, however minor, and if necessary, a doctor can be consulted. Respect
the advice of the in-country staff, especially when they warn you of danger.

Most people who acquire some sort of “bug” while abroad will become ill within six weeks after returning home. Some diseases, such as malaria, however, may not produce symptoms for as long as six months to one year after you return home. If you become ill, be sure to advise your physician that you have traveled outside the country. Knowledge of the possibility of exposure to certain diseases abroad will help your physician arrive at a correct diagnosis.
MEDICAL KITS
Take a team/personal medical kit which includes:

- Band-Aids and Neosporin
- Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Tylenol, or similar pain reliever
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Sunscreen with at least SPF 15
- Calamine lotion
- Antibacterial gel (Purell)
- Antibiotic ointment (for minor cuts and abrasions)
- Multi-vitamins with B-complex (good for preventing fatigue, stress, and warding off mosquitoes)
- Cold/Allergy medicine, decongestant
- Malaria pills
- Pepto Bismol
- Antimotility agent (Immodium) for diarrhea
- Hydrocortisone cream (0.5%) for relief of itching
- Aloe Vera lotion
- Anti-fungal powder or cream
- Motion sickness medication (Dramamine)
- Ace bandages, gauze pads, roll of tape
- Moleskin for blisters
- Box of pre-moistened towelettes
- Digital thermometer
- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- For Individuals with Insect Allergies: Carry an Ana-Kit Insect Sting Treatment Kit, or Epi-Pen
- Ciprofloxacin (cipro): You may ask your doctor for a prescription, in case you become infected by a bacterial strain that causes diarrhea, typhoid fever, etc.

All participants should bring at least $100 in cash in case of any medical emergency, to cover the medical insurance deductible.
PACKING TIPS
Airline luggage allowances vary by airline. Check with your airline for specifics. Most airlines allow each traveler at least one carry-on item, one personal item (purse or computer bag), and two checked bags (most airlines charge for checked bags—even for international travel). We ask that participants use a carry-on item to bring their clothing and personal items, while reserving any additional space for COTN project resources, sponsorship mail, or other items that will bless the children.

Important Documents
Place your personal documents (plane tickets, passport, visa, etc.) in a pouch on your person. You may also place these items in your personal bag. Never put your passport, visas, airline tickets, or anything you absolutely need or can’t afford to lose (including money, credit cards, prescription medicine, etc.) in your checked luggage!

Luggage
- Take luggage you don’t mind damaging.
- Know the current policy regarding carrying liquids on your flight. The European Union (EU) has very strict rules on these items, so if your team is traveling through Europe you will most likely have items confiscated from carry-on bags if they exceed allowable limits. Current safety restrictions require that liquids be carried in a clear plastic bag.
- Use the downloadable luggage tags provided by COTN to attach to your baggage.
- Pack three days’ worth of clothing in your carry-on, as it is not uncommon for bags to be delayed or lost.
- Claim your own luggage upon arrival so that missing pieces may be easily identified and corresponding luggage tags collected.
Packing List

- T-shirts
- Blouses/Button-up shirts (for church and teaching)
- Long-sleeved shirts
- 1 tie (men)
- Sweatshirt/sweater
- Pants/Khakis
- Skirts or dresses
- 1 nice skirt or dress for church
- Leggings/tights/shorts to wear under skirts
- Underwear and socks
- 1–2 pairs of closed-toe/closed-heel shoes, one for work/normal wear, one for church
- Flip-flops/sandals for shower/COTN campus
- Swimsuit
- Jacket
- Pajamas
- Extra set of clean clothes for plane ride home
- Bible, COTN Venture Team Manual, and other reading materials
- Journal
- Flashlight or head lamp
- Alarm clock (battery-operated)
- Water bottle (empty)
- Supplies for your project (teaching, art, construction, etc.)
- Extra glasses/contacts, sunglasses
- Insect repellant containing DEET
- Sun screen (SPF 15 or higher) and sunburn remedies
- 1 bath towel and wash cloth to leave in country
Optional Items

- Musical instrument
- Laundry detergent; travel clothesline
- Sleeping pills
- Electrical converter/adapters (for Africa)
- Pillow
- Surge protectors
- Baseball glove (for ILB teams)
- Miscellaneous: Ear plugs, lip balm, baby powder, rubber bands, safety pins, sewing kit, duct tape, Ziploc bags, hand sanitizer/baby wipes

Carry-on Items

- Three days’ worth of clothing
- Toiletries
- All prescription/non-prescription medications
- Any items of sentimental or monetary value, including Bible, camera, jewelry, electronics, etc.
- Snacks
- Water bottle (empty)
- Money Belt or passport case with the following:
  - Passport
  - Visa (Sierra Leone only)
  - Airline tickets
  - Luggage tags
  - Cash
  - Keys to luggage
  - Important phone numbers (see page 259)
- Cash ($10 for Dominican Republic tourist card, $50 for Uganda tourist visa, $100 for insurance deductible [all teams], money for souvenirs)
Pack at Your Own Risk

- Cell phones (and chargers)
- iPods or MP3 players
- iPads or Tablet PCs
- Kindles or Nooks
- Camera
- Laptops (It is preferred that you not bring a computer unless one is required for the projects your team has planned.)

Don’t Bring

- Expensive jewelry
COTN LUGGAGE PROCEDURES

In group travel, luggage may be COLLECTIVE, with the exception of one carry-on and one checked bag reserved for your own personal use. You will be responsible for transporting the allotted per-person bags (usually one carry-on and one checked bag). As you prepare for your trip, please follow these steps for packing your personal items, project items, and COTN supplies.

Decide First – “Do I bring this item as a carry-on, or pack it in a COTN supply bag?”

4 Types of Things that go with Venture Teams
1. COTN office and sponsorship mail
2. Urgent and resource-identified items (case-by-case basis)
3. Laptops and high-value equipment — CARRY-ON ONLY
4. Religious items (Bibles, JESUS film gear, requested tracts and literature, etc.)

Venture Teams work with their Venture Coordinators to determine their team’s resource drive and focus of mobilizing donations. Items to be brought by teams will utilize the teams’ luggage allowance, and should be planned for accordingly. The items may be shipped to you from other locations already packed.
How to Pack a Duffel Bag

1. Pack in layers to give structure to a soft-sided duffel bag.
2. Start the bottom layer with heavy items such as shoes and books. Wrap shoes in plastic bags to keep dirt out and odors in.
3. Pack toiletries on the second layer. This will insulate them from shock.
4. Place clothing in clean, dry-cleaning bags to reduce wrinkles caused by friction.
5. Alternate tops and bottoms of clothing to allow for flatter packing, and roll knit items and T-shirts into tight tubes.
6. Don’t use bags with advertisements because the ink may bleed onto clothing if the bag gets too hot or wet. They also identify you as an American.
7. Bring along empty plastic garbage bags. They can be used for: dirty laundry, keeping things dry, an emergency raincoat, or even trash.
8. Place rolled items onto blouses, slacks and skirts, and place this large bundle into the center of the duffel.
9. Secure all fasteners tightly to minimize shifting.
10. Remember weight allowances (and the fact that you’ll have to be able to lift it)!
11. Don’t put fragile items into a duffel bag. Hand-carry cameras, computers, spare glasses, etc.
12. Don’t pack valuables into checked luggage. If you require special medication, make sure to carry enough for your whole trip on your person.
Packing Procedures

1. Determine what you will need for the following:
   a. Personal Items
   b. Project Supplies
   c. COTN Supplies

2. Determine how many bags you/your team can take and the maximum per-bag weight for your airline.

3. Arrange a time and location for your team to bring all their materials together.

4. Sort the supplies in order of importance:
   a. #1 Items – Necessary Personal Items (clothes/shoes, cameras, medications, personal hygiene products)
   b. #2 Items – Needed Project Supplies
   c. #3 Items – Donation Items (medical supplies, clothing, etc. for the children/staff)

5. As you pack, inventory all items per bag on COTN Packing Slips, which your team leader will provide.

6. Pack your own #1 items in your own carry-on bag to ensure these items are available to you at all times.

7. Pack all remaining #1 items in checked luggage. Consider sharing bags, when possible, to allow for more space for donation items.

8. Pack #2 items in checked luggage.

9. Pack #3 items in checked suitcases or large boxes. If you have more than will fit, remove items that are the least important. If you have extra room, ask your leader about current COTN in-country needs.
10. Once all bags are packed to maximum weight capacities, packing is complete.

11. Make **two** copies of each of the COTN Packing Slips. Place one into the corresponding bag and give the other to your leader.

12. Each leader should fax or email the original COTN Packing Slips to your Venture Coordinator.

13. Attach Number Tags (that correspond with the packing slips) and Address Tags to each piece of luggage (addresses are on the COTN Packing Slip).

**Once You Arrive In Country**

1. Claim and track all your team’s luggage (you are responsible for any piece you checked).

2. Use the COTN Packing Slip to inventory bags that appear to have been rifled through and to route supplies to appropriate staff or locations.
FREQUENTLY ASKED LUGGAGE QUESTIONS

What do I do with donated items that friends gave me that cannot fit in my luggage?
First, you should receive permission to carry and deliver such items. (For example, sponsorship gifts must be approved by the COTN–USA Sponsorship Program, supplies must be approved by our Resource Program, etc.) Contact your team leader or Venture Coordinator for more information.

Once donated items are approved, mail them to a COTN office. See our website at cotni.org to learn more.

When should I pack for my trip?
- Start gathering your #2 and #3 items at least a month before departure
- Gather your #1 (personal items) a week before departure to set aside the necessary space
- Plan your “Team Packing Party” for at least a week prior to departure.

What if I want to take a guitar or other large items?
Contact your team leader or Venture Coordinator to confirm whether or not the item is already available in country. If not, your leader can approve based on priority and space availability and allot it as a piece of luggage accordingly.

Who can I contact for assistance in packing my bags?
- Contact your team leader first.
- COTN Resource Director – Dave Schertzer:
  360-698-7227 or daveschertzer@cotni.org
OTHER TRAVEL TIPS

- Anticipate time zone changes. Set your watch to the destination time zone as soon as you board your plane and start matching your schedule to the new time zone.

- Bring earplugs and/or a blindfold if you are sensitive to unfamiliar sounds or light.

- Eat light while traveling and when you arrive, to help your system adjust. Also, drink plenty of fluids.

- Engage in some light, outdoor (in the sunlight) exercise like walking to help regulate your biological clock.

- Take short naps, (no longer than an hour or two) to help acclimate yourself to the new time zone. Do not nap close to bedtime.

- If needed, you can make “special meal requests” with most airlines a few days before traveling.

- Always carry your passport, tickets, and cash under your clothes or close to your body, never in a suitcase.

- If interested, carry a few small bills to purchase postcards or snacks.

- Some airlines give you packets with socks, eye masks, toothbrushes, etc. Collect the socks (and toothbrushes). Many feet are being kept warm by those brightly colored socks!
Notes:

- Learn which items will be included in your team medical kit and which items should be in your personal kit.
- Ensure your team has a strategy for collecting specific items for your in-country project(s).
- Begin collecting appropriate clothing and personal items.
- Schedule your Packing Party. This meeting should take place one week prior to your departure.
- Confirm your airport drop-off/pick-up arrangements.
- Read Chapters 8–10 of *Foreign to Familiar*. Answer related questions in Appendix B of this manual.
Chapter Three: Debriefing

MEETING #5: AIRPORT MEETING

Section Goal: Participants will continue processing their experiences and begin considering how they will continue their venture once at home.

FINALLY!
Wow! You made it! You are probably exhausted right now and in need of a nap—you will have plenty of time to sleep on the plane(s)!

Something we often say at Children of the Nations is “the venture begins when the trip ends.” What we mean by this is that the real lessons God may be teaching you through your trip are often not realized until after you return home and you have had a chance to reflect on your time, what you’ve learned, and how you’ve grown. This process of change and evaluation is called debriefing.

For some, this adjustment can be simple, for others it can be very difficult. This chapter will help you prepare to return home in a healthy way so that you might be able to fully see and hear how God used you, what He taught you, and how you can continue with the work you started during your time in country.

You will discover that discussing your experiences with your teammates/fellow interns and leader will help you understand and process your thoughts more effectively. We encourage you to continue meeting after the trip—formally and informally. The support you feel from your team/fellow interns will help you through this transition.
RE-ENTERING YOUR OWN CULTURE
Returning home from a Venture Trip can be challenging. There can be feelings that you didn’t expect or haven’t felt before. Upon returning home you might become aware of cultural distinctions from your home culture that you don’t like or agree with. This is called reverse culture shock. Often participants realize they have changed and don’t fit into their home culture the way they once did. This section is meant to help you expect those differences and feelings so you might deal with them in a healthy way upon returning home.

1. There are numerous feelings you may have upon your return. You may feel joy in seeing friends and family, a strong desire to share your experience, loss, sadness or grief, discouragement, confusion, anger toward your home culture, pride, and excitement, just to name a few. Take a moment to think about going home; the people you’ll encounter, your school, work, church, and family. Think about what it will be like to see these people and go to these places.

2. Think of two people who you can speak with about these feelings. This might be your leader, COTN staff, a fellow teammate, a pastor, or a mentor. Share with a teammate who those people will be and how soon you are going to contact them upon your return (it is best to get together with these people within the first few days of your return). List those people and times below:

_________________________________________________
_________________________________________________
3. It is also important to think about ways people generally react. There are two prominent reactions that people often have:

a. Some people returning home tend to isolate themselves. They become angry at their home culture and are put off by things like materialism and affluence. They glorify their trip above all other possible experiences and can’t see how God is working in their home culture, too.

b. Others adapt to their home culture too quickly. They go on like their experience never happened and do everything they can to be involved in their home culture, never giving them the chance to respond to the lessons God had for them during the Venture Trip.

The hope is that you would recognize that your return is a part of God’s will. As a result, you can return to your home culture, appreciate the ways God blessed you through it, but still recognize the changes that have occurred from your experience.

On the following pages are a few examples of thoughts and feelings you may experience, and suggestions for how you may process them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unexpected Thoughts and Feelings When Returning Home</th>
<th>Response or Reaction</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect to feel so “foreign” upon return</td>
<td>Tiredness, lethargy</td>
<td>Schedule several transition days of rest and relaxation after home arrival. Do not over-schedule your time upon return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect a “let-down” feeling upon return</td>
<td>Disappointment, lack of fulfillment</td>
<td>Be prepared for a possible “let-down.” Realize that you have probably been operating on an emotional high prior to return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect an extended recovery period from illness contracted abroad</td>
<td>Discouragement, resentment toward God</td>
<td>Anticipate a medical exam upon arriving home. Try not to feel surprised or guilty if rest or other treatments are prescribed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t expect inability to relate to home culture</td>
<td>Unsettled, feeling confused</td>
<td>Realize you have absorbed some of the host culture and you are changed forever. See this as positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect critical attitude toward own culture/peers</td>
<td>Guilt, frustration</td>
<td>Critical attitudes often appear in times of stress and readjustment. Try not to let it overwhelm you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect feelings of superiority</td>
<td>Guilt, aloofness</td>
<td>“Regard others as more important that yourself.” (Phil 2:1–11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect personal values to have changed so much</td>
<td>Uncertainty, confusion</td>
<td>This often does come as a surprise to many after returning home. Attempt to define what changes have taken place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected Thoughts and Feelings When Returning Home</td>
<td>Response or Reaction</td>
<td>Suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect people to ask so many superficial questions</td>
<td>Irritation</td>
<td>Be prepared to face these questions. Work on ways to transition into what you really want to communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect peers to seem so insensitive to materialism and wastefulness</td>
<td>Disappointment, irritation, contempt</td>
<td>Do not allow yourself to slip into feelings of resentment, anger or judging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect to see so much apathy and lack of concern for the needs of the world</td>
<td>Anger, discouragement</td>
<td>This may rightly disturb you, but do not become self-righteous. Lovingly try to inform of the world’s needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expect others to show a lack of interest in hearing about my experiences</td>
<td>Withdrawal, resentment</td>
<td>Take it as fact that others are usually not able to relate to your experiences as you would wish. Some are just not interested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected VIP treatment upon return, which didn’t happen</td>
<td>Frustration, discouragement</td>
<td>Though you are special, do not view it as your right to have attention focused on you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE VENTURE BEGINS

As you go through the debriefing process, we challenge you to continue to be personally involved in the COTN vision of raising children who will transform nations. It is very easy to become excited about needs and ideas for meeting those needs while you are in country, but the challenge is maintaining that determination once the responsibilities of home set in.

To help combat this challenge, we recommend that during the first hour of the plane ride home you consider the following activity:

- Take some time to write yourself a letter (or journal) with your current intentions for remaining involved. Your letter may include:
  - The first people with whom you want to share about your trip
  - The names of the children/staff who significantly impacted you; summarize their stories
  - The greatest needs that you saw
  - Ideas for ways you might mobilize your community to help meet those needs (Visit cotni.org/get-involved for ideas.)

- Place the letter in an envelope, seal it and address it to your permanent address. Then give your letter to your leader so they can mail it to you in three months’ time.

- When the letter arrives, it will serve as a checkup on your progress in re-entry and in applying the insights and lessons learned on while in country to your life at home.
After returning home, you may also speak with your leader, visit the COTN website at cotni.org/get-involved, or contact any of our area offices to learn about the ways you can remain involved.

- **Read:** *Unearth* by Christy Vidrine and Autumn Rogers
- Summarize your experience in a 30-second, 3-minute or 30-minute story.
- Go to cotni.org/get-involved to learn more ways to get further involved in making a lasting impact for the children.
MEETING #6: REUNION

Purpose: Sharing your experiences from your trip is very important. Your team will benefit by processing the trip together through sharing photos and stories.

Directions:
- Bring a flash drive, CD, or hard drive with your photos from the trip.
- Break up into groups of two or three. Share with your group a couple of highlights from your trip.
- Come together as a whole to discuss what your next steps may be as you continue to live in light of your recent venture.
- Develop a Share the Vision® plan to mobilize others to partner with the children and in-country staff you met.
MEETING #7: SHARE THE VISION®

**Purpose:** To plan a time to thank your supporters and share with them how they may partner with you to accomplish the COTN vision (Raising children who transform nations).

“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained…”

Proverbs 29:18

The next step in continuing the venture is to begin sharing with your church, community, or supporters about your trip and how they can partner with you and with COTN. Make a plan on how you want to share with your community and tell a teammate.

**Directions:**
Use the outline below to assist you in organizing a 20–30 minute presentation:

- **The Need:** Begin by sharing stories about the people you met and the needs you saw. Statistics may help illustrate the needs of the children in the country you visited, but personal stories can have a greater impact.
- **The Vision/Mission:** Share the vision and mission of COTN.
- **The Hope:** Describe the impact that COTN is making in the lives of the children.
- **Your Experience:** Using the names of people you spent time with, help your supporters see that the stories aren’t just statistics, but they are about people and circumstances that are a reality.
- **Conclusion:** End with a hopeful story about a child you met.
- **Mobilize:** Explain to your supporters how they can partner with you to bring about transformation in the lives of these children. Share practical ways they may be
involved (COTN Handles: Sponsorship, Resources, Venture Program, and more).

* Be sure to include pictures to help your supporters visualize the people and places you are speaking about.

* You may also consider putting pictures on Shutterfly, Snapfish or another photo website that allows you to share your pictures with others. Places like iPhoto, Costco, and Shutterfly will also allow you to create great photo albums.

Other helpful resources may include:
  o COTN’s website:  
    cotni.org/share-cotn  
    cotni.org/share-cotn/downloadable-materials  
  o COTN DVDs  
  o Sponsorship Profiles  
  o COTN brochures  
  o Hope Encounter newsletters  
  o Your nearest COTN area office staff
Chapter Four:
Emergency Procedures

COTN VENTURE PROGRAM EMERGENCY PLAN
The Venture Program Emergency Plan has been created for the protection and safety of those traveling with COTN to developing nations where dangerous situations and medical emergencies may occur. The safety and well-being of teams and individuals traveling with COTN is of utmost importance.

Summary
- All Venture participants are registered with the U.S. Embassy in the destination country
- Venture participants are required to have travel insurance
  - COTN purchases travel insurance through Seven Corners, Inc. Program summary and benefits are available upon request.
- Emergency Evacuation Plans are in place in all COTN countries in the unlikely case of political uprisings or other dangerous situations.
- Copies of each participant’s passport, medical information (e.g. medications, allergies), emergency contact information, and travel itinerary are kept in a safe and central place while participant is in country and en route.
  - Both the in-country Venture Coordinator and the Venture Program Emergency Contact that is on-call in the U.S. will have access to information in case of emergency.
• A detailed and specific plan of action is in place in case of sickness or injury.
• COTN has partnerships with several trusted medical providers and facilities in each country.

HOW TO USE TRAVEL INSURANCE
Here’s a step-by-step guide to using the supplied travel insurance.

Seven Corners Insurance guarantees coverage for care at any medical provider (hospital, clinic, urgent care, etc.). You may not be turned down for care due to insurance. Yet, the provider may or may not accept the insurance to be billed for your care. (See below for details).

In the event that a Venture participant does require medical attention of any kind (blood tests, urine tests, IV solution drip, medication, broken bone care, sprain care, surgery, etc.), please make sure to:

1. Pay the medical fee. (All Venture participants must pay for their care)*
   a. Pay up to the $100 insurance deductible that is part of your insurance plan. Make sure you get a fully itemized receipt (explaining what services were provided) for payment (try to get it in English with an official letterhead of the clinic or hospital visited).
   b. If the medical attention requires more money, first ask the provider if they will “bill Seven Corners internationally.”
   c. If they are unable to bill Seven Corners and you are able to pay (or borrow from COTN), you may do so, but you must get a fully itemized receipt (explaining which services
were provided) for payment (try to get it in English with an official letterhead of the clinic or hospital visited).

d. You will need to file a claim with the insurance company immediately when you return home to receive funding for your medical attention. Go to step 2.
e. If the medical attention requires more money and you are not able to pay, go to Step 3.

2. How to file an insurance claim:
   a. You may contact a Seven Corners agent to help you file a claim at 1-800-335-0477
   b. Choose the appropriate Proof of Loss form at this web link:
      http://www.sevencorners.com/travelers/claims/#forms
   c. Complete the Proof of Loss form
   d. Include the following documents with your completed Proof of Loss form:
      i. Copies of your passport, including the identification page and the entry/exit stamps from the past 12 months
      ii. Detailed bills (if you have any) for services received
      iii. Fully itemized receipts for payments made for your medical needs in-country
      iv. Any other supporting medical documentation

Suggestion: Get a note (explaining your care) from a doctor who cared for you in country with his/her letterhead, credentials, and signature.
3. Contact your Venture Coordinator at COTN for more help.

* The insurance only works when the total cost of care is beyond the deductible (i.e. $100 has been paid and then additional services are needed). If a COTN staff member uses COTN funds to pay for your health bills, you are required to pay COTN back (either through an insurance claim or via check).

**AUTHORITY OF IN-COUNTRY STAFF**

In the event of a weather-related or other unexpected emergency that might put teams in harm’s way or expose our staff to undue harm, visitors must be aware that COTN’s in-country staff has the right to change schedules and plans for the betterment of the whole ministry.

Example: Hurricanes – In the event that a hurricane forms in the Caribbean Sea, our in-country staff has the right to change teams’ plans in an effort to best address the primary needs of caring for the children and adults in our communities.
Part II

Country-Specific Information
Chapter Five:
The Dominican Republic

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – COUNTRY FACTS

Population:
10,219,630 (July 2013 est.)

Location: Caribbean, eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola, between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, east of Haiti

History: The Taino—indigenous inhabitants of Hispaniola prior to the arrival of the Europeans—divided the island into five chiefdoms and territories. Christopher Columbus explored and claimed the island on his first voyage in 1492; it became a springboard for Spanish conquest of the Caribbean and the American mainland. In 1697, Spain recognized French dominion over the western third of the island, which in 1804 became Haiti. The remainder of the island, by then known as Santo Domingo, sought to gain its own independence in 1821 but was conquered and ruled by the Haitians for 22 years; it finally attained independence as the Dominican Republic in 1844. In 1861, the Dominicans voluntarily returned to the Spanish Empire, but two years later they launched a war that restored independence in 1865. A legacy of unsettled, mostly non-representative rule followed, capped by the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo from 1930 to 1961. Juan Bosch was elected president in 1962 but was deposed in a military coup in 1963. In 1965, the United States led an intervention
in the midst of a civil war sparked by an uprising to restore Bosch. In 1966, Joaquin Balaguer defeated Bosch in an election to become president. Balaguer maintained a tight grip on power for most of the next 30 years, but international reaction to flawed elections forced him to curtail his term in 1996. Since then, regular competitive elections have been held in which opposition candidates have won the presidency. Former President Leonel Fernandez Reyna (first term 1996-2000) won election to a second term in 2004 following a constitutional amendment allowing presidents to serve more than one term, and was later reelected to a third term, which ended in 2012.

**Government:** Democratic Republic  
Official name: Dominican Republic (Local: Republica Dominicana)  
President: Danilo Medina Sanchez (since Aug. 2012)  
Capital: Santo Domingo  
Independence Day: February 27, 1844 (from Haiti)

**Religions:** Roman Catholic 95%, other 5%

**Language:** Spanish

**Economy:** The Dominican Republic has long been viewed primarily as an exporter of sugar, coffee, and tobacco, but in recent years the service sector has overtaken agriculture as the economy’s largest employer, due to growth in telecommunications, tourism, and free trade zones. The economy is highly dependent upon the US, the destination for more than half of exports. Remittances from the US amount to about one-tenth of GDP (gross domestic product), equivalent to almost half of exports and three-quarters of tourism receipts. The country suffers from marked income inequality; the poorest half of the population receives less than one-fifth of GDP, while the richest 10
percent enjoys nearly 40 percent of GDP. High 
unemployment and underemployment remains an important 
long-term challenge. The Central America-Dominican 
Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) came into 
force in March 2007, boosting investment and exports and 
reducing losses to the Asian garment industry. The growth of 
the Dominican Republic’s economy rebounded from the 
global recession in 2010-12 and remains one of the fastest 
growing in the region although its fiscal situation is weak; the 
fiscal deficit climbed from 2.6 percent in 2011 to 
approximately 8 percent in 2012. A tax reform package 
passed in November 2012 aims to narrow this deficit. (From 
The World Factbook, cia.gov)

**Exports:** ferronickel, sugar, gold, silver, coffee, cocoa, 
tobacco, meats, consumer goods

**Natural Resources:** nickel, bauxite, gold, silver

**Currency:** Dominican peso (DOP); US Dollar equivalent = 
42.85 pesos (2013)

**Unemployment Rate:** 14.7% (2012 est.)

**Population Living on Less than $1.25 per Day:** about 
200,000 people (These are the people COTN serves)

**Education:** Secondary school enrollment: 
Boys: 58%, Girls: 67%

**Health:**
Under-five mortality: 25 deaths/1,000 live births
Life expectancy: 77 years
Hospital Beds per 1,000 people: 1.6
People Living with HIV: 44,000
Staple Foods: Rice and beans

Climate: Tropical maritime; little seasonal temperature variation; rainfall variation (hot and humid)

Human Trafficking: The Dominican Republic is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. A large number of Dominican women are trafficked into prostitution and sexual exploitation in Western Europe, Australia, Central and South America, and Caribbean destinations. A significant number of women, boys, and girls are trafficked within the country for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

The Origin of the Dominican Batey

The Dominican Republic consists of a mixed population of native Dominicans and Haitian immigrants. Since Venture participants will be working with both Dominicans and Haitians in impoverished Dominican villages as well as Haitian bateyes, it is important to understand a bit of the history.

COTN’s ministry in the Dominican Republic began in the summer of 1997 when we first came alongside the village of Algodón—a Haitian batey (pronounced BAH-tay). A batey (plural bateyes) is a shanty-town camp where sugarcane cutters lived. Bateyes are found only in Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

Our ministry in the Dominican Republic is centered around our Village Partnership Program, which ministers to Haitian bateyes (Algodón, Altagracia, and Los Robles) and poor Dominican villages (Don Bosco and Pueblo Nuevo). On the surface, Haitian bateyes appear very similar to poor Dominican villages. To understand the real differences, one must understand how and why bateyes came into existence.

The Dominican Republic shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with Haiti, but the two neighboring countries might as well be across the globe from each other. Dominicans are Latin and pride themselves on their Spanish roots, whereas Haitians speak French Creole and are largely descendants of freed African slaves.

In the early 1900s, Haitians sugarcane cutters, lured by the promise of work, began the seasonal migration to the Dominican Republic—the Haitians were willing to do this low-wage, back-breaking work whereas most Dominicans were not. Over the decades, many of these sugarcane workers
did not return to Haiti at season end, and thus created a large, permanent population of Haitians in the Dominican Republic—a population that was not welcomed.

There has always been a clash of cultures between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, but under the anti-Haitian regime of Rafael Trujillo (1930–1961), animosity, prejudice, and racial tension toward Haitians reached horrific levels, culminating in Trujillo’s brutal order of a Haitian massacre (where 25,000+ Haitians found outside the sugar plantations were killed) and ultimately Trujillo’s assassination in 1961. During this time, Dominicans harbored a growing fear of a “Haitian invasion” (much the same way some Americans today fear the effects of the illegal immigration of Mexicans in the Southwest). In the mid-1960s, in an effort to stop this growing Haitian immigration from diluting the Dominican culture, the government proposed a solution—the batey. Bateyes were company-owned towns (consisting of nothing more than crude barracks surrounded by fencing) erected by the government on the outskirts of sugarcane plantations.

Throughout the late 1960s, ‘70s, and ‘80s (the heyday of the Dominican Republic’s sugar economy), Haitian sugarcane cutters were confined to these bateyes (i.e. “work camps”) under the watchful eye of armed government soldiers. Their belongings were confiscated and they were trucked back and forth from the fields, often working from sun up to sun down. The daily wage was barely enough to buy one meal a day—oftentimes the cane cutters and their families had nothing to eat but the very cane they cut. The bateyes had no running water, no electricity, no cooking facilities, and no bathrooms. The shanty homes consisted of slatted wood walls, tin roofs, dirt floors and often housed up to eight or more people. The Haitians were not allowed to leave the bateyes, under the threat of deportation, except to work in the fields. By the 1990s, the bateyes had become home to
hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children—second- and third-generation Haitians born in the Dominican Republic, but with no legal citizenship status to be there and with no ties to their “homeland” Haiti. They basically became a people without a country.

In the mid-1990s, the bateyes drew the attention of humanitarian organizations, calling for action to address the “deplorable treatment” of Haitian families and children living in the bateyes. Most of the 400+ bateyes in the Dominican Republic had not changed much since they were originally erected—they still had no running water, no electricity, no cooking facilities, no bathrooms, no schools for the children, and no medical facilities. And since the Constitution of the Dominican Republic does not extend citizenship to children born to non-naturalized Haitian parents, these children born in the Dominican Republic, did not have birth certificates or identity papers of any kind. This lack of documentation made it nearly impossible for children of Haitian descent to attend school or benefit from any other social services. These families and children were denied access to medical, social, and educational facilities. Just as the generations that preceded them, these families faced a dead-end life—with no way out of the batey. Essentially, what the Dominican Republic had done was to create a permanent underclass—a category of individuals that, in the eyes of the law, doesn’t exist—they have no right to own property, no right to an education, no access to healthcare, and no right to vote. In essence, a class of people condemned to poverty.

A little over a decade ago, when the world markets (particularly the US) switched to high-fructose corn syrup and away from cane sugar, the Dominican government was forced to privatize the sugar industry and closed many of the struggling sugarcane plantations. Without cane to cut, the Haitian workers were no longer needed. Essentially, the
economy of the batey (though sparse as it was) completely dried up. Not long after the Haitians’ only means of support disappeared, so did the armed government guards and the fences that once kept them prisoner. All that remained in the bateyes were crying babies, bored and uneducated mothers, and unemployed men who were no longer able to even meagerly provide for their families.

But the Dominican’s privatization efforts were not without consequence—much to their dismay, it forced the Haitians from the bateyes into the cities in search of work. Starting in the late 1990s, the women, ineligible for legal jobs, took positions in the homes of Dominicans as nannies and maids, or worse—entered into the sex trades. The men found under-the-table work in construction and farming. They also took to the streets as vendors. But in a country where unemployment is already high, competition for jobs was tough. And with this increased visibility and competition came a backlash—government officials and the media began to blame the Haitians for increased violence, social problems, and poverty, causing them to become, yet again, the target of Dominican frustration and racial prejudice.

Today, the bateyes remain—with little change, except that brought about through humanitarian and non-governmental organizations. An estimated 500,000 residents—7% of the population of the Dominican Republic, live in 400+ bateyes. Most still do not have latrines. Potable water is rare. Electricity, non-existent. Primitive dirt roads carved through ever-encroaching jungles become muddy lakes when it rains—cutting off entire bateyes from the outside world (including food and water) for days at a time. Inside the bateyes, education and healthcare remain almost non-existent. Where these services are available, they generally have been built and are operated by humanitarian organizations, not the government. And when natural disaster strikes (like Tropical
Storm Noel that made a direct hit in October of 2007, washing away homes, furnishings, and livelihoods), the bateyes are the last in line to receive assistance from the government—if they receive any at all.

Yet there is hope. Children of the Nations is making a difference in the lives of these families and children by investing in these communities through our Village Partnership Program—building schools and churches, operating feeding programs, providing medical services—providing hope where there once was none. We are investing in children who will grow up and transform their own nations. We seek to end the dead-end cycle of poverty and give these precious children a chance at a life far different from the one they have—a chance to make a difference in their own communities.
COTN’s HISTORY
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

1995
Chris and Debbie Clark found Children of the Nations (beginning ministry in Sierra Leone).

1997
Chris Clark encounters Malou Faublas, who is ministering to 67 children in the village of Algodón, holding classes in a dilapidated classroom. Village Partnership Program begins in Algodón, focusing on education and nutrition.

1998
Construction of our first school and feeding center in the Dominican Republic is completed in Algodón. Our first Medical Venture Team performs operations in the Dominican Republic.

1999
A Venture Team visits the village of Los Robles and hosts a Vacation Bible School (VBS) program for the children; as a result, ministry begins and a Village Partnership Program is started in Los Robles.

2002
COTN begins a Village Partnership Program (VPP) in Don Bosco, enrolling 80 children.

2003
The first child from Algodón to ever graduate from high school receives his diploma. Construction of three primary classrooms and one small office begins in Don Bosco.
2005
Our first Medical/Dental Center opens in Barahona. Venture Teams add three classrooms to our Don Bosco school.

2006
Casa Bethesda, COTN’s Mission Center in the Dominican Republic, is purchased. COTN begins a Village Partnership Program in Altagracia. COTN also begins sending our first students to university.

2007
Village Partnership Program begins in Pueblo Nuevo.

2008
I Love Baseball® program begins with the vision of training pro baseball hopefuls while also giving them an education.

2010
Charinson Feliz, from Algodón, becomes the first student from our VPP to graduate from university, beginning his career as a medical doctor. COTN lends medical and emotional assistance to many Haitians after the devastation of the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010.

2011
Venture Teams build latrines, libraries, a church, and more!

2012
Along with the University of Texas and other partners, COTN establishes public health programs and installs three water purification systems in the Dominican Republic.

2013
Venture Teams help build an expansion to the Casa Bethesda dining hall and kitchen.
COTN’s DOMINICAN REPUBLIC PROGRAMS

Village Partnership Program
Our Village Partnership Program strategically targets the neediest children living in villages and seeks to come alongside their caregivers in an effort to bring well-rounded care to their lives. Keeping individual children and their needs in mind, COTN works with local caregivers and village leaders to identify the unique needs of a village or community. A customized partnership is created. Through child sponsorship, programs are developed to address such areas as nutrition, education, health, clothing, and the child’s spiritual life and development. COTN currently partners with five villages in the Dominican Republic: Algodón, Los Robles, Don Bosco, Altagracia, and Pueblo Nuevo.

I Love Baseball® (ILB)
A part of the Village Partnership Program, ILB gives young men a place where they can pursue their dream of playing professional baseball while still getting an education. They are taught to live a balanced life socially, mentally, physically, and spiritually.

Vocational Skills Program
Our Vocational Skills Program provides training to help our teens and young adults gain the skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Our current programs include Cooking, Hospitality Training, and Computer Classes.

Medical/Dental/Surgery Center
The medical clinic is owned and run by COTN’s Dominican staff, along with professionally trained nurses and doctors. It also provides dental and vision needs for children enrolled in the COTN Village Partnership Program, as well as children in the community. Medical teams from the US travel to the
Dominican Republic throughout the year to donate their skills and services in the center.

**Casa Bethesda Mission Center**
Serving as COTN’s mission center in the Dominican Republic, Casa Bethesda is a large residence in the city of Barahona. The main house and adjacent dormitory buildings can accommodate 35 to 40 people total. The Casa serves as a central meeting place for Venture participants. It is also used to host events and visitors outside of COTN, to generate income for our ministry.
WHERE YOU WILL STAY
Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic, Venture participants stay either at COTN’s mission center, Casa Bethesda, or in a nearby hotel (depending on the size of the team and/or number of other teams).

Casa Bethesda Mission House
Casa Bethesda is located about five minutes from the COTN mission office and clinic, and serves as “base camp” for Venture participants. The complex consists of a main guest house with a living area, bedrooms, and a full kitchen where most Venture meals are prepared. The main house and adjacent dormitories accommodate approximately 35 to 40 people total. The buildings have running water, electricity with a backup generator, and an outdoor swimming pool. The grounds are fully enclosed by a concrete wall and are staffed with 24-hour guards.

Area Hotels
There are about four hotels that COTN works with to host Venture Teams. All of the hotels are located in the Barahona area. Each of the hotels has electricity, air conditioning, running water, and a restaurant.
**CULTURAL DO’S AND DON’TS**

*Dominican Republic*

*LOOK, LISTEN*, and *LEARN* when interacting in another culture.

**Dress / Hygiene**
- DO wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes in the villages.
- DO dress nice/clean cut—nothing sloppy.
- DO cover tattoos and piercings (women may have one earring per ear).
- DO bathe daily and wash your hair as needed.
- DO wear long, opaque skirts in the village (women).
- DO NOT wear spaghetti straps (women); only straps that are 3 to 4 inches wide at least.
- DO continue to shave/maintain your facial hair (men).
- DO tell your team leader immediately if you feel sick.
- DO bring hand sanitizer with you (please use it discreetly so as not to offend locals).
- DO fill your water bottle each day before going into the villages.
- DO NOT drink the water outside of the COTN property unless it is bottled. (Water in the Casa is fine to bathe with.)
- DO use wisdom when eating what is served to you outside of COTN property.
- DO NOT play with or touch any animals.

**Miscellaneous**
- DO register all gifts for sponsored children with the Sponsorship Coordinator.
- DO recognize that if you are inquiring about a local person’s situation, people often interpret your
questions as meaning you are going to help them. (Education, home, travel to the U.S., etc.)

- DO ask your team host if you see a need and want more information.
- DO expect most scheduled events to run late. Be flexible.
- DO bring toilet paper with you if you are traveling off the mission center property.
- DO NOT talk about alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or make sexual comments around staff/children.
- DO NOT give out anything to children, adults, staff, or translators (gifts, food, candy, money, clothing). All donations should go through the COTN–DR office to be checked in and distributed.
- DO NOT talk about money.
- DO NOT walk alone off COTN property at any time.

**Housing**
- DO expect for the electricity to come and go.
- DO expect for the house to be hot.
- DO close and lock all gates and doors after opening them.
- DO keep all passports in a safe location.
- DO NOT put toilet paper in the toilet; rather put it in the trash can nearby.
- DO NOT invite visitors into the house. They must remain outside or be invited in by a COTN staff member.

**In the Bateyes/Communities**
- DO respect teachers by not distracting the students while they are in class.
- DO avoid swimming in the rivers and creeks near the villages because of parasites.
- DO NOT bring candy, toys or clothes to give away.

A Few More Tips on Culture

- Public displays of affection between men and women are taboo. If a couple is alone in public, they will be assumed to be married.
- Never leave belongings unattended where they are visible, even with people you trust. It’s important not to put people into a position of temptation.
- The Dominican Republic culture is very people-oriented and all about relationships. It is more important to greet someone or talk to a friend than it is to be on time for any meeting or gathering.
- Expect most meetings and gatherings to start later than planned.
- It is NOT recommended to use an ATM card in the Dominican Republic as credit card and pin number theft is common. If you so choose to bring a Debit Card, make sure your bank knows of your trip before going. It is also better to bring cash instead of traveler’s checks.

Special Note on Alcohol / Drinking

Drinking, talking about, and joking about alcohol are discouraged in the Dominican Republic. We ask that you refrain from drinking alcohol while in the Dominican Republic. The Christian culture in the Dominican Republic oftentimes associates drinking alcohol (especially beer or hard liquor) with a certain negative lifestyle. Drinking wine may not be seen in the same light. As such, you may be offered a glass of wine at dinner. It is culturally acceptable to accept or decline such an offer.
Since you are a representative of Children of the Nations, participating in drinking alcohol could potentially offend or cause confusion about the standards and beliefs of COTN. Though you might not share the same views on such topics, please respect the beliefs of the culture and remember you are representing the values of COTN in the Dominican Republic.
HEALTH CONCERNS
Dominican Republic

Immunizations
Please contact your health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for up-to-date information on immunization requirements for the Dominican Republic. (http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list)

You will need to carry your immunization record with you any time your passport is required.

Water-Borne Disease Precautions
Drinking water
Purified water is provided in hotels and on COTN properties. While in the city, you should only drink beverages from a bottle, including water. Do not drink water in the bateyes, or from the taps on COTN property or hotels. Tap water in the mission house and hotels may be used for bathing, but you must not drink it or brush teeth with it. In a case where tap water must be used for drinking, it should ALWAYS be boiled to a vigorous rolling boil for 3 minutes and allowed to cool before consumption (recommended treatment by CDC) or treated by filtration with a 1-micron filter combined with iodine or chlorine.

Food and beverages
Be especially cautious of fresh fruits and vegetables in the city that may have been washed in untreated water. COTN kitchen staff will always clean produce properly before serving it, but others may not. Also, water on the outside of beverage cans or bottles is most likely contaminated. Therefore, wet cans or bottles should be dried before being opened, and surfaces that are contacted directly by the mouth in drinking should first be wiped clean.
Food-Borne Disease Precautions
If eating outside of COTN property, be sure food is well cooked and meats have been properly handled. Wash hands well before eating anything. Carry anti-bacterial hand sanitizer for the times when soap and water are not available. Being very cautious will pay off, and neglecting to be careful will result in traveler’s diarrhea!

Other Health Issues
HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis
Precautions must ALWAYS be taken during any activity with risk of body-fluid contact (mending scraped knees, etc). Talk to a health provider about what the risks are and precautions necessary to protect yourself. Be sure to bring plenty of bandages to cover any scratches or open sores you may have. Also, carry medical gloves (that are the correct size) even if you do not plan on any medical contact.

Tuberculosis (TB)
Tuberculosis infection is generally transmitted through the air by coughing. Travelers who anticipate possible prolonged exposure to tuberculosis should have a tuberculin skin test before leaving. If the reaction is negative, they should have a repeat test after returning to the United States. Avoid prolonged close contact to someone who has a constant cough. When traveling on public mini-busses, be sure to sit next to the window to reduce your exposure to TB.

Worms
To decrease your chance of contracting worms, avoid walking barefoot anywhere (inside or outside). Many varieties of worm larvae live in the soil or are present in rural areas contaminated by animal or human feces. Such larvae can enter the body through the soles of exposed feet or toenails. Wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes at all times.
International Health Insurance
COTN has a medical clinic on property in the Dominican Republic with a well-trained staff of in-country nurses and doctors. This clinic is available to any Venture participant who is ill or has any minor health issues while in country. For other needs there is a private clinic in Barahona which can offer quality medical attention.

In the case of a medical emergency, COTN purchases medical insurance to ensure the ability to airlift someone out of the country to the nearest medical facility with the needed capabilities (most likely the US). COTN uses Seven Corners Emergency Medical and Evacuation Insurance for all Venture participants. This insurance costs about $3 per day, per person, and is included in the cost of your trip. Please ask your team leader if you’d like more information.

Medicine
You should bring over-the-counter pain and cold medication with you, especially during the summer (cold/flu season). Bring any necessary prescriptions for the duration of the trip, CLEARLY marked with the pharmacy label. (Label can be on a Ziploc bag.) All prescription medication that you take needs to be filled in advance, with enough to last for the duration of your stay in the Dominican Republic.
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELING

Dominican Republic

Passport, Visa, and Immunization Record
You will need a passport to travel to the Dominican Republic, as well as a $10 visa, obtained at the airport in Santo Domingo. Be sure to make photocopies of your passport before you leave. Carry one copy somewhere other than with your passport. A second copy should be left in the States on file with the COTN–USA office so it can be faxed if any problem arises due to a lost passport. It is also a good idea for your team leader to have a copy of all team members’ passports.

Airport Issues
Luggage
Because the Dominican Republic is part of North America, most airlines do not consider it an international destination and do not allow checked bags to travel for free. Any checked bags should be less than 50 pounds. Be sure to check with your airline on the baggage allowance and cost, to ensure that you stay within the guidelines so you don’t have to discard anything at the airport or pay excess baggage fees.

If you are transporting resource items for COTN, please note that the excess baggage cost is considered an additional cost to your team. If you prefer not to pay those extra fees, please consult with your team leader.

Check with your specific airline, especially if your luggage is an odd shape/size. Nothing valuable should be carried in checked luggage. It is recommended to use the luggage locks issued by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration to ensure luggage content safety. When you arrive in Santo Domingo, only claim your own bags so there is no confusion with others in your group.
All checked luggage should be marked with the following information:

Your Name  
Niños de las Naciones  
Proyecto San Juan Bosco, Blanquizales  
Barahona, La Republica Dominicana  
Phone: (809) 524-5037

Your Name  
Your Home/Group Address  
Phone Number

 Carry-On Baggage  
Many airlines have varying guidelines regarding carry-on baggage. Make sure you are well acquainted with your airline’s rules. In some cases, you may be flying on multiple airlines that have different rules, so double check each flight.

In addition, some airlines will ask or even force you to place your carry-on in the checked baggage compartment—as a courtesy, free of charge. Although this may sound like a great deal, be prepared to speak with the representative at the gate.

Explain to the representative that you and your team are a part of a mission team going to visit COTN’s ministry sites, which are far removed from the airport. To lose your carry-on would be a major headache and could cause problems for the health of your team as your carry-on baggage has all your clothing, toiletries, medicine, and other valuable items you need when arriving at your final destination. Express gratitude for their offer, but ask them to allow you to board with your carry-on and find a place to put your baggage.
**NOTE:** In the event that the representative refuses to allow you to carry on your baggage, remove your medicine, any valuables, and no less than one day’s worth of clothing from your bag and place it in your backpack. If lost, your baggage may not arrive for up to 3 days.

Checking In
Check-in for an international flight usually begins three hours before boarding. However, depending on your team’s size, it may be necessary to arrive at the airport four hours prior to flying to ensure that all luggage is successfully checked. **You may also want to reconfirm your tickets home from the Dominican Republic a few days before leaving.**

Tourist Visa Cost
Be sure to have with you $10 USD (in cash) to pay the tourist visa fee, which is paid upon arrival. This is **not** included in the cost of your trip.
ENTRY PLAN
Dominican Republic

In the case of last-minute problems, questions, or flight schedule changes:
Contact the COTN International Office at 360-698-7227 during business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time). If it is after hours, contact your designated Venture Emergency Contact (found at cotni.org/pages/venture-overview) to inform them of the situation.

En route to the Dominican Republic
You will receive an immigration card to fill out either on the airplane or once you arrive in the Dominican Republic. It will ask for basic personal information like name, passport number, citizenship, etc. You’ll also need to include the address of where you are staying. The address of the COTN office is: Niños de las Naciones, Proyecto San Juan Bosco, Blanquizales, Barahona, La Republica Dominicana. It will ask for the reason for your travel. Check “Tourist” (not “Missionary”) to avoid any confusion or problems. If it asks for the phone number of where you’ll be staying, it is: 809-524-5037.

At Santo Domingo Airport in the Dominican Republic
Follow others from your flight to purchase your tourist visa, pass through immigration, claim your baggage, pass through customs, and then exit to where our COTN–DR staff will be waiting for you.

Immigration
Have your passport and immigration card handy. You may be asked some questions about what your plans are. Please remember you are NOT working for COTN. You have
come as tourists and are planning to volunteer some time with Children of the Nations while you are there.

**Baggage Claim**
You will need to retrieve your bags from the luggage carousel and proceed through customs. Talk with your team (big or small) before you land and establish someone to go first and lead your group and someone to bring up the rear—ensuring everyone stays together. Have your luggage claim tickets ready (normally they are stuck onto your airline ticket jackets). If, after all the bags have been run through the carousel, a bag is missing, report it to an official; you’ll need to make a lost luggage claim. Our staff will coordinate with the airport to make sure your bag(s) get picked up when they arrive.

**Proceed through Customs**
When answering questions, please remember that, for now, the items you are carrying are “your personal items” and you are “volunteering your time with Children of the Nations, which is an NGO (non-governmental organization) caring for orphaned and destitute children.”

Once through customs, you will be transported to our ministry center in Barahona, approximately three hours away. Your leader will have more specific transportation details.
LEARNING A BIT OF SPANISH

Structurally, Spanish is very similar to English. The subject begins the sentence and the verb/action follows. The only major difference is that most adjectives go after the noun instead of before it, unless you’re trying to emphasize something specific.

Spanish Vowel Sounds

- A (pronounced like “ah”)
- E (pronounced like “eh”)
- I (pronounced like “ee”)
- O (pronounced like “oh,” but short and clipped)
- U (pronounced like “oo,” but short and clipped)

- Ñ is pronounced en-yay
- ll is pronounced as a ya (as in tortilla) and sometimes ja
- The Spanish g is pronounced softly, like the English h, when followed by an e or an i. It is pronounced like the English g when followed by other vowels.
- The Spanish j is always pronounced like the English h (as in jalapeño)
- The letter b is not usually pronounced, except in the cb combination, which is the same as in English

ADJECTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bueno/a(s)</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malo/a(s)</td>
<td>bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bien</td>
<td>well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enfermo/a(s)</td>
<td>sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bonito/a(s)</td>
<td>pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feo/a(s)</td>
<td>ugly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inteligente</td>
<td>intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simpático/a(s)</td>
<td>nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alto/a(s)</td>
<td>tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bajo/a(s)</td>
<td>short, low</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ADVERBS</strong></td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>siempre</td>
<td>always</td>
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<tr>
<td>nunca</td>
<td>never</td>
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<tr>
<td>también</td>
<td>also, too</td>
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<tr>
<td>tampoco</td>
<td>neither</td>
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<tr>
<td>tarde</td>
<td>late</td>
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<tr>
<td>muy</td>
<td>very</td>
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<tr>
<td>mucho</td>
<td>many</td>
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<tr>
<td>ayer</td>
<td>yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hoy</td>
<td>today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mañana</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un poco (poquito)</td>
<td>a little</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PRONOUNS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>algo</td>
<td>something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nada</td>
<td>nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alguien</td>
<td>someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nadie</td>
<td>no one</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CONJUNCTIONS</strong></th>
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<td>y</td>
<td>and</td>
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<td>ni</td>
<td>nor</td>
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<td>pero</td>
<td>but</td>
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<td>o</td>
<td>or</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>QUESTION WORDS</strong></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quién (quiénes)</td>
<td>who/whom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qué</td>
<td>what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cuándo</td>
<td>when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dónde</td>
<td>where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>por qué</td>
<td>why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cómo</td>
<td>how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cual</td>
<td>which</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVERYDAY EXPRESSIONS**

Commonly, Dominicans greet people by saying “*Dios te bendiga*” (God bless you). Respond by saying “*Amen! (ab-MEN) Dios te bendiga*” or “*Amen! Igualmente.*”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hola</td>
<td>Hi; Hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenos días</td>
<td>Good morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenas tardes</td>
<td>Good afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenas noches</td>
<td>Good evening/night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cómo está usted?/</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cómo estás?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muy bien, gracias</td>
<td>Very well, thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qué tal?</td>
<td>How’s it going?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qué pasa?</td>
<td>What’s going?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nos vemos</td>
<td>See you later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengo que ir.</td>
<td>I have to go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiene que ir?</td>
<td>Do you have to go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cómo se llama usted?/</td>
<td>What’s your name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cómo te llamas?</td>
<td>What’s your name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me llamo __________.</td>
<td>My name is __________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cómo se dice ________ en español?</td>
<td>How do you say ________ in Spanish?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qué es esto?</td>
<td>What is this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Por favor</td>
<td>Please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qué hora es?</td>
<td>What time is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Es la / Son las ________</td>
<td>It is __________ (time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiero</td>
<td>I want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Que quieres?</td>
<td>What do you want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengo hambre.</td>
<td>I’m hungry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengo sed.</td>
<td>I’m thirsty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengo calor.</td>
<td>I’m hot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuantos años tiene(s)?</td>
<td>How old are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengo ______ años.</td>
<td>I’m ______ years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tienes hermanos?</td>
<td>Do you have brothers or sisters?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conoces a Jesus como tu salvador?</td>
<td>Do you know Jesus as your savior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jesus (Dios) te ama.</strong></td>
<td>Jesus (God) loves you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estoy contento/cansado/ocupado</strong></td>
<td>I’m content/tired/busy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No te comprendo.</strong></td>
<td>I don’t understand you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No sé.</strong></td>
<td>I don’t know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No problema.</strong></td>
<td>No problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Te voy a extrañar.</strong></td>
<td>I will miss you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Necesito comida/dinero/descansar.</strong></td>
<td>I need food/money/to rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Con/sin</strong></td>
<td>With/without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Un momento, por favor</strong></td>
<td>One minute, please.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Me gusta __________.</strong></td>
<td>I like __________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Me gusta jugar / ir a la playa / el chocolate</strong></td>
<td>I like to play/ to go to the beach/ chocolate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Es importante.</strong></td>
<td>It’s important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No es importante.</strong></td>
<td>It’s not important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two important things to consider when packing clothing for your trip are: 1) **Culture** and 2) **Climate**.

Culturally, you will be **seen as professionals** and should dress accordingly for most ministry activities in the communities. When you are being presented, presenting, teaching, or leading something, you will need to wear more formal clothing. A general rule of thumb would be to try not to allow your clothing to be the thing that most sets you apart from the culture. When in doubt, it is better to err on the side of being too dressed up as opposed to being too casual.

The climate in the Dominican Republic is hot and humid, with seasonal rainy periods.

In order to help you prepare for your trip, we have devised five levels of dress available as a means to be culturally sensitive in the Dominican Republic.

**Appropriate Dress for the Dominican Republic**

**Church Attire/Public Speaking/Professional Speaking** – Men: Business-casual dress including clean, collared, wrinkle-free shirts (ties optional, but preferred) and dress shoes.

Women: knee-length dresses/skirts and shirts with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps, dress shoes, no short skirts.

**Community Ministry and Outreach Attire** – Business-casual including collared shirts and khaki trousers for men; casual below-the-knee capri pants, dresses/skirts and tops with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women. All participants must wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes.
Construction Attire – Clean T-shirts with jeans, capris, knee-length shorts, or work pants for both men and women; closed-toe/closed-heel shoes; head bandanas and hats are acceptable.

Mission House or Hotel – Conservative casual; shirts worn at all times for men; skirts or loose pants (no yoga pants) and tops with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women; long shorts (to knees) for both men and women. These guidelines apply to ALL casual/house attire including pajamas. Flip-flops are okay in the mission house or hotel.

Swimwear – Conservative style, one-piece traditional-cut swimsuits for women. No bikinis. T-shirts, shorts, and wraps are recommended.

Sportswear – Men are permitted to wear shorts and T-shirts when participating in a sporting activity. Shirts should be worn at all times. Women may wear knee-length, loose shorts while playing.

Shoes – You are required to wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes any time you are outside the mission house, unless you are at the beach.

Recommendation: One pair of nice shoes for church; one pair of closed-toe/closed-heel shoes that will dry quickly if soaked in the rain (or that are washable if covered with mud), for use with work projects; one pair of flip-flops for inside the mission site and in the shower.

Additional Specifics Regarding Dress and Appearance
• Men should not plan on wearing shorts, except during sporting activities, work projects, or swimming.
• Earrings, gauges, shanks, and other piercings are not permitted to be worn by men during the trip. All
piercings (including tongue piercings) must be removed for the duration of the trip.

- Women should not wear any piercings apart from one small hole in each lower ear. Other earrings may be worn at night, but must be removed during the day.
- Women should wear loose-fitting Capri pants, skirts or dresses that fall below the knee.
- Women should not wear tight clothing.
- Women may wear shorts/leggings/tights under opaque skirts if desired (although it is hot).
- Women should wear loose-fitting Capri pants, skirts or dresses that fall below the knee.
- Women should wear loose-fitting Capri pants, skirts or dresses that fall below the knee.
- Women should not wear tight clothing.
- Women may wear shorts/leggings/tights under opaque skirts if desired (although it is hot).
- Women should avoid heavy makeup and a lot of jewelry.
- Women should not wear low-cut shirts or shorts.
- No see-thru clothing. Women should wear slips if the shape of their legs can be seen through their dress or skirt.
- Women should not wear spaghetti or thin straps unless a T-shirt is worn underneath. No strapless dresses/shirts should be worn.

**Reasoning for Dress Code Guidelines**

There is a conservative mindset that still prevails in the Dominican Republic and is different from that of the United States. In the Dominican Republic, many people will make assumptions as to whether or not you are a Christian based on the way you dress. This assumption is less prevalent in Barahona, but still very much present in the communities where COTN works.

It is not just the cultural conservatism that contributes to COTN’s dress code; it is also the role modeling that COTN is trying to provide for the children. Teenage and extramarital sex is a big problem in Dominican communities so one way COTN combats that is with conservative dressing. There is also a gang culture that exists in the Dominican Republic. A
pierced ear on a male is a symbol of gang affiliation. For this reason, COTN does not allow male missionaries to wear earrings.

You will see many Dominicans—even some of our children—that do not fit this dress code. This is partly because the society is increasingly changing as a result of outside influences (such as television, movies, and imported goods) and partly because there is a different mindset between Christians and non-Christians. It is also because there are many families that simply cannot afford to choose their clothes. However, it is in the spirit of service that COTN chooses to err on the side of being conservative so as not to be a distraction to God’s work.
Chapter Six: Haiti

HAITI — COUNTRY FACTS

Population:
9,893,934 (July 2013 est.)

Location: Caribbean, western one-third of the island of Hispaniola, between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, west of the Dominican Republic

History: The native Taino Amerindians—who inhabited the island of Hispaniola when Christopher Columbus landed there in 1492—were virtually annihilated by Spanish settlers within 25 years. In the early 17th century, the French established a presence on Hispaniola. In 1697, Spain ceded to the French the western third of the island, which later became Haiti. The French colony, based on forestry and sugar-related industries, became one of the wealthiest in the Caribbean but only through the heavy importation of African slaves and considerable environmental degradation. In the late 18th century, Haiti’s nearly half-million slaves revolted under François-Dominique Toussaint Louverture. After a prolonged struggle, Haiti became the first black republic to declare independence, in 1804. Now the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has been plagued by political violence for most of its history. After an armed rebellion led to the forced resignation and exile of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February 2004, an interim government took office to organize new elections under the auspices of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).
Continued violence and technical delays prompted repeated postponements, but Haiti finally did inaugurate a democratically elected president and parliament in May of 2006. A massive magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010 with an epicenter about 10 miles southwest of the capital, Port-au-Prince. An estimated 2 million people lived within the zone of heavy to moderate structural damage. The earthquake was assessed as the worst in this region in the last 200 years.

**Government:** Republic
Official Name: Republic of Haiti (Local: Republique d'Haiti/Repiblik d' Ayiti)
President: Michel Martelly (since May 2011)
Capital: Port-au-Prince
Independence Day: January 1, 1804 (From France)

**Religions:** Roman Catholic 80%, Protestant 16%, none 1%, other 3%
*Note:* roughly half of the population practices voodoo

**Language:** Creole, French

**Economy:** Haiti has a free market economy with low labor costs and tariff-free access to the US for many of its exports. Poverty, corruption, and poor access to education for much of the population are among Haiti’s most serious disadvantages. Haiti’s economy suffered a severe setback after the January 2010 earthquake. Already the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere with 80 percent of the population living under the poverty line and 54 percent in abject poverty, the damage to Port-au-Prince caused the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) to contract an estimated 5.1 percent in 2010. Two-thirds of all Haitians depend on the agricultural sector, mainly small-scale subsistence farming, and remain vulnerable to damage from frequent natural disasters,
exacerbated by the country’s widespread deforestation. The apparel sector accounts for three-quarters of Haitian exports and nearly one-tenth of GDP. Remittances are the primary source of foreign exchange, equaling nearly 20 percent of GDP and more than twice the earnings from exports. Haiti suffers from a lack of investment, partly because of limited infrastructure and a lack of security. In 2005, Haiti paid its arrears to the World Bank, paving the way for re-engagement with the Bank. Haiti received debt forgiveness for more than $1 billion through the Highly-Indebted Poor Country initiative in mid-2009. The remainder of its outstanding external debt was cancelled by donor countries in early 2010 but has since risen to about $400 million. The government relies on formal international economic assistance for fiscal sustainability, with more than half of its annual budget coming from outside sources.

**Exports:** apparel, manufactured goods, oils, cocoa, mangoes, coffee

**Natural Resources:** coffee, mangoes, sugarcane, rice, corn, sorghum, wood

**Currency:** Gourdes (HTG); US Dollar equivalent = 43.35 gourdes (2013)

**Unemployment Rate:** 40.6% (2010)

**Population Living on Less than $1.25 per Day:** 62%

**Education:** Literacy rate: (definition: age 15 and over can read and write) total population: 52.9%
Health:
Under-five mortality: 70 deaths/1,000 live births
Life expectancy: 62 years
Hospital Beds per 1,000 people: 1.3
People Living with HIV: 120,000

Climate: tropical; semiarid where mountains in east cut off trade winds

Human Trafficking: Haiti is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. A large number of Haitian women are trafficked into prostitution and sexual exploitation in Western Europe, Australia, Central and South America, and Caribbean destinations. A significant number of women, boys, and girls are trafficked within the country for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude.

COTN’s HISTORY IN HAITI

2010
In January 2010, Children of the Nations (COTN) and its partners responded to the earthquake in Haiti with emergency food and resource distribution, as well as medical aid via a series of medical Venture Teams. During the course of these response efforts, 14 children were identified in dire need of advanced care, and were transported to COTN’s medical clinic in Barahona, Dominican Republic.

Children of the Nations committed to care for those families following their reintegration into their Haitian communities, and since then, thanks to the generosity of our partners, we have been able to provide ongoing medical support, supplies, food, and funding to help the families get back on their feet.

2012
Thanks to generous sponsors and other partners, seventy-five children in the community of Bellevue are enrolled in COTN’s first Haiti Village Partnership Program (VPP).

2013
In January, children in the Bellevue VPP begin attending a local school thanks to their sponsors. COTN implements its own after-school program for the children, and begins work on establishing a school and ministry center of our own.
COTN’s HAITI PROGRAMS

Village Partnership Program
Our Bellevue Village Partnership Program officially launched in October 2012, when we welcomed the first seventy-five sponsored children into the program. Sponsorship provides these children with an education, daily nutrition, spiritual encouragement, and much-needed resources like soap, school supplies, and clothing. As this Village Partnership continues to develop, COTN plans to eventually build a school and medical clinic to better serve the children of Bellevue.

Our Village Partnership Program in Bellevue is a community-based ministry that comes alongside local leaders to provide training, education, spiritual encouragement, and resources empowering them to raise their children and reach their goal of self-sustainability. Working with the local leadership of Bellevue, COTN has assessed the unique needs of this community, and is working to establish programs and strategies to best meet these needs.
WHERE YOU WILL STAY

Haiti

COTN’s Ministry Site/Guesthouse
The COTN guesthouse is located in Gressier, about 15 miles west of Port-au-Prince and near the community of Bellevue. It is about a two-hour drive from the airport. This house will accommodate up to 15 people, all in single beds. There are two full bathrooms and a full kitchen with a staff cook on hand. The guesthouse property is located in a quiet residential neighborhood and enclosed by a wall. COTN also employs security guards to ensure our guests’ safety. The building has running water, electricity, and a backup generator. There is a large room for meeting or lounging. All visitors will enjoy a nice night’s sleep with fans and screens in windows.
CULTURAL DO’S AND DON’TS

Haiti

LOOK, LISTEN and LEARN when interacting in another culture.

Dress / Hygiene

● DO wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes outside of the guesthouse.
● DO dress nice/clean cut—nothing sloppy.
● DO cover tattoos and piercings (women may have one earring per ear).
● DO bathe daily and wash your hair as needed.
● DO wear pants/capris that cover your knees or long, opaque skirts (women).
● DO NOT wear spaghetti straps (women); only straps that are 3 to 4 inches wide at least.
● DO continue to shave/maintain your facial hair (men).
● DO tell your team leader immediately if you feel sick.
● DO bring hand sanitizer with you (please use it discreetly so as not to offend locals).
● DO fill your water bottle each day before going into the villages.
● DO NOT drink the water off COTN property unless it is bottled. (Water in the guesthouse is fine to bathe with.)
● DO use wisdom when eating what is served to you outside of COTN property.
● DO NOT play with or touch any animals.

Miscellaneous

● DO register all gifts for sponsored children with the Sponsorship Coordinator.
● DO recognize that if you are inquiring about a local person’s situation, people often interpret your
questions as meaning you are going to help them. (Education, home, travel to the U.S., etc.)

- DO ask your team host if you see a need and want more information.
- DO expect for most scheduled things to run late.
- DO bring toilet paper with you if you are traveling off the mission center property.
- DO NOT talk about alcohol.
- DO NOT give out anything to children, adults, staff, or translators (gifts, food, candy, money, clothing). All donations should go through the COTN–Haiti office to be checked in and distributed.
- DO NOT talk about money.
- DO NOT walk alone off COTN property at any time.

**Housing**

- DO expect for the electricity to come and go.
- DO expect for the house to be hot.
- DO close and lock all gates and doors after opening them.
- DO keep all passports in a safe location.
- DO NOT put toilet paper in the toilet; rather put it in the trash can nearby.
- DO NOT invite visitors into the house. They must remain outside or be invited in by a COTN staff member.
Special Note on Alcohol and Tobacco Use
Since you are a representative of Children of the Nations, participating in drinking alcohol or using tobacco could potentially offend or cause confusion about the standards and beliefs of COTN. Though you might not share the same views on such topics, please respect the beliefs of the culture and remember you are representing the values of COTN in Haiti. Please do not drink alcohol or use tobacco while on COTN trips.
HEALTH CONCERNS
Haiti

Immunizations
Please contact your health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for up-to-date information on immunization requirements for Haiti. (http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list)

You will need to carry your immunization record with you any time your passport is required.

Water-Borne Disease Precautions
Drinking water
COTN will provide purified water in the mission house, hotels, and on the COTN property. While in the city, you should only drink beverages from a bottle, including water. Do not drink water in the city, or from the taps on COTN property or hotels. Tap water in the mission house and hotels may be used for bathing, but you must not drink it or brush teeth with it. In a case where tap water must be used for drinking, it should ALWAYS be boiled to a vigorous rolling boil for 3 minutes and allowed to cool before consumption (recommended treatment by CDC) or treated by filtration with a 1-micron filter combined with iodine or chlorine.

Food and beverages
Be especially cautious of fresh fruits and vegetables in the city that may have been washed in untreated water. COTN kitchen staff will always clean produce properly before serving it, but others may not. Also, water on the outside of beverage cans or bottles is most likely contaminated. Therefore, wet cans or bottles should be dried before being opened, and surfaces that are contacted directly by the mouth in drinking should first be wiped clean.
Food-Borne Disease Precautions
If eating outside of COTN property, be sure food is well cooked and meats have been properly handled. Wash hands well before eating anything. Carry anti-bacterial hand sanitizer for the times when soap and water are not available. Being very cautious will pay off, and neglecting to be careful will result in traveler’s diarrhea!

Other Health Issues
HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis
Precautions must ALWAYS be taken during any activity with risk of body-fluid contact (mending scraped knees, etc). Talk to a health provider about what the risks are and precautions necessary to protect yourself. Be sure to bring plenty of bandages to cover any scratches or open sores you may have. Also, carry medical gloves (that are the correct size) even if you do not plan on any medical contact.

Tuberculosis (TB)
Tuberculosis infection is generally transmitted through the air by coughing. Travelers who anticipate possible prolonged exposure to tuberculosis should have a tuberculin skin test before leaving. If the reaction is negative, they should have a repeat test after returning to the United States. Avoid prolonged close contact to someone who has a constant cough. When traveling on public mini-busses, be sure to sit next to the window to reduce your exposure to TB.

Worms
To decrease your chance of contracting worms, avoid walking barefoot anywhere (inside or outside). Many varieties of worm larvae live in the soil or are present in rural areas contaminated by animal or human feces. Such larvae can enter the body through the soles of exposed feet or toenails. Wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes at all times.
Dengue Fever and Malaria
Bring bug spray and use throughout the day to keep mosquitoes away. Mosquitoes are most active in the early morning and late night. It is also a good idea to discuss obtaining a prescription of antimalarial drugs from your doctor.

International Health Insurance
In the case of a medical emergency, COTN purchases medical insurance to ensure the ability to airlift someone out of the country to the nearest medical facility with the needed capabilities (most likely the US). COTN uses Seven Corners Emergency Medical and Evacuation Insurance for all Venture participants. This insurance costs about $3 per day, per person, and is included in the cost of your trip. Please ask your team leader or the COTN Venture Coordinator if you’d like more information.

Medicine
You should bring over-the-counter pain and cold medication with you, especially during June–August (cold/flu season). Bring any necessary prescriptions for the duration of the trip and CLEARLY marked with the pharmacy label. (Label can be on a Ziploc bag.) All prescription medication that you take needs to be filled in advance, with enough to last for the duration of your stay in Haiti.
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELING

Haiti

Passport, Visa, and Immunization Record
You will need a passport to travel to Haiti, but a tourist visa is not required for citizens of the United States for a stay up to 90 days. Be sure to make photocopies of your passport before you leave. Carry one copy somewhere other than with your passport. A second copy should be left in the States on file with the COTN–USA office so it can be faxed if any problem arises due to a lost passport. It is also a good idea for your team leader to have a copy of all team members’ passports.

Airport Issues
Luggage
Most airlines allow one 13- to 40-pound carry-on bag and one personal item for free. Because Haiti is considered part of North America, most airlines do not consider it an international destination and do not allow checked bags to travel for free. Any checked bags should be less than 50 pounds. Be sure to check with your airline on the baggage allowance and cost, to ensure that you stay within the guidelines so you don’t have to discard anything at the airport or pay excess baggage fees.

If you are transporting resource items for COTN, please note that the excess baggage cost is considered an additional cost to your team. If you prefer not to pay those extra fees, please consult with your team leader.

Check with your specific airline, especially if your luggage is an odd shape/size. Nothing valuable should be carried in checked luggage. It is recommended to use the luggage locks issued by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration to ensure luggage content safety. When you arrive in Port-au-
Prince, only claim your own bags so there is no confusion with others in your group.

All checked luggage should use the luggage tags available from COTN and also be marked with the following information:

Your Name
COTN Haiti – Timoun Tout Peyi
La Ferroney No. 1-Angle
Boulevard 14 AOUT 1960
Et Ruelle Catherine Flon,
Gressier, Haiti (W.I)
Phone: 5093-789-6221

Your Name
Home/Group Address
Phone Number

Carry-On Baggage
Many airlines have varying guidelines regarding carry-on baggage. Make sure you are well acquainted with your airline’s rules. In some cases, you may be flying on multiple airlines that have different rules, so double check each flight.

In addition, some airlines will ask or even force you to place your carry-on in the checked baggage compartment—as a courtesy, free of charge. Although this may sound like a great deal, be prepared to speak with the representative at the gate.

Explain to the representative that you and your team are a part of a mission team going to visit COTN’s ministry sites, which are far removed from the airport. To lose your carry-on would be a major headache and could cause problems for the health of your team as your carry-on baggage has all your clothing, toiletries, medicine, and other valuable items you
need when arriving at your final destination. Express gratitude for their offer, but ask them to allow you to board with your carry-on and find a place to put your baggage.

*NOTE:* In the event that the representative refuses to allow you to carry on your baggage, remove your medicine, any valuables, and no less than one day’s worth of clothing from your bag and place it in your backpack. If lost, your baggage may not arrive for up to 3 days.

**Checking In**
Check-in for an international flight is three hours before boarding. However, depending on the team size it may be necessary to arrive at the airport four hours prior to flying to ensure that all luggage is successfully checked. You may want to reconfirm your tickets home from Haiti a few days before leaving.
ENTRY PLAN

Haiti

In the case of last-minute problems, questions, or flight schedule changes:
Contact the COTN International office at 360-698-7227 during business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time). If it is after hours, contact your designated Venture Emergency Contact (found at www.cotni.org/pages/venture-overview) to inform them of the situation.

En route to Haiti
You will receive an immigration card to fill out either on the airplane or once you arrive in Haiti. It will ask for basic personal information like name, passport number, citizenship, etc. You’ll also need to include the address of where you are staying. The address of the COTN office is:

COTN Haiti – Timoun Tout Peyi
La Ferroney No. 1-Angle
Boulevard 14 AOUT 1960
Et Ruelle Catherine Flon,
Gressier, Haiti (W.1)
Phone: 5093-789-6221

It will ask for the reason for your travel. Check “Tourist” (not “Missionary”) to avoid any confusion or problems.

At Port-au-Prince Airport in Haiti
Follow others from your flight to purchase your tourist visa, pass through immigration, claim your bags, pass through customs, and then exit to where our COTN–Haiti staff will be waiting for you. Do not let anyone (aside from team members) assist you with your baggage, as they will require you to pay them. Simply say, “No, thank you” and move along.
Immigration
Have your passport and immigration card handy. You may be asked some questions about what your plans are. Please remember you are NOT “working” for COTN. You have come as a tourist and are planning to volunteer some time with Children of the Nations while you are there.

Baggage Claim
You will need to retrieve your bags from the luggage carousel and proceed through customs. Talk with your team (big or small) before you land and establish someone to go first and lead your group and someone to bring up the rear—ensuring everyone stays together. Have your luggage claim tickets ready (normally they are stuck onto your airline ticket jackets). If, after all the bags have been run through the carousel, a bag is missing, report it to an official; you’ll need to make a lost luggage claim. Our staff will coordinate with the airport to make sure your bag(s) get picked up when they arrive.

Proceed through Customs
When answering questions, please remember that, for now, the items you are carrying are “your personal items” and you are “volunteering your time with Children of the Nations, which is an NGO (non-government organization) caring for orphaned and destitute children.”

Once through customs, you will be transported to our ministry center in Gressier, approximately two hours away. Your leader will have more specific transportation details.
LEARNING A BIT OF HAITIAN CREOLE

Creole is written phonetically. Each letter is pronounced, and each word is spelled as it is pronounced. Creole has only been recognized as the official language of Haiti in the last few decades. Therefore, there are many different ways in which the Haitians write and spell Creole words. There is an official standard that has been set, and this standard will be maintained in this publication. The following is a pronunciation guide using this standard; most of the sounds are French.

**Basic Creole Pronunciation**

- **e** (similar to the “ay” sound in “aim”) **ede** — to aid, help
- **e** (similar to the “eh” sound in “leg”) **mesi** — thank you
- **i** (similar to the “ee” sound in “see”) **isit** — here
- **o** (similar to the “ah” sound in “claw”) **fo** — strong
- **o** (similar to the “oh” sound in “toe”) **zo** — bone
- **ou** (similar to the “oo” sound in “you”) **ou** — you
- **ch** (similar to the “sh” sound in “share”) **chache** — to search
- **g** (similar to the sound in “go”) **gen** — to have
- **j** (similar to the French “j” sound in “bonjour;” not the hard “j” sound of the English “just”) **jou** — day
- **r** (not a hard “R” as in English; soft sound, like in French) **respire** — to breathe
- **s** (same as the soft “s” in English, like in the word “safe”) **prese** — in a hurry
- **y** (similar to the “y” sound in “yes”) **pye** — foot

There are nasal sounds in Creole just as there are in French, which are pronounced partially through the nose, but without the “n” itself pronounced (a rare exception to the general pronunciation rule of pronouncing every letter). Some
English equivalents which come close to the nasal sounds are as follows:

**an** (similar to the “ah” in “alms,” but with a nasal inflection)
**en** (similar to the “ah” in “at,” but with a nasal inflection)
**on** (similar to the “oh” in “don’t,” but with a nasal inflection)

**A.** When a nasal sound is followed by a word that begins with “n,” or “m,” the nasal sound is pronounced, then the “n” or “m” is pronounced separately.

**B.** If an accent is placed over the vowel, there is no nasal sound.

**C.** The letter combination “in” never indicates a nasal sound.

The letter c is only used in the ch combination.
The letter k is used for the hard sound.
The letter s is used for the soft sound.

**Common Creole Words and Phrases**
- Bonjou! - Good morning!
- Bonswa! - Good afternoon!/Evening! (used after 11 a.m.)
- Komon ou ye? - How are you?
- N'ap boule! (most common greeting and response) - Good!
- Wi - Yes
- yo - they, them
- Non - No
- Mesi - Thanks
- Anmwe! - Help!
- Non, mesi - No, thanks
- Souple - Please
- Merite – You’re welcome
- Pa gen pwoblem - No problem
Oke - OK
Eskize mwen - Excuse me
Mwen regret sa - I'm sorry
Separe sa ant nou - Divide this among you
Ye - Yesterday
Jodia - Today
Demen - Tomorrow
Maten an - This morning
Apremid a - This afternoon
Aswe a - This evening
lendi - Monday
madi - Tuesday
mekredi - Wednesday
jedi - Thursday
vandredi - Friday
samdi - Saturday
dimanch - Sunday
Ou byen? - You OK?
Mwen pa two byen - I'm not too well
Mwen malad – I’m sick
Te gen yon aksidan - There was an accident
Nou bezwen yon dokte/yon mis touswit - We need a
doctor/a nurse right now
Kote Iopital Ia? - Where is the hospital?
Kote Li ou fe mal? - Where does it hurt you?
Mwen pa ka manje/domi - I cannot eat/sleep
Mwengendjare - I have diarrhea
Mwen anvi vonmi - I feel nauseated
Tout ko mwen cho - My whole body is hot
Mwen toudi – I’m dizzy
Nou bezwen pansman/koton - We need bandages/cotton
Mwen bezwen yon bagay pi blese sa a - I need something
for this cut
Mwen grangou – I’m hungry
Mwen swaf anpil – I’m very thirsty
Konben - How much?/How many?
Poukisa? - Why?
Kote? - Where?
Kisa? - What?
Kile? - When?
Ki moun? - Who?
Kijan? - How?
Kiles? - Which?
Eske ou pale angle/franse? - Do you speak English/French?
Ki moun isit ki pale angle? - Who speaks English here?
Ou konprann? - You understand?
Kij an yo rele sa an kreyol? - What do they call that in Creole?
Kij an yo di...an kreyol? - How do they say... in Creole?
Kilaj ou? - How old are you?
ou - you, your
mwen - I, me, my, mine
nou - us, our, you (plural)
lì - him, her, his, hers
Two important things to consider when packing clothing for your trip are: 1) **Culture** and 2) **Climate**.

Culturally, you will be seen as professionals and should dress accordingly for most ministry activities in Haiti. When you are being presented, presenting, teaching, or leading something you will need to wear more formal clothing. A general rule of thumb would be to try not to allow your clothing to be the thing that most sets you apart from the culture. When in doubt, it is better to err on the side of being too dressed up as opposed to being too casual.

The climate in Haiti is hot and humid, with seasonal rainy periods.

In order to help you prepare for your trip, we have devised five levels of dress available as a means to be culturally sensitive in Haiti.

**Appropriate Dress for Haiti**

**Church Attire/Public Speaking/Professional Speaking** –
Men: Business-casual dress including clean, collared, wrinkle-free shirts (ties optional, but preferred) and dress shoes.

Women: knee-length dresses/skirts and shirts with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps, dress shoes, no short skirts.

**Ministry and Outreach Attire** – Business-casual including collared shirts and khaki trousers for men; casual below-the-knee capri pants, dresses/skirts and tops with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women. All participants must wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes.
Construction Attire – Clean T-shirts with jeans, capris, or work pants for both men and women; closed-toe/closed-heel shoes; head bandanas and hats are acceptable.

Mission House or Hotel – Conservative casual; shirts worn at all times for men; skirts or loose pants (no yoga pants) and tops with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women; long shorts (to knees) for both men and women. These guidelines apply to ALL casual/house attire, including pajamas. Flip-flops are okay in the mission house or hotel.

Swimwear – Conservative style, one-piece traditional-cut swimsuits for women. No bikinis. T-shirts, shorts and wraps are recommended.

Sportswear – Men are permitted to wear shorts and T-shirts when participating in a sporting activity. Shirts should be worn at all times. Women may wear knee-length, loose shorts while playing.

Shoes – You are required to wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes any time you are outside the mission house, unless you are at the beach.

Recommendation: One pair of nice shoes for church; one pair of closed-toe/closed-heel shoes that will dry quickly if soaked in the rain (or that are washable if covered with mud), for use with work projects; one pair of flip-flops for inside the mission site and in the shower.

Additional Specifics Regarding Dress and Appearance

- Men should not plan on wearing shorts, except during sporting activities, work projects or swimming.
- Earrings, gauges, shanks, and other piercings are not permitted to be worn by men during the trip. All
piercings (including tongue piercings) must be removed for the duration of the trip.

- Women should not wear piercings apart from one small hole in each lower ear. Other earrings may be worn at night, but must be removed during the day.
- Women should wear loose-fitting Capri pants, skirts or dresses that fall below the knee.
- Women should not wear tight clothing.
- Women may wear shorts/leggings/tights under opaque skirts if desired (although it is hot).
- Women should avoid heavy makeup and a lot of jewelry.
- Women should not wear low-cut shirts.
- No see-thru clothing. Women should wear slips if the shape of their legs can be seen through their dress or skirt.
- Women should not wear spaghetti or thin straps unless a T-shirt is worn underneath. No strapless dresses/shirts should be worn.

**Reasoning for Dress Code Guidelines**

There is a conservative mindset that still prevails in the Caribbean and is different from that of the United States. In the Caribbean, many people will make assumptions as to whether or not you are a Christian based on the way you dress. This assumption is becoming less prevalent in larger cities, but is still very much present in the smaller communities where COTN serves.

It is not just the cultural conservatism that contributes to COTN’s dress code; it is also the role modeling that COTN is trying to provide for the children. Teenage and extramarital sex is a big problem in Caribbean communities so one way COTN combats that is with conservative dressing. There is also a gang-culture that exists on Hispaniola. A pierced ear on
a male is a symbol of gang affiliation. For this reason, COTN does not allow male missionaries to wear earrings.

You will see many Haitians—even some of our children—who do not fit this dress code. This is partly because the society is increasingly changing as a result of outside influences (such as television, movies, and imported goods) and partly because there is a different mindset between Christians and non-Christians. It is also because there are many families that simply cannot afford to choose their clothes. However, it is in the spirit of service that COTN chooses to err on the side of being conservative so as not to be a distraction to God’s work.
Chapter Seven: Malawi

MALAWI – COUNTRY FACTS

Population: 16,777,547 (2013 est.)

Location: Southern Africa, east of Zambia

History: Established in 1891, the British protectorate of Nyasaland became the independent nation of Malawi in 1964. After three decades of one-party rule under President Hastings Kamuzu Banda, the country held multiparty elections in 1994, under a provisional constitution that came into full effect the following year. President Bingu wa Mutharika, elected in May 2004 after a failed attempt by the previous president to amend the constitution to permit another term, struggled to assert his authority against his predecessor and subsequently started his own party, the Democratic Progressive Party, in 2005. Mutharika was reelected to a second term in May 2009. As president, he oversaw some economic improvement in his first term, but was accused of economic mismanagement and poor governance in his second term. He died abruptly in April 2012 and was succeeded by his vice president, Joyce Banda. Population growth, increasing pressure on agricultural lands, corruption, and the spread of HIV/AIDS pose major problems for Malawi.
Government: Multi-party democracy
Official name: Republic of Malawi
President: Joyce Banda (since April 2012)
Capital: Lilongwe
Independence Day: July 6, 1964 (from UK)

Religions: Christian 82.7%, Muslim 13%, other 1.9%, none 2.5% (1998 census)

Language: Malawi has two official languages: English and Chichewa. However, Chichewa is more widely spoken in villages as English is only used commercially.

Family Life: In family life it is not uncommon to share a home with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and/or in-laws. There is great respect in this culture for elders (and wisdom) in the family and community. Any child who has lost one parent is considered orphaned. If double-orphaned (a loss of both parents), generally the child will first go to live with an uncle.

Economy: Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world’s most densely populated and least developed countries. The economy is predominately agricultural with about 80 percent of the population living in rural areas. The performance of the tobacco sector is key to short-term growth as tobacco accounts for more than half of exports. The economy depends on substantial inflows of economic assistance from the IMF, the World Bank, and individual donor nations. The government faces many challenges including developing a market economy, improving educational facilities, facing up to environmental problems, dealing with the rapidly growing problem of HIV/AIDS, and satisfying foreign donors that fiscal discipline is being tightened. The government has announced infrastructure projects that could yield improvements, such as a new oil pipeline for better fuel access, and the potential for a waterway link through
Mozambican rivers to the ocean for better transportation options. Since 2009, however, Malawi has experienced some setbacks, including a general shortage of foreign exchange, which has damaged its ability to pay for imports, and fuel shortages that hinder transportation and productivity. Investment fell 23 percent in 2009, and continued to decline in 2010. The government has failed to address barriers to investment such as unreliable power, water shortages, poor telecommunications infrastructure, and the high costs of services. Donors, who provided an average of 36 percent of government revenue in the past five years, suspended general budget support for Malawi in 2011 due to a negative IMF review and governance issues.

**Natural Resources**: limestone, arable land, hydropower, uranium, coal, and bauxite

**Exports**: tobacco, tea, sugar, cotton, coffee, peanuts, wood products, apparel

**Currency**: Malawian Kwacha (MWK); USD equivalent = 335 kwachas (2013)

**Population Living on Less than $1.25 per Day**: 74%

**Education**: In Malawi, primary school is free; however secondary school is not. Typical secondary school fees: $50–$300 per term (three terms per year)

Youth Literacy Rate: *(definition: people aged 15 to 24 can read and write)* 87% (2012)

**Health**: Malawi has been ravaged by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Of the 16.7 million people who live in Malawi, about 10 percent are young children who have been orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS, famine, malaria, or a
number of treatable diseases.  
Under-five mortality: 83 deaths per 1,000 live births  
Life expectancy: 54 years  
Physicians per 1,000 people: about 0.02 (Malawi has one of the lowest physician-to-population ratios in the entire world.)  
People living with HIV/AIDS: about 910,000

**Staple Food:** Nsima (ground maize)

**Climate:** Malawi is an inland African country with a tropical climate. The lower elevations are covered with dense rainforests and occupied by a variety of exotic wildlife. April to August is the dry, cool season (with cold nights).

COTN’s HISTORY IN MALAWI

1998
Bill Clark, (Chris’ father) serving with his wife Pat in Malawi, calls home to his son, “You’ve got to do something for these orphans. Chris, they are in desperate circumstances!”

1999
COTN’s first Children’s Home is opened in Malawi in Chiwengo Village.

2001
We begin our first agricultural project at Chitipi Farm near Malawi’s capital, Lilongwe. A Children’s Home opens on the property, with space for 33 children.

Village Partnership Program begins in the village of Mtsiliza, near Lilongwe.

2004
Our first Skills Center opens in Mtsiliza and our first Teen Home opens in Mtsiliza.

2006
Construction begins on our Njewa Ministry Center, our 350-acre Chichere Farm is purchased, and the Widows Program begins in Mtsiliza.

2007
Village Partnerships begin in the villages of Mgwayi and Chiromombo.

2010
COTN–Malawi opens its first secondary school. The students name it COTN International Christian Academy. In its first
year, the school takes in 29 pupils from our Children’s Homes and Village Partnership Program.

2011
COTN’s first African college graduate, Aness Banda of Malawi, receives her diploma.

2012
Partners build a community center in Chirombo and a boys’ dormitory at our International Christian Academy in Malawi.

2013
On June 29, the first-ever class of graduates (40 students) from the International Christian Academy receives their high school diplomas.
COTN’s MALAWI PROGRAMS

Njewa Ministry Center
The Njewa Ministry Center consists of guest accommodations and dining facilities as well as COTN administration buildings and the COTN International Christian Academy (secondary school). The center hosts hundreds of Venture guests per year with plenty of room for growth. The center is also used for youth camps/retreats for our children and staff. Eventually we hope to be able to use this facility to host outside groups, conferences, and retreats to generate income that will support COTN’s ministry in Malawi.

COTN International Christian Academy
Doors opened to ninth-grade (Form 1) students in September 2009. In June 2013, the first class of 40 students graduated from the school. Construction of classrooms and other facilities continues as the school grows.

Nursery School and Primary School
Nursery school services are provided in the villages of Chirombo, Mtasiliza, and Mgwayi, with more than 200 children attending. COTN also operates a primary school in the village of Mgwayi.

Children’s Homes
“House of Peace” Children’s Home
Our “House of Peace” Children’s Home at Chitipi Farm houses up to 33 children and is run by a parental couple assisted by numerous “aunties.” This home is situated in the midst of a working farm and our children are able to learn valuable agricultural skills.
Chichere Farm Boys’ Home
Our Chichere Farm Boys’ Home is located in Mchinji, near the Zambia border and, much like the Chitipi Farm Children’s Home, offers children a chance to grow up in a traditional agricultural environment and learn the skills that come with such an upbringing.

Village Partnership Program
Our Village Partnership Program strategically targets the neediest children living in villages and seeks to come alongside their caregivers in an effort to bring well-rounded care to their lives. Keeping individual children and their needs in mind, COTN works with caregivers and village leaders to identify the unique needs of a village or community. A customized partnership program is created. Through child sponsorship, programs are developed to address such areas as nutrition, education, health, clothing, and the child’s spiritual life and development. COTN currently partners with three villages in Malawi: Mtsiliza, Mgwayi, and Chirombo.

Agricultural Projects
Our agricultural projects in Malawi not only provide a source of food for the children in our homes and school program, but also provide opportunities for self-sustainability.

Chitipi Farm
This 11-acre farm includes animals and crops.

Chichere Farm
This 350-acre farm includes animals and crops such as maize, rice, cassava, and sunflowers.

Widows Program
The Widows Program in Mtsiliza village is as much an spiritual support group as it is a financial one. The widows
enrolled in the program learn skills in the areas of sewing, knitting/crocheting, and baking. They gather together to create products which they later sell, providing them with an income to care for their children.

**HIV Testing / Training / Treatment**

HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention training are key to the health of our children in Malawi. COTN provides education in classrooms, throughout villages, and in one-on-one conversations. COTN also provides testing, awareness, and treatment to those suffering from the virus.

**The *JESUS* Film Project**

COTN uses the *JESUS* film (www.jesusfilm.org) as an evangelical outreach to the surrounding villages. Shown in makeshift outdoor theaters, the film has played a significant role in sharing the gospel as well as helping plant new churches in the area.

**National Internship Program**

Each year, interns from Malawi are chosen out of many applicants, mainly students from the African Bible College or grown COTN children. These interns, serving alongside COTN–Malawi staff, are given the opportunity to learn how COTN functions and also help with Venture Teams and interns. They serve as interpreters, role models, and leaders to COTN children and youth.
WHERE YOU WILL STAY
Malawi

The following are several options of where Venture participants may stay while serving in Malawi. Teams should be flexible as changes to accommodations are often made with little notice.

Njewa Ministry Center
Situated on 12 acres, COTN’s Njewa Ministry Center includes our Malawi offices, guest housing, and secondary school (International Christian Academy). It is three miles from the Crossroads Center on Mchinji Highway and 30 minutes from the airport, outside the capital city of Lilongwe.

“The Village” at Njewa
Consisting of eight thatched-roof huts and an open-air gazebo that serves as a central meeting space, The Village is designed with the feel of a traditional African village. Each hut, which sleeps 4 to 6 guests in bunk beds, has electricity and a sink with running water. Just a few feet away is a community bathroom (one side for men, the other for women) with running water, Western-style toilets, showers, and deep sinks (for washing and also for doing laundry). A community dining hall serves the needs of all the visiting teams and interns. The Village is fully enclosed by a brick wall and security fencing and staffed with 24-hour guards.

Dormitories
Usually used for summer interns, the dormitories are also used for Venture Teams that are too large for the huts to accommodate. Located literally a stone’s throw from The Village, separate women’s and men’s dormitories each sleep 16 people. Each dormitory has its own bathroom facilities, complete with running water, Western-style toilets, sinks, and showers. Meals are served in the dining hall at The Village.
Chichere Farm
Located about an hour and a half from Lilongwe, Chichere Farm is a 350-acre farm on the southeast end of the Mchinji District. COTN bought the farm to produce food for the children we serve in Malawi.

The facilities on the farm include the Chichere Farm Boys’ Home and a guest room that can sleep three Venture participants or interns. The house has running water, a shower, and electricity. The facility is well-secured and has security guards.

Chitipi Farm
Chitipi Farm is situated on about 11 acres, six miles from the Crossroads Center on Mchinji Highway and about 15 minutes from Lilongwe. The farm includes a COTN Children’s Home, which houses about 30 children. There is one guest room that can sleep two interns or Venture Team members. The room has two beds, a bathroom with a Western-style toilet, running water, and electricity. Security guards are positioned around the house and the farm during night hours.
CULTURAL DO’S AND DON’TS

Malawi

LOOK, LISTEN, and LEARN when interacting in another culture.

Greetings/Respect

- DO greet everyone in the room individually, greeting the oldest person first.
- DO bend/kneel down to their level when greeting (women specifically should do this).
- DO use two hands when shaking hands or handing something to someone.
- DO try to greet in Chichewa.
- DO NOT ask people if they speak English.

Relationships

- DO sit with the members of your sex (women on one side, men on the other).
- DO NOT display affection in public to anyone of the opposite sex—even your husband or wife.
- DO NOT walk off together with a member of the opposite sex.
- DO NOT talk about dating (at all) or ask about boyfriends/girlfriends.
- DO NOT talk about pregnancy to a woman, even if she is obviously pregnant.
- DO NOT give out your email or mailing address. It is a privilege in this culture to provide this kind of information to someone, and when given it is usually understood that you are going to help them financially.
- DO NOT ask people if they have traveled to the US or if they want to—most villagers haven’t even
traveled as far as Lake Malawi, which is only two hours away.

**Dress / Hygiene**
- **DO** wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes in the villages.
- **DO** dress nice/clean cut—nothing sloppy.
- **DO** cover tattoos and piercings (women may have one earring per ear).
- **DO** bathe daily and wash your hair as needed.
- **DO** wear long, opaque skirts in the village (women).
- **DO** bring leggings or shorts to wear under skirts for warmth. (women)
- **DO NOT** wear spaghetti straps (women); only straps that are 3 to 4 inches wide at least.
- **DO NOT** wear anything sheer; women, wear slips with skirts if necessary.
- **DO** continue to shave/maintain your facial hair (men).
- **DO** tell your team leader immediately if you feel sick.
- **DO** bring hand sanitizer with you everywhere; use it discreetly so as not to offend locals.
- **DO** drink water from the purified water jugs we provide.
- **DO** fill your water bottle each day before going into the villages.
- **DO NOT** drink the water from the tap.
- **DO NOT** play with or touch village animals.

**Miscellaneous**
- **DO** register all gifts for sponsored children with a COTN staff member before giving them.
- **DO** recognize that if you are inquiring about a person’s situation, people often interpret your
questions as meaning you agree to help them (education, home, travel to the US, etc.).

- **DO** ask your team host if you see a need and want more information
- **DO NOT** talk about alcohol.
- **DO NOT** give out anything to children, adults, staff, or translators (gifts, food, candy, money, or clothing). All donations should go through the COTN country office to be logged and accounted for.
- **DO NOT** talk about or enter graveyards.
- **DO NOT** talk about money.
- **DO NOT** walk alone outside after dark (or at all outside of COTN’s sites).

**A Few More Tips on Culture**

- Don’t throw things toward someone—always hand them with two hands (or with one hand under forearm).

- Public displays of affection between men and women are taboo. Even a couple being alone in public is slightly odd. It will be assumed that the couple is married. However, holding hands with people of the same sex is considered a sign of friendship and trust. A man will often hold the hand of a man he is speaking to.

- Never leave belongings unattended where they are visible, even with people you trust. It’s important not to put people into situations of temptation.

- Malawians love to please and many will give you any answer they think you want to hear—even if it is impossible. Remember this in conversation.
**Special Note on Alcohol / Drinking**

We ask that you refrain from drinking alcohol while in Malawi. Christian culture in Malawi associates drinking alcohol with a certain negative lifestyle. Since you are a representative of Children of the Nations, participating in drinking alcohol or even talking/joking about needing a beer or a glass of wine could potentially offend or cause confusion about the standards and beliefs of COTN. Though you might not share the same views on such topics, please respect the beliefs of the culture and remember you are representing the values of COTN in Malawi.
HEALTH CONCERNS

Malawi

Immunizations
Please contact your health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for up-to-date information on immunization requirements for Malawi.
(http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list)

NOTE: Immunization for yellow fever is needed if you will be taking a safari. It is not included on the required/recommended list for travel to Malawi. However, if you plan to travel across borders in Africa, many countries (i.e., Zambia) recommend or require proof of yellow fever vaccination. If you plan to be in Malawi for several months or more, you may want to go into Zambia for a safari. (One dose at least 10 days prior to travel protects for 10 years.)

You will need to carry your immunization record with you anytime your passport is required.

Malaria Prevention
Malaria is endemic in Malawi. The months of June through August are the dry, cold season in Malawi, so risk is significantly lower. However, anti-malarials must be taken for travel to Malawi at any time. Check with your health care provider or the Center for Disease Control for the best methods of prevention for Malawi.

Preventing Insect Bites
Mosquitoes that transmit malaria bite between dusk and dawn. Prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and by applying insect repellent to exposed skin. Use insect repellents that contain at least 30–35% DEET; however, this will cause skin to be more sensitive to the sun, so use with precaution. If not sleeping in well-
screened or air-conditioned housing, use a mosquito bed net. (COTN provides nets for all Venture Team members.) For greater protection during seasons of higher risk, spray clothing and bed nets with Permethrin. Permethrin will repel insects for several months. Repellents containing DEET and Permethrin should be purchased before traveling and can be found in hardware, camping, and military surplus stores. Do not buy repellent in aerosol cans, as they are not allowed on airplanes.

**Water-Borne Disease Precautions**

**Drinking water**

COTN will provide purified water in each home and on the COTN property. While in the city, you should only drink beverages, including water, from a bottle. Do not drink water in the villages, from the taps on COTN property, or in host homes. Tap water on COTN property or host homes may be used for bathing and brushing teeth, but you must not drink it. In a case where tap water must be used for drinking, it should ALWAYS be boiled to a “vigorous rolling boil” for at least three minutes and allowed to cool before consumption (recommended treatment by CDC) or treated by filtration with a 1-micron filter combined with iodine or chlorine.

**Food and beverages**

Be especially cautious in the city of fresh fruits and vegetables that may have been washed in untreated water. COTN will always clean produce properly before serving it, but others may not. Also, water on the outside of beverage cans or bottles is most likely contaminated. Therefore, wet cans or bottles should be dried before being opened, and surfaces that are contacted directly by the mouth in drinking should first be wiped clean.
Schistosomiasis (aka Bilharzia)
Please be aware of the risk of swimming in Lake Malawi due to the risk of Schistosomiasis (referred to by Malawians as Bilharzia). Schistosomiasis is caused by flukes that live in freshwater snails and can penetrate human skin. The CDC stresses that even brief exposures to contaminated water can result in infection. Common Malawian misconception is that exposure of less than 10 minutes in areas free of reeds near the shore (where the snails are found), followed by immediate drying of the skin, decreases risk.

Food-Borne Disease Precautions
If eating outside of COTN property, be sure food is well cooked and meats have been properly handled. Beef is commonly contaminated with parasites, often improperly handled, and is best avoided in Malawi except when purchased from reputable companies. Salmonella (on eggshells) is common, so be sure that eggs are completely cooked. Wash hands well before eating anything. Carry antibacterial hand sanitizer for the times when soap and water are not available. Being very cautious will pay off—and neglecting to be careful can result in traveler’s diarrhea!

Other Health Issues
HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis
HIV is widespread in Malawi, as are Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. Precautions must ALWAYS be taken during any activity with risk of body-fluid contact (mending scraped knees, etc). Talk to a health provider about what the risks are and precautions necessary to protect yourself. Be sure to bring plenty of bandages to cover any scratches or open sores you may have. Also, carry medical gloves (that are the correct size) even if you do not plan on any medical contact.
**Tuberculosis (TB)**

Tuberculosis is common throughout Malawi. Tuberculosis infection is generally transmitted through the air by coughing. Travelers who anticipate possible prolonged exposure to tuberculosis should have a tuberculin skin test before leaving. If the reaction is negative, they should have a repeat test after returning home. Avoid prolonged close contact to someone who has a constant cough. When traveling on public minibusses, be sure to sit next to the window to reduce your exposure to TB.

**Worms**

To decrease your chance of contracting worms, avoid walking barefoot anywhere (inside or outside). Many varieties of worm larvae live in the soil or are present in rural areas contaminated by animal or human feces. Such larvae can enter the body through the soles of exposed feet or toenails. Wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes at all times.

**International Health Insurance**

COTN partner ministry, African Bible College in Malawi, is located a few miles from COTN property. COTN relies on the college’s dependable medical clinic and well-trained doctors for any minor health issues that Venture participants may have. For anything more serious, additional doctors and hospitals are available throughout Malawi.

In the case of a medical emergency, COTN purchases medical insurance to ensure the ability to transport someone out of the country to the nearest medical facility with the needed capabilities (most likely South Africa). COTN uses Seven Corners Emergency Medical and Evacuation Insurance for all Venture participants. This insurance is included in the cost of your trip. Please ask your team leader or COTN Venture Coordinator for more information.
Medicine
You should bring over-the-counter pain and cold medication with you, especially during June through August (cold/flu season). Bring any necessary prescriptions for the duration of the trip, CLEARLY marked with the pharmacy label. (Label can be on a Ziploc bag). All prescription medication that you take needs to be filled in advance, with enough to last you the duration of your stay in Malawi.
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELING

Malawi

Passport, Visa and Immunization Record
You will need a passport to travel to Malawi, but not a visa. A 30-day visa will be issued at customs in Lilongwe. Participants staying longer than 30 days must purchase another 30-day extension for $40 US. This is an additional cost and is not included in your COTN invoice. If you are staying longer than three months, you will need to bring a copy of your high school diploma and college transcripts to ensure ability to extend your visa for longer than three months and/or obtain a temporary employment permit (TEP).

Be sure to make photocopies of your passport before you leave. Carry one copy somewhere other than with your passport. A second copy should be left on file with the COTN–USA office so it can be faxed if any problem arises due to a lost passport. It is also a good idea for your team leader to have a copy of all team members’ passports.

Airport Issues
Luggage
For international travel, most airlines allow two pieces of checked luggage (each no more than 50 pounds) and one 13-to 40-pound carry-on (depending on the airline). If you’re traveling on two separate tickets (one to Europe, for example, and a second one to Lilongwe) your baggage allowance will change in your layover city. So, be sure to check with each airline on the baggage allowance to ensure that you stay within the guidelines of the lesser allowance. You don’t want to have to discard anything in your layover city or pay excess baggage fees.
If you are transporting resource items for COTN, please note that the excess baggage cost is considered an additional cost to your team. If you prefer not to pay those extra fees, please consult with your team leader.

Check with your specific airline, especially if your luggage is an odd shape/size. Nothing valuable should be carried in checked luggage. It is recommended to use the luggage locks issued by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration to ensure luggage content safety. When you arrive in Lilongwe, only claim your own bags so there is no confusion with others in your group.

If traveling with British Airways, missionaries can apply in advance by letter to be allowed three (instead of two) pieces of checked luggage per passenger. This helps COTN when sending over supplies.

All checked luggage should be marked with the following information:

Your Name
Children of the Nations / Malawi
M-12 Lilongwe – Mchinji Hwy
AREA 47 – Njewa
Lilongwe, MALAWI
Phone: 265-8-910-6

Your Name
Home/Group Address
Phone Number

If using boxes for one or two pieces of your luggage, cardboard moving “dish pack” boxes work well. Using duct tape to seal will ensure they don’t fall apart with abuse. Be sure to bring duct tape with you in an accessible place in case
boxes get opened at customs and need to be closed again and for sealing boxes when returning home.

**Carry-On Baggage**
Many airlines have varying guidelines regarding carry-on baggage. Make sure you are well acquainted with your airline’s rules. In some cases, you may be flying on multiple airlines that have different rules, so double check each flight.

In addition, some airlines will ask or even force you to place your carry-on in the checked baggage compartment—as a courtesy, free of charge. Although this may sound like a great deal, be prepared to speak with the representative at the gate.

Explain to the representative that you and your team are a part of a mission team going to visit COTN’s ministry sites, which are far removed from the airport. To lose your carry-on would be a major headache and could cause problems for the health of your team as your carry-on baggage has all your clothing, toiletries, medicine, and other valuable items you need when arriving at your final destination. Express gratitude for their offer, but ask them to allow you to board with your carry-on and find a place to put your baggage.

*NOTE:* In the event that the representative refuses to allow you to carry on your baggage, remove your medicine, any valuables, and no less than one day’s worth of clothing from your bag and place it in your backpack. If lost, your baggage may not arrive for up to 3 days.

**Checking In**
Check-in for an international flight is three hours before boarding. However, teams usually bring quite a few pieces of checked luggage, which results in a need to be at the airport at least four hours before flying to be sure that all complications can be dealt with.
Another reason for early check-in: seat assignments are not made until passengers check in. Be sure to have the ticket agent make your seat reservations for the entire trip, not just the first leg.

You may want to reconfirm your return tickets from Malawi a few days before leaving. Again, when checking in at the Lilongwe airport, have the ticket agent make your seat reservations for the entire trip, if possible.
ENTRY PLAN
Malawi

In the case of last-minute problems, questions, or flight schedule changes:
Contact the COTN–USA office at 360-698-7227 during business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time). If it is after hours, contact your designated Venture Emergency Contact (found at www.cotni.org/pages/venture-overview) to inform them of the situation.

En route to Malawi
You will receive an immigration card to fill out either on the airplane or once you arrive in Malawi. It will ask for basic personal information like your name, passport number, citizenship, etc. You’ll also need to include the address of where you are staying. This address is: Children of the Nations – Malawi; M-12 Lilongwe, Mchinji Hwy; Area 47-Njewa; Lilongwe, Malawi. It will ask for the reason for your travel. Check “Tourist” (not “Missionary”) to avoid any confusion or problems. If it asks for the phone number of where you’ll be staying, it is: 01-762-657

At Kamuzu Airport in Malawi
The international airport in Malawi is quite small, so don’t worry about not being able to find where you’re supposed to go. Follow others from your flight to immigration, baggage claim, through customs, and then out to where people will be waiting for you.

Immigration
Have your passport and immigration card handy. You may be asked some questions about what your plans are. Please remember you are NOT working for COTN. You have
come as tourists and are planning to volunteer some time with Children of the Nations while you are there.

Baggage Claim
You will need to retrieve your bags from the luggage carousel and proceed through customs. Talk with your team (big or small) before you land and establish someone to go first and lead your group and someone to bring up the rear—ensuring everyone stays together. Have your luggage claim tickets ready (normally they are stuck onto your airline ticket jackets). If, after all the bags have been run through the carousel, a bag is missing, report it to an official; you’ll need to make a lost luggage claim. Our staff will coordinate with the airport to make sure your bag(s) get picked up when they arrive.

Proceed through Customs
When answering questions, please remember that, for now, the items you are carrying are “your personal items” and you are “volunteering your time with Children of the Nations, which is an NGO (non-governmental organization) caring for orphaned and destitute children.”

On the other side of customs, a COTN staff member will be waiting for you with a “Children of the Nations” sign. They will assist you with luggage and transport you to our ministry center.
# LEARNING A BIT OF CHICHEWA

## Greetings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chichewa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>Muli bwanji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m well. And you?</td>
<td>Ndili bwino. Kaya inu?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>Mwazuka bwanji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Good morning)</td>
<td>Ndazuka bwino. Kaya inu?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m well. And you?</td>
<td>Ndazuka bwino. Zikomo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you.</td>
<td>Zikomo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>Mwaswela bwanji?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Good afternoon/evening)</td>
<td>Ndaswela bwino. Kaya inu?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m well. And you?</td>
<td>Ndaswela bwino. Zikomo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Getting to Know You:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chichewa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your name?</td>
<td>Dzina lako (lanu) ndani?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is ______.</td>
<td>Dzina langa ndi ______.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How old are you?</td>
<td>Uli ndi zaka zingati?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am ______ years old.</td>
<td>Ndili ndi zaka ______.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Commonly Used Words/Phrases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chichewa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stay well</td>
<td>Tsalani bwino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you tomorrow/later</td>
<td>Tionana mawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little by little (slowly)</td>
<td>Pong’ono, pong’ono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I come in?</td>
<td>Odi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter</td>
<td>Lowani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome!</td>
<td>Takulandilani!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Eya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ayi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Zikomo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>Kwambiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Sesotho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepani</td>
<td>Sorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakhonza!</td>
<td>Good job!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiyeni!</td>
<td>Let’s go!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chabwino</td>
<td>Alright (OK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwera!</td>
<td>Come!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moni nonse!</td>
<td>Hello everyone! (in a group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usiku wabino</td>
<td>Good night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugone bwino</td>
<td>Sleep well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(maloto abwino)</td>
<td>(Sweet dreams)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sekelera! (Mwetulira)</td>
<td>Smile!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DRESS CODE

Malawi

Two important things to consider when packing clothing for your trip are: 1) Culture and 2) Climate.

Culturally, you will be seen as professionals and should dress accordingly for most ministry activities in the villages. In this culture, the way you dress communicates how much respect you have for those around you. When you are being presented, presenting, teaching, or leading something, you will need to wear more formal clothing. A general rule of thumb would be to try not to allow your clothing to be the thing that most sets you apart from the culture. When in doubt, it is better to err on the side of being too dressed up as opposed to being too casual.

The climate in Malawi is dry and cool during May through October—evenings and mornings may even be cold. However, you may find it is very warm during the noon hours. (Think layers!) November through April is the hot, humid, rainy season.

In order to help you prepare for your trip, we have devised five levels of dress available as a means to be culturally sensitive in Malawi.

Appropriate Dress for Malawi
Church Attire/Public Speaking/Professional Speaking –
Men: Business-casual dress including clean, collared, wrinkle-free shirts (ties optional, but preferred) and dress shoes.

Women: knee-length dresses/skirts and shirts with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps, dress shoes, no short skirts.
Village Ministry and Outreach Attire – Business-casual including collared shirts and khaki trousers for men; casual below-the-knee dresses or skirts and tops with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women.

Construction Attire – Clean T-shirts with jeans or work pants for both men and women; closed-toe/closed-heel shoes; head bandanas and hats are acceptable.

Njewa Ministry Center – Conservative casual including shirts worn at all times for men; skirts or loose pants (no yoga pants) and tops with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women; long shorts (at least to bottom of fingertips) for both men and women. These guidelines apply to ALL casual/house attire, including pajamas. Flip-flops are okay on COTN property.

Swimwear – Traditional, one-piece swimsuits for women. Women should bring shorts to wear over swimsuits at all times, even while swimming. No bikinis or tankinis. T-shirts, shorts, and wraps are recommended.

Sportswear – Men are permitted to wear shorts and T-shirts when participating in a sporting activity. Shirts should be worn at all times. Women may wear knee-length, loose shorts while playing.

Shoes – You are required to wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes any time you are outside the mission house, unless you are at the beach.

Recommendation: One pair of nice shoes for church; one pair of closed-toe/closed-heel shoes that will dry quickly if soaked in the rain (or that are washable if covered with mud), for use with work projects; one pair of flip-flops for inside the mission site and in the shower.
Additional Specifics Regarding Dress and Appearance

- Men should not plan on wearing shorts except during sporting activities or swimming.
- Earrings, gauges, shanks, and other piercings are not permitted to be worn by men during the trip. All piercings (including tongue piercings) must be removed for the duration of the trip.
- Women should not wear piercings apart from one small hole in each lower ear. Other earrings may be worn at night, but must be removed during the day.
- Women should not wear tight clothing.
- Women may wear shorts/leggings/tights under opaque skirts for warmth.
- No see-thru clothing. Women should wear slips if the shape of their legs can be seen through their skirt.
- Women should avoid heavy makeup and jewelry.
- Women should not wear low-cut shirts.
- Women should not wear spaghetti or thin straps unless a T-shirt is worn underneath. No strapless dresses/shirts should be worn.

Reasoning for Dress Code Guidelines
There is a conservative mindset that still prevails in Africa and is different from that of the United States. In Africa, many people will make assumptions as to whether or not you are a Christian based on the way you dress. This assumption is becoming less prevalent in larger cities, but is still very much present in the smaller communities where COTN serves.

It is not just the cultural conservatism that contributes to COTN’s dress code; it is also the role modeling we are trying to provide for the children. Teenage and extramarital sex is a big problem in African communities, so one way COTN combats that is with conservative clothing.
You will see many Africans—even some of our children—who do not fit this dress code. This is partly because the society is increasingly changing as a result of outside influences (such as television, movies, and imported goods) and partly because there is a different mindset between Christians and non-Christians. It is also because there are many families that simply cannot afford to choose their clothes. However, it is in the spirit of service that COTN chooses to err on the side of being conservative, so as not to be a distraction to God’s work.
Chapter Eight:  
Sierra Leone

SIERRA LEONE – COUNTRY FACTS

Population:  
5,612,685 (2013 est.)

Location: Western coast of Africa, between Guinea and Liberia.

History: Formerly organized into independent chiefdoms or kingdoms, Sierra Leone as we know it now is largely a creation of the colonial era. Slave trading from Sierra Leone began in the mid-1500s and continued into the 1700s. In 1787, the British helped freed slaves from the US, Nova Scotia, and Great Britain return to Sierra Leone. This settlement was joined by other groups of freed slaves and the area became known as Freetown. In 1808, Freetown became one of Britain’s first colonies in West Africa and in 1896 the surrounding area was made a British protectorate. When independence was declared in April 1961, these areas had been brought together to form the country we know as Sierra Leone. A civil war from 1991 to 2002 resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than two million people. The military, which took over responsibility for security following the departure of UN peacekeepers in 2005, is increasingly developing as a guarantor of the country’s stability. The armed forces remained on the sideline
during the 2007 and 2012 national elections but still look to the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL)—a civilian UN mission—to support efforts to consolidate peace. The new government’s priorities include furthering development, creating jobs, and stamping out endemic corruption.

**Government:** Constitutional democracy
Official name: Republic of Sierra Leone
President: Ernest Bai Koroma (since Sept. 2007)
Capital: Freetown
Independence Day: April 27, 1961 (from UK)

**Religions:** Muslim 60%, Christian 10%, Indigenous beliefs 30%

**Language:** English is Sierra Leone’s official language, but it is only used by the literate minority. Mende is spoken primarily in the south and Temne is spoken primarily in the north. Krio is also a common language throughout the country and understood by 95 percent of the population. It is an English-based Creole language, spoken by the descendants of the freed slaves who settled in Freetown.

**Family Life:** It is not uncommon for families to share a home with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and/or in-laws. There is great respect in this culture for elders (and wisdom) in the family and community. Any child who has lost one parent is considered orphaned. If double-orphaned (a loss of both parents), generally the child will go to live with any relative willing to take them in. This can cause relatives to be overburdened.

**Economy:** Sierra Leone is an extremely poor nation with tremendous inequality in income distribution. While it possesses substantial mineral, agricultural, and fishery
resources, its physical and social infrastructure has yet to recover from the civil war, and serious social disorders continue to hamper economic development. Nearly half of the working-age population engages in subsistence agriculture. Manufacturing consists mainly of the processing of raw materials and of light manufacturing for the domestic market. Alluvial diamond mining remains the major source of hard currency earnings, accounting for nearly half of Sierra Leone’s exports. The fate of the economy depends upon the maintenance of domestic peace and the continued receipt of substantial aid from abroad, which is essential to offset the severe trade imbalance and supplement government revenues. Political stability has led to a revival of economic activity such as the rehabilitation of bauxite and rutile mining, which are set to benefit from planned tax incentives. A number of offshore oil discoveries were announced in 2009 and 2010. The development on these reserves, which could be significant, is still several years away. However, growth skyrocketed to more than 20 percent in 2012, as exploitation activities began.

**Natural Resources:** diamonds, titanium ore, bauxite, iron, gold, chromite

**Exports:** diamonds, rutile, cocoa, coffee, fish

**Currency:** Leone (SLL); USD equivalent = 4,300 Leones (2013)

**Population Living on Less than $1.25 per Day:** 53%
(This is just one way of measuring poverty. The United Nations Development Programme suggests that in fact 81.5 percent of Sierra Leoneans live in multidimensional poverty.)

**Education:** In Sierra Leone, primary school is free; however, parents are expected to pay for books, uniforms, shoes,
school supplies, and graduation ceremonies. Secondary school tuition is not free.
Typical Secondary School Fees: $50 – $250 per term (three terms per year)
Secondary School Enrollment: Boys 40%, Girls 33%

Health:
Under-five mortality: 185 deaths per 1,000 live births
Life expectancy: about 57 years
Orphaned children: 310,000
Physicians per 1,000 people: 0.02. (The World Health Organization’s most up-to-date figure came from 2008 and stated there were just 95 physicians in the whole country.)

Climate: Tropical; hot, humid; summer/rainy season (May through December); winter/dry season (December – April)

Staple Foods: Cassava and rice

Environmental Issues: Rapid population growth pressuring the environment; overharvesting of timber, expansion of cattle grazing, and slash-and-burn agriculture have resulted in deforestation and soil exhaustion; civil war depleted natural resources; overfishing

COTN’s HISTORY IN SIERRA LEONE

1995
On project assignment in Sierra Leone with Youth for Christ (YFC), Chris and Debbie Clark encounter orphans and refugee children in dire need of assistance. The Clarks return to the US and find there is no organization whose sole purpose is to provide for the needs of orphans around the world. Sensing God’s call, Chris and Debbie resign from YFC and found COTN to meet this very real need.

1996
Our first foreign board of directors is set up in Sierra Leone.

1997
COTN purchases a plot of land in Marjay Town, on the outskirts of Sierra Leone’s capital, Freetown, to establish a children’s home for orphaned children. Our first ever short-term missions team (Venture Team) from the US breaks ground in Sierra Leone.

1999
We open our first Children’s Home in Marjay Town.

2002
With construction complete, the official dedication of our Marjay Town Children’s Home takes place. COTN opens its own school, the Mallory Jansen Memorial School (Marjay Town), utilizing the upper floor of the Children’s Home.

2004
COTN is gifted a 45-acre plot of land in Upper Banta, by the area’s paramount chief, to develop into a ministry site. Our first Church of the Nations is formed in Sierra Leone. Our
first Village Partnership in Sierra Leone begins in Ngolala, located next to our Banta ministry site.

2005
Initial ministry at our Banta ministry site begins—a temporary primary school, a medical clinic/malnourishment center, and a vocational skills center.

2007
Construction begins and is completed on the expansion of the Banta Ministry Center: ten Children’s Homes and permanent school buildings for the Mallory Jansen Memorial School—Banta (a nursery and primary school). Our 98 children are relocated to the Banta Children’s Village. The Children’s Home and school in Marjay Town are converted to a school for community children. Additional Village Partnerships begin in Mokpangumba and Mosenesi.

2009
Precious Ibrahim becomes the first child from our Children’s Village to graduate from secondary school and begin university. Our first secondary school in Sierra Leone, at the Banta Ministry Center, is dedicated.

2010
COTN—Sierra Leone is recognized among the top three non-governmental organizations in Sierra Leone by national group All Walks of Life (AWOL).

2012
Partners help to build a new school science lab and guesthouses at the Banta Ministry Center.

2013
Partners help equip all ten of our Children’s Homes with solar power, and help install wells in nine local villages.
COTN’S SIERRA LEONE PROGRAMS

Banta Ministry Center and Children’s Village
Given to COTN by the chief of Upper Banta, this 100-acre site currently consists of ten children’s homes, a farm, school buildings, a medical clinic, a kitchen, staff housing, sports fields, a vocational skills center, and COTN offices. It is located about an eight-hour drive from Freetown.

Children’s Homes
Our Children’s Homes (within the Children’s Village), provide a family-style environment for our children to grow up in. Each home, housing about 10-12 children, is run by a house mother with the assistance of “aunties” who together serve as the primary caregivers to the children. These caregivers are supervised by our head Home Mother and Home Father who also live on site. We currently have ten Children’s Homes at our Banta Ministry Center.

Mallory Jansen Memorial School (Banta)
We currently have a nursery school, primary school, and secondary school at our Banta Ministry Center. The schools provide education for the children living in our homes along with children from the surrounding villages. We also have a nursery school and primary schools in two other local villages: Mosenesi Junction and Mokpangumba. More than 800 children attend these schools.

Village Partnership Program
Our Village Partnership Program strategically targets the neediest children living in villages and seeks to come alongside their caregivers in an effort to bring well-rounded care to their lives. Keeping individual children and their needs in mind, COTN works with caregivers and village leaders to identify the unique needs of a community. A customized partnership
program is created. Through child sponsorship, programs are developed to address such areas as nutrition, education, health, clothing, and the child’s spiritual life and development. COTN currently partners with three villages in Sierra Leone—Ngolala, Mokpangumba, and Mosenesi—though children from neighboring villages are also included in our programs.

**William E. Clark Skills Center**
Our skills center, located near the Banta Children’s Village, provides vocational training for children and young adults not geared toward traditional university. Current classes include tailoring, weaving, batik, tie-dyeing, soap making, English, math, and business development.

**Medical Clinic**
Our Banta Medical Clinic is located within our Banta Ministry Center. Staffed and operated by our quality Sierra Leone medical staff, the clinic provides medical services to the children residing in our Banta Children’s Village and those enrolled in our Village Partnership Program. The clinic also makes medical services available to those in the surrounding communities who are not part of our sponsorship program. In addition to basic medical care, the clinic provides prenatal and pregnancy care, a therapeutic feeding center, vaccinations, and basic health education.

**Therapeutic Feeding Center**
Run by the COTN medical clinic staff, this is a place where women from surrounding villages can seek treatment for babies and children suffering from malnutrition. Besides providing life-saving intervention on behalf of the children, the staff also educates mothers on how to properly feed and care for their children.
Health Animators
Health Animators, respected women appointed by their village elders, meet each week with COTN staff to discuss the health issues and challenges of each village. These women serve as advocates for healthier conditions in their villages and address such issues as clean water, sanitation, childbirth practices, myths, and superstitions that affect health.

Church of the Nations
Following the establishment of the first Church of the Nations in Banta in 2004, more than 15 churches have been planted in villages surrounding our Banta Ministry Center. Started by COTN staff and youth, many of these churches are now led by local pastors, lay leaders, and active members from each village.

Pastoral Training
Pastor training seminars are conducted by the COTN pastor in Sierra Leone, with the assistance of Venture Teams and consultants. Ongoing one-on-one mentoring also takes place.

Agricultural Projects
A portion of our Banta Ministry Center acreage is set aside for agricultural projects as a source of food for the children in our homes and school program and also to provide opportunities for self-sustainability.

National Internship Program
Each year, interns from Sierra Leone are chosen out of many applicants. These interns, serving alongside COTN–Sierra Leone staff, are given the opportunity to learn how COTN functions and also help with Venture Teams and interns,
serve as interpreters, and serve as leaders to COTN children and youth.

**The *JESUS* Film Project**

COTN uses the *JESUS* film (www.jesusfilm.org) as an evangelical outreach to the surrounding villages. Shown in makeshift outdoor theaters, the film has played a significant role in sharing the gospel as well as helping to plant new churches in the area.

**Mallory Jansen Memorial School (Marjay Town)**

Located in Marjay Town, on the outskirts of Freetown, this school (converted from the building that served as our first Children’s Home in Sierra Leone) serves the surrounding area as a community school (grades K–8).
WHERE YOU WILL STAY

Sierra Leone

The following are several options of where Venture participants may stay while serving in Sierra Leone. Teams need to be flexible as changes to accommodations are often made with little notice.

Guest House Dormitory
Built in 2011–2012, this brick building has an outside kitchen. There are two large bedrooms with five bunk beds in each, allowing for 10 guests in each room. Each bedroom has its own bathroom with two toilets, two showers, and two sinks in each. There is a dining area and living area along with a covered veranda.

Each building on our property is protected by metal doors in front and back, guard bars on the windows, and 24-hour security. Each room has a lock and guests will be given their key upon arrival.

Guest House
Built in 2011–2012, this brick building was designed for families traveling together and has two small bedrooms and one small living/dining area. Each room can host two people. There is one bathroom with one toilet, shower, and sink.

Children’s Village
Located on the backside of COTN’s property, surrounded by a large farm, is a semi-circle of ten small houses. Nine of these houses are home to the children in our full-time care. The unoccupied home is sometimes used to house Venture participants and consultants.

These houses are made of concrete with tin roofs and concrete floors. Each house has two rooms: one sleeps three people and the other sleeps nine (or more, with bunk beds),
all in single beds. Each room locks, along with the house itself. Each house has a living/dining room area.

Each house is equipped with a full indoor bathroom. The houses have plumbing for running water, which is sometimes available. Venture participants will take bucket baths and use well water, which is carried to the home, for washing hands and flushing toilets. There is electricity available in the evening through the use of the generator.

**Administration Building**
The administration building is where the COTN–Sierra Leone country director stays when in Banta. It also houses her office and the main administrative staff office. The house is mud block and cement, with a cement floor and tin roof. One room is available for guests and holds three people. There are two toilets; one inside with a small sink and small shower. There is sometimes running water. The outside toilet is similar, and is housed in an outside building.

There is generator electricity available in the evening. The dining room is shared with the country director, as space is limited.
CULTURAL DO’S AND DON’TS
Sierra Leone

LOOK, LISTEN and LEARN when interacting in another culture.

Greetings/Respect

- DO greet older people with respect by stopping to say hello and using Ma, Pa, Aunty, or Uncle before their name.
- DO use two hands when shaking hands with someone important or to show respect. When you are finished, touch your right hand back to your chest to show additional respect and openness to them.
- DO try to greet in Mende or Krio.
- DO NOT greet with your left hand or hand things to someone with your left hand. This is a sign of disrespect.

Relationships

- DO NOT have children of the opposite sex sit on your lap.
- DO NOT display affection in public to anyone of the opposite sex. It is mildly okay for husband and wife.
- DO NOT spend significant exclusive time with a member of the opposite sex, as assumptions will be made.
- DO NOT give out your email or mailing address. It is a privilege in this culture to provide this kind of information to someone and when given, it is usually understood that you are going to help them financially.
- DO NOT accept notes or gifts from members of the opposite sex, as this indicates an openness to begin an intimate relationship with them.
**Miscellaneous**

- **DO** bathe daily and wash your hair as needed.
- **DO** register all gifts for sponsored children with the sponsorship coordinator before giving them.
- **DO** recognize that if you are inquiring about a person’s situation, people often interpret your questions as meaning you agree to help them (education, home, travel to the US, etc.).
- **DO** ask your team host if you see a need and want more information.
- **DO** take care to follow through on any/all promises made to children/staff.
- **DO NOT** talk about alcohol, smoking, or chewing tobacco.
- **DO NOT** talk about secret societies with community members. If you have questions please ask our senior staff.
- **DO NOT** give out anything to children, adults, staff, or translators (gifts, food, candy, money, or clothing). All donations should go through the COTN country office to be logged/accounted for.
- **DO NOT** walk off COTN property alone at any time.

**Housing**

- **DO** flush the toilet when you’re supposed to.
- **DO** take turns helping with the dishes.
- **DO** lock your house/room when no one is there.
- **DO NOT** expect to use the generator/electricity every night.
A Few More Tips on Culture

- Holding hands with people of the same sex is considered a sign of friendship and trust. A man will often hold the hand of the man he is speaking to. Hugging is not a normal practice and may seem awkward to the locals.
- Never leave belongings unattended where they are visible, even with people whom you trust. It’s important not to put people into situations of temptation.
- When walking around town or through crowds of people keep your backpack in front of you with pockets zipped. Be aware of those around you (beggars, children, those creating a distraction). Don’t keep valuables in your pockets (unless they zip or button).
- The Sierra Leone culture is very people-oriented and all about relationships. Always take the time to greet people you pass, even if you don’t know them. It is more important to greet someone or talk to a friend than it is to be on time anywhere.
- The Sierra Leone culture is more formal when it comes to dressing up. You show respect to others by dressing up for an event, more so than arriving on time.
- Expect most meetings and gatherings to start later than planned.
- Nakedness is not uncommon in Sierra Leone. African women often go topless when working. African men will urinate on the side of the road. At times, African children may not wear anything at all. However, this does not give visitors like yourself license to behave in this way, and out of respect it is not appropriate to look or comment when someone is exposed.
• Abuse such as beating women and children is not uncommon in Sierra Leone. If you witness this happening you may politely “beg” for them to stop, but you are NOT to get physically involved. Ask a staff member for wisdom and assistance in dealing with a situation you encounter that you have questions about.

• Dispose of garbage in trash cans or in community garbage heaps. Littering is commonplace in this culture—not frowned upon as it is in the US. However, do not contribute to this cultural norm by littering, even though it is viewed as acceptable by the locals.

• Please remember our children are being raised as Africans—not as Americans. Standards will be different than what you are used to. Please be careful not to judge by Western standards how much our in-country staff loves and cares for our children.

Special Note on Alcohol / Drinking
We ask that you refrain from drinking alcohol while in Sierra Leone. Christian culture in Sierra Leone associates drinking alcohol with a certain negative lifestyle. Since you are a representative of Children of the Nations, participating in drinking alcohol or even talking/joking about needing a beer or a glass of wine could potentially offend or cause confusion about the standards and beliefs of COTN. Though you might not share the same views on such topics, please respect the beliefs of the culture and remember you are representing the values of COTN in Sierra Leone.
HEALTH CONCERNS
Sierra Leone

Immunizations
Please contact your health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for up-to-date information on immunization requirements for Sierra Leone. (http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list)

You will need to carry your immunization record with you anytime your passport is required.

Yellow Fever
Located on the back of your vaccination card is a section specifically designated for yellow fever. Whoever administers the shot to you should write in the date, the type of shot, and the batch number all on the same line. This proves that you have received the injection. If there is no number next to the date and name of the shot, you will need to go back to whoever administered the shot and request to have the batch number added to your card. The Sierra Leone Embassy will require a batch number, not just a copy of your card.

Malaria Prevention
Malaria is endemic in Sierra Leone. May through December is the hot, humid, rainy season; risk is a bit higher during this time. Check with your health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the best methods of prevention for Sierra Leone. Please note that malaria in Sierra Leone is resistant to chloroquine.

Preventing Insect Bites
Mosquitos that transmit malaria bite between dusk and dawn. Prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and by applying insect repellent to exposed skin.
Insect repellents containing at least 30–35% DEET help keep the bugs away, but they do cause skin to be more sensitive to the sun, so use with caution. If not sleeping in air-conditioned housing, use a mosquito bed net. COTN provides nets for all Venture participants. For greater protection during seasons of higher risk, spray clothing and bed nets with permethrin. Permethrin will repel insects for several months. Repellents containing DEET and permethrin should be purchased before traveling and can be found in hardware, camping, and military surplus stores.

**Poisonous Bugs, Snakes, Animals, Plants, etc.**
There are two parts to this health concern: prevention and antidote/medical care.

**Prevention**
- Bring bug repellent.
- Use mosquito nets at night.
- Wear protective shoes (closed-toe, closed-heel).
- Wear protective clothing – e.g. if you are working in the fields, wear long pants to protect from ticks and other bugs that may crawl up on you.
- Stay on the beaten paths—don’t blaze your own trails through thick brush or even tall grass.
- Don’t put your hands or feet under rocks or logs
- Avoid coming in contact with any bugs or plants that are not familiar to you.
- Assume all snakes are poisonous. (DO NOT go on snake hunts!)
- ALWAYS carry a flashlight or headlamp with you at night (think ahead to have one with you if you may be coming back late).
- Carry a snake bite kit with you (you can buy one online for about $10), especially when you are not near your home or home village.
• Assume all animals carry disease, and don’t pet them. (If you are helping with farm animals and must come in contact with them, wash your hands and clothing afterward—take a bath if possible.)
• Dogs and cats are NOT domestic animals in Sierra Leone. DO NOT pet them even if they are puppies or kittens.
• Do not eat plant material that is not served to you by the locals.

Antidote/Medical Care
• If any type of bug bites you, bring it to the attention of a local person (preferably the COTN nurse) to learn of any potential risk or care needed.
• If a snake bites you, stay calm and do not move the bitten part, in order to slow down the circulation of the venom. Wrap the area of the bite firmly (without cutting off circulation) to slow circulation. Keep the bite below the level of your heart. If possible, the person who has been bitten should be carried to the nurse rather than walking. If possible, have someone kill the snake by crushing its head and bring it with you to the nurse for identification. DO NOT try to lance the bite and suck venom out—clean the wound and shave the hair from that area. Then, using a vacuum extractor from the snake bite kit, suction out as much venom as possible. An anti-venom injection may be administered by the nurse or doctor to treat serious snake bites. The nurse will accompany that person to the nearest medical facility for a full examination and care.
• If you begin to have any allergic reaction to things you have eaten or have come in contact with,
immediately bring it to the attention of the COTN nurse.

- All fevers should be reported to and monitored by the COTN nurse.
- If you refuse medical care, you will be asked to sign a medical waiver and may be required by COTN to leave the country.

**Water-Borne Disease Precautions**

**Drinking water**
COTN will provide well water in each home and on the COTN property. While in the city, you should only drink beverages from a bottle (no bags!), including water. When buying bottled water from a vendor on the street, inspect the cap to make sure the seal has not been broken. Refilling used water bottles with untreated water is commonplace for locals.

**Food and beverages**
Be especially cautious in the villages and city of fresh fruits and vegetables that may have been washed in untreated water. COTN kitchen staff will always clean produce properly before serving it, but others may not. Also, water on the outside of beverage cans or bottles is most likely contaminated. Therefore, wet cans or bottles should be dried before being opened, and surfaces that are contacted directly by the mouth in drinking should first be wiped clean.

**Food-Borne Disease Precautions**
If eating outside of COTN property, be sure food is well-cooked and meats have been properly handled. Beef is very commonly contaminated with parasites, often improperly handled, and is best avoided in Sierra Leone except when purchased from reputable companies. Salmonella (on the outside of eggshells) is common, so be sure that eggs are completely cooked. Wash hands well before eating anything.
Carry anti-bacterial hand sanitizer for the times when soap and water are not available. Being very cautious will pay off—and neglecting to be careful may result in traveler’s diarrhea!

**Other Health Issues**

**HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis**

Though HIV is not widespread in Sierra Leone, precautions should be taken against it as well as Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B, especially during any activity with risk of body-fluid contact (mending scraped knees, etc.). Talk to a health provider about the risks and what precautions are necessary to protect yourself. Be sure to bring plenty of bandages to cover any scratches or open sores you may have. Also, carry medical gloves (that are the correct size) even if you do not plan on any medical contact.

**Tuberculosis (TB)**

Tuberculosis infection is generally transmitted through the air by coughing. Travelers who anticipate possible prolonged exposure to tuberculosis should have a tuberculin skin test before leaving. If the reaction is negative, they should have a repeat test after returning home. Avoid prolonged close contact with someone who has a constant cough. When traveling on public mini-busses, be sure to sit next to the window to reduce your exposure to TB.

**River Blindness**

*Onchocerciasis*, also called River Blindness, is an infection caused by the parasite *Onchocerca Volvulus* (worm). It is spread by the painful bite of an infected blackfly. Transmission is most intense in remote African rural agricultural villages, located near rapidly flowing streams. Though it takes years for worms to grow and affect the optical nerve, you will need to let your physician know that you may have been exposed so they can help keep an eye on your optical health. Oral
medication is available internationally to treat this condition if it is detected before damage is done.

**Worms**
To decrease your chance of contracting worms, avoid walking barefoot anywhere (inside or outside). Many varieties of worm larvae live in the soil or are present in rural areas contaminated by animal or human feces. Such larvae can enter the body through the soles of exposed feet or toenails. Wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes at all times.

**International Health Insurance**
COTN has a medical clinic on site in Sierra Leone with a well-trained staff of nurses. This clinic is available to any Venture participant who is ill or has any minor health issues while in country. For anything more serious, a hospital with doctors and specialists is located about two hours away in Bo, Sierra Leone’s second-largest city.

In the case of a medical emergency, COTN purchases medical insurance to ensure the ability to airlift someone out of the country to the nearest medical facility with the needed capabilities. COTN uses Seven Corners Emergency Medical and Evacuation Insurance for all Venture participants. This insurance cost is included in the cost of your trip. Please ask your team leader or your COTN Venture Coordinator for more information.

**Medicine**
You should bring over-the-counter pain and cold medication with you. Bring any necessary prescriptions for the duration of the trip. Prescriptions should be CLEARLY marked with the pharmacy label. (Label can be on a Ziploc bag). All prescription medication that you take needs to be filled in advance, with enough to last you the duration of your trip.
**VISA REQUIREMENTS**

*Sierra Leone*

**Note:** The Sierra Leone Embassy ONLY accepts US Postal Express Mail, so send the following through the US post office. It is recommended that you use a form of registered mail (insure it and track it) since it will contain your important documents.

You will need to send:

A. **A passport**—make sure it is valid for at least one year beyond your expected date of travel; it must also contain sufficient blank visa pages.
   This may seem odd to send your physical passport in the mail, but this is required and you will receive your passport back within 3–6 weeks.

B. **Completed Visa Application Form**
   This can be found at [http://embassyofsierraleone.net/sites/all/downloads /visa.pdf](http://embassyofsierraleone.net/sites/all/downloads /visa.pdf). Visas are valid for up to three years.

C. **One (1) recent, color passport-sized photo**
   Make sure the background is white and the size of the photo is about 2”x2”

D. **A copy of travel itinerary/round-trip ticket**
   The Sierra Leone Embassy wants to know by what means and when you plan to travel. They also want to make sure you are returning home.

E. **A valid and up-to-date international certificate of vaccination for yellow fever**
   You must get vaccinated for yellow fever before you can apply for your visa. The certificate is the signed
form you receive when you get the vaccine. The
embassy will send it back to you with your passport.

F. A profile of the organization the applicant
represents with a letter of invitation from a
registered organization in Sierra Leone
This is in the form of a letter of invitation from
COTN (explaining the organization and inviting you
to come volunteer), which your leader will provide.

G. Evidence of sufficient funds to cover the period
the applicant wishes to stay in Sierra Leone
Make reference that this is on file with COTN.

H. A postage-paid, self-addressed envelope
At the post office, you can have them weigh the
envelope along with what will be sent back inside of it
(mainly just your yellow fever certificate and passport,
which will have the visa stamp in it). You then pay for
that return postage and have them put the proper
postage on the return envelope.
I. The following are the fees for consular duties/visas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizen</th>
<th>Single Entry Fee (valid for 6 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Citizens</td>
<td>US $72.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Citizens</td>
<td>US $137.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Citizens</td>
<td>US $160.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Citizens</td>
<td>US $40.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All fees must be made payable to the Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone either in a money order or a cashier’s check. No personal checks are accepted.

For questions about the above information, refer to http://embassyofsierraleone.net or call 202-939-9261.
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELING
Sierra Leone

Passport, Visa, and Immunization Record
Be sure to make photocopies of your passport and the visa stamp inside your passport before you leave. Carry a copy somewhere other than with your passport. A second copy should be left on file with the COTN–USA office so it can be faxed if any problem arises due to a lost passport. It is also a good idea for your team leader to have a copy of all team members’ passports.

Airport Issues
Luggage
For international travel, most airlines allow two pieces of checked luggage (each no more than 50 pounds) and one 13- to 40-pound carry-on (depending on the airline). Because you most likely will be traveling on two separate tickets, one to London (or another European airport) and a second one to Freetown, your baggage allowance may change in your layover city. Be sure to check with each airline about the baggage allowance to ensure that you stay within the guidelines of the lesser allowance. You don’t want to have to discard anything in your layover city or pay excess baggage fees.

If you are transporting resource items for COTN, please note that the excess baggage cost is considered an additional cost to your team. If you prefer not to pay those extra fees, please consult with your team leader.

Check with your specific airline, especially if your luggage is an odd shape/size. Nothing valuable should be carried in checked luggage. It is recommended to use the luggage locks issued by the U.S. Transportation Safety Administration to ensure luggage content safety. When you arrive in Freetown,
only claim your own bags so there is no confusion with others in your group.

All checked luggage should be marked with the following info:
Ngolala Junction
Upper Banta Chiefdom
Moyamba District
Sierra Leone

Your Name
Home/Group Address
Phone Number

*For Sierra Leone, standard luggage is preferred over cardboard boxes, as boxes may raise more questions/suspicions from customs officials.

Carry-On Baggage
Many airlines have varying guidelines regarding carry-on baggage. Make sure you are well acquainted with your airline’s rules. In some cases, you may be flying on multiple airlines that have different rules, so double check each flight.

In addition, some airlines will ask or even force you to place your carry-on in the checked baggage compartment—as a courtesy, free of charge. Although this may sound like a great deal, be prepared to speak with the representative at the gate.

Explain to the representative that you and your team are a part of a mission team going to visit COTN’s ministry sites, which are far removed from the airport. To lose your carry-on would be a major headache and could cause problems for the health of your team as your carry-on baggage has all your
clothing, toiletries, medicine, and other valuable items you need when arriving at your final destination. Express gratitude for their offer, but ask them to allow you to board with your carry-on and find a place to put your baggage.

*NOTE: In the event that the representative refuses to allow you to carry on your baggage, remove your medicine, any valuables, and no less than one day’s worth of clothing from your bag and place it in your backpack. If lost, your baggage may not arrive for up to 3 days.

Checking In
Check-in for an international flight is three hours before boarding. However, teams usually bring quite a few pieces of checked luggage, which results in a need to be at the airport at least four hours before flying to be sure that all complications can be dealt with.

Another reason for early check-in: seat assignments are not made until passengers check in. Be sure to have the ticket agent make your seat reservations for the entire trip, not just the first leg.

You will need to reconfirm your return tickets before leaving—this should be arranged by your team leader and the Venture Coordinator in Sierra Leone. Again, when checking in at the airport, have the ticket agent make your seat reservations for the entire trip, if possible.

Airport Cash
Be sure to save about $100 US for any emergencies at the airport(s) on the way home. You may not need it, but it’s always better to be prepared for unexpected circumstances, such as fluctuating exit fees.
ENTRY PLAN

Sierra Leone

In the case of last-minute problems, questions, or flight schedule changes
Contact the COTN–USA office at 360-698-7227 during business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time). If it is after hours, contact your designated Venture Emergency Contact (found at cotni.org/pages/venture-overview) to inform them of the situation.

En route to Sierra Leone
You will receive an immigration card to fill out either on the airplane or once you arrive in Sierra Leone. It will ask for basic personal information like name, passport number, citizenship, etc. You’ll also need to include the address of where you are staying. This address is: Children of the Nations–Sierra Leone, Ngoala Junction, Upper Banta Chiefdom, Moyamba District. It will ask for the reason for your travel. Check “Tourist” (not “Missionary”) to avoid any confusion or problems. If it asks for the phone number of where you’ll be staying, it is: 076-905-028 (Magnus Beah, Sierra Leone Venture Coordinator).

At Lungi Airport in Sierra Leone
The international airport in Sierra Leone is quite small, so don’t worry about not being able to find where you’re supposed to go. Follow others from your flight to immigration, baggage claim, through customs, and then out to where people will be waiting for you.

Immigration
Have your passport, yellow fever certification card, and immigration card handy. You may be asked some questions about what your plans are. Please remember you are NOT
working for COTN. You have come as tourists and are planning to volunteer some time with Children of the Nations while you are there.

**Baggage Claim**
You will need to retrieve your bags from the luggage carousel and proceed through customs. Talk with your team (big or small) before you land and establish someone to go first and lead your group and someone to bring up the rear—ensuring everyone stays together. Have your luggage claim tickets ready (normally they are stuck onto your airline ticket jackets). If, after all the bags have been run through the carousel, a bag is missing, report it to an official; you’ll need to make a lost luggage claim. Our staff will coordinate with the airport to make sure your bag(s) get picked up when they arrive.

**Proceed through Customs**
This part might be a little intimidating, but just follow the crowd and remember you’re no longer in the US. Don’t be surprised if people cut in front of you—this is culturally acceptable. *Walk with confidence like you know where you are going.*

When answering questions, please remember that, for now, the items you are carrying are “your personal items” and you are “volunteering your time with Children of the Nations, which is an NGO (non-government organization) caring for orphaned and destitute children.”

The customs officials rarely give international guests problems; they are glad to have you visit their country. If, by chance, they want something from you (money or an item), do your best to persuade them with humor, saying something like: “How can I give this to you—what would I have then for the children?” **Being friendly, confident, and personable will go a long way in this culture, even if they seem serious.** Relationships are most important—don’t
become demanding or angry. If you feel you have no choice but to give something financially, requesting a receipt may serve as a deterrent if it is an illegitimate amount.

On the other side of customs, a COTN staff member will be waiting for you with a Children of the Nations sign. They will assist you with luggage and guide you to a taxi or van, which will transport you either directly to your hotel or to the ferry. The ferry ride is about 60 minutes and it takes you to Freetown.

As you make your way from baggage claim, through customs and to the COTN vehicle, uniformed airport porters may try to assist you with your bags. Try to politely dissuade them from doing so. If a porter does assist you, leave it to the COTN staff member who meets you at the airport to tip them.

In addition, make sure before your suitcase or carry-on is placed on the COTN vehicle, that you have a change of clothes, toiletries, your medicine, and any important items needed for an evening stay at a hotel, as most teams will spend the first night in Sierra Leone in a hotel in Freetown before departing for Banta the following morning.

Exit Fee
On your way home, you may encounter an exit fee to leave the country of Sierra Leone. This is a fairly new fee required by the Sierra Leonean government. Plan to have at least $24 available to exit customs on your way to the security checkpoint and airport terminal.
Mende and Krio
The main languages spoken in the areas of COTN’s ministry in Sierra Leone are Mende and Krio. English is also spoken among those who have had access to education. All COTN in-country staff members will speak English. All of the children in COTN’s Children’s Village will speak English, Krio, and Mende to varying degrees of proficiency. Mende is the first language of the people living in the villages of Upper Banta.

A good starting point for learning these languages is sierra-leone.org, where language manuals can be accessed.

On the following pages are some basic phrases in both Krio and Mende. (Since Mende vowel sounds do not correspond with English and the language includes additional letters, an attempt has been made to present the Mende words in phonetic English.)
Basic Krio Words and Phrases

Kusheh. – Hello.
Una adu? – You (plural), how are you?
Aw di bohdi? – How are you?
A fine, aw yu seh? – I am fine. How are you?
A teh God tehnki. – I say thanks to God.
Wetin na yu nem? – What is your name?
Na me nem Brian. – My name is Brian.
Brian, a gladi foh mit yu. – Brian, I am glad to meet you.
Usai yu kohmoht? – Where do you come from?
A kohmoht Amehrika. – I come from America.
A de go. – I am going.
Wi go si bak. – See you later.
Grap. – Stand up.
Kam. – Come.
Sidohn. – Sit down.
Lef. – Leave.
Basic Mende Words and Phrases

**Boo-wa.** – Hello.

**B’Seeay.** – Thank you.

**Kai oo yayna?** – How are you?

**Kai en goma.** – I praise God.

**B’be yay?** – What is your name?

**Nya byay mya Brian.** – My name is Brian.

**Be ma mean doe?** – Where are you going?

**Ghee lee ma Ngolala lo.** – I am going to Ngolala.

**Geh who may panda.** – I did not hear properly. (I did not understand)

**Nya menday yay gama klo klo.** – I am learning Mende slowly.

**Nya lee ma.** – I am going.

**Maloway.** – See you again.

**Malo seena way** – See you tomorrow.

**Wa.** – Come.

**Lee.** – Go.

**Hinjay.** – Get up.

**Mao.** – Wait.

**Ah wallo.** – Keep quiet. (plural)

**Bay na ma be pay ma.** – Stop what you are doing.
Two important things to consider when packing clothing for your trip are: 1) Culture and 2) Climate.

Culturally, you will be seen as professionals and should dress accordingly for most ministry activities in the villages. In this culture, the way you dress communicates how much respect you have for those around you. When you are being presented, presenting, teaching, or leading something you will need to wear more formal clothing. A general rule of thumb would be to try not to allow your clothing to be the thing that most sets you apart from the culture. When in doubt, it is better to err on the side of being too dressed up as opposed to being too casual.

The climate in Sierra Leone is hot, humid, and rainy from May through December, with temperatures in the 80s during the day and slightly cooler in the evenings. From December through April the air is dry, yet temperatures may reach into the 100s.

In order to help you prepare for your trip, we have devised four levels of dress available as a way to be culturally sensitive and safe in Sierra Leone.

**Appropriate Dress for Sierra Leone**

Church Attire/Public Speaking/Professional Speaking –
Men: Business-casual dress including clean, collared, wrinkle-free shirts (ties optional, but preferred) and dress shoes.

Women: knee-length dresses/skirts and shirts with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps, dress shoes, no short skirts.
Village Ministry and Outreach Attire – Business-casual, including collared shirts and khaki trousers for men; casual dresses/skirts or loose-fitting capri pants that fall below the knee, and tops with three-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women. Don’t forget the closed-toe/closed-heel shoes!

Construction Attire – Clean T-shirts with jeans or work pants for both men and women; closed-toe/closed-heel shoes; head bandanas and hats are acceptable.

House Attire – Conservative-casual including shirts worn at all times for men; skirts or loose pants and tops with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women; long shorts (at least to bottom of fingertips) for both men and women. These guidelines apply to ALL casual/house attire including pajamas. Flip-flops are okay inside the house.

Swimwear – Traditional, one-piece swimsuits for women. Women should bring shorts to wear over swimsuits at all times, even while swimming. No bikinis or tankinis. T-shirts, shorts, and wraps are recommended.

Sportswear – Men are permitted to wear shorts and T-shirts or tank tops when participating in sporting activities. Shirts should be worn at all times. Women may wear knee-length, loose shorts and T-shirts or tank tops while playing.

Shoes – You are required to wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes any time you are outside the mission house, unless you are at the beach.

Recommendation: One pair of nice shoes for church; one pair of closed-toe/closed-heel shoes that will dry quickly if soaked in the rain (or that are washable if covered with mud),
for use with work projects; one pair of flip-flops for inside the mission site and in the shower.

**Additional Specifics Regarding Dress and Appearance**

- Men should not plan on wearing shorts except inside the guest housing and during sporting activities or swimming in Freetown.
- Earrings, gauges, shanks, and other piercings are not permitted to be worn by men during the trip. All piercings (including tongue piercings) must be removed for the duration of the trip.
- Male hair must be short. No afros or dreadlocks are permitted, as these hairstyles may cause profiling by government officials.
- Facial hair should be shaved daily. Existing facial hair should be kept neatly trimmed.
- Women should not wear tight clothing (shirts or skirts).
- Women may wear shorts/leggings under opaque skirts if desired; this helps with chafing, though this may be too hot.
- Women should avoid heavy makeup and a lot of jewelry.
- Women should not wear low-cut shirts.
- No see-thru clothing. Women should wear slips if the shape of their legs can be seen through their dress or skirt.

**Reasoning for Dress Code Guidelines**
There is a conservative mindset that still prevails in Africa and is different from that of the United States. In Africa, many people will make assumptions as to whether or not you are a Christian based on the way you dress. This assumption is becoming less prevalent in larger cities, but is still very much present in the smaller communities where COTN serves.
It is not just the cultural conservatism that contributes to COTN’s dress code; it is also the role modeling we are trying to provide for the children. Teenage and extramarital sex is a big problem in African communities, so one way COTN combats that is with conservative clothing.

You will see many Africans—even some of our children—who do not fit this dress code. This is partly because the society is increasingly changing as a result of outside influences (such as television, movies, and imported goods) and partly because there is a different mindset between Christians and non-Christians. It is also because there are many families that simply cannot afford to choose their clothes. However, it is in the spirit of service that COTN chooses to err on the side of being conservative, so as not to be a distraction to God’s work.

Other Resources on Sierra Leone
The following offer an insight into Sierra Leone and its recent history:

Books
_A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier_ – Ishmael Beah  
_Soldiers of Light_ – Daniel Bergner  
_The Bite of the Mango_ – Mariatu Kamara  
_Ancestor Stones_ – Aminatta Forna  
_Chasing the Devil_ – Tim Butcher

Films
_Blood Diamond_  
_Amistad_
Chapter Nine: Uganda

UGANDA – COUNTRY FACTS

Population: 
34,758,809 (2013 est.)

Location: East Africa, west of Kenya.

History: The colonial boundaries created by Britain to define Uganda grouped together a wide range of ethnic groups with different political systems and cultures. These differences prevented the establishment of a working political community after independence was achieved in 1962.

The dictatorial regime of Idi Amin (1971–1979) was responsible for the deaths of some 300,000 citizens. Guerrilla war and human rights abuses under Milton Obote (1980–85) claimed at least another 100,000 lives. The rule of Yoweri Museveni since 1986 has brought relative stability and economic growth to Uganda; however, the vicious and cult-like Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which sought to overthrow the Ugandan Government, has murdered and kidnapped civilians in the north and east since he took office. The LRA displaced up to 1.8 million people, creating a humanitarian catastrophe, particularly when they were forced into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps for their own protection. In 2005, the Ugandan military finally pushed the LRA out of northern Uganda. There have been no LRA attacks in northern Uganda since August 2006—the same
year that Uganda held multiparty general elections for the first time since 1986, re-electing current President Museveni.

**Government:** Republic
Official name: Republic of Uganda
President: Lt. Gen. Yoweri Museveni (since January 1986)
Capital: Kampala
Independence Day: October 9, 1962 (from UK)

**Religions:** Roman Catholic 41.9%; Protestant 42%; Muslim 12.1%; other 3.1%; none 0.9% (2002 census)

**Language:** English is the official language, which is taught in schools, used in courts of law, and for newspapers and radio. Ganda or Luganda is the most common native language. Luo is the language most commonly spoken in Lira. Other commonly spoken languages include Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Swahili, and Arabic.

**Family Life:** It is not uncommon to share a home with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and/or in-laws. There is great respect in this culture for elders in the family and community. Any child who has lost one parent is considered orphaned. If double-orphaned (a loss of both parents), generally the child will first go to live with an uncle. This can cause relatives to be overburdened.

**Economy:** Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, regular rainfall, small deposits of copper, gold, and other minerals, and recently discovered oil. Uganda has never conducted a national minerals survey. Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, employing more than 80 percent of the work force. Coffee accounts for the bulk of export revenues. Since 1990 economic reforms ushered in an era of solid economic growth based on continued investment in infrastructure,
improved incentives for production and exports, lower inflation, better domestic security, and the return of exiled Indian-Ugandan entrepreneurs. The global economic downturn hurt Uganda’s exports; however, Uganda’s GDP growth has largely recovered due to past reforms and sound management of the downturn. Oil revenues and taxes will become a larger source of government funding as oil comes on line in the next few years. Instability in South Sudan is a risk for the Ugandan economy because Uganda’s main export partner is Sudan, and Uganda is a key destination for Sudanese refugees. Unreliable power, high energy costs, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and corruption inhibit economic development and investor confidence.

**Exports:** coffee, fish and fish products, tea, cotton, flowers, horticultural products, gold

**Currency:** Ugandan Shilling (UGX); USD equivalent = 2,580 shillings (2013)

**Population Living on Less than $1.25 per Day:** 38%

**Education:** Typical primary school fees: $100–$150 per term
Typical Secondary School Fees: $200–$300 per term
Secondary School Attendance: 17%

**Health:**
Uganda has been greatly affected by HIV/AIDS.
People living with HIV/AIDS: 1.4 million (2013)
Under-five mortality: about 90 deaths per 1,000 live births
Life expectancy: about 54 years

**Climate:** Uganda is hot, tropical, and generally rainy with two dry seasons from December through February and June through August.
**Political Stability:** Uganda is subject to armed fighting among hostile ethnic groups, rebels, armed gangs, militias, and various government forces that extend across its borders. Uganda hosts 209,860 Sudanese, 27,560 Congolese, and 19,710 Rwandan refugees, while Ugandan refugees seek shelter in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s Garamba National Park. (More research into the 23-year war in Northern Uganda between the LRA [Lord’s Resistance Army] and the Government of Uganda is recommended to better understand Ugandan history.)

**Staple Foods:** beans, potatoes, peas, rice, millet, and cassava (a green, leafy plant)

COTN’s HISTORY IN UGANDA

2006
COTN Founder Chris Clark meets Pastor James Okalo Ekwang while passing through Lira en route to Gulu in northern Uganda, seeking to meet the needs of the children there. “We have children with those needs right here in Lira,” says Pastor James.

2007
In response to Pastor James’ prayer and God’s guidance, COTN returns to Lira to begin ministry. COTN trauma counselors begin working with children in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Working with Ugandan social services, COTN identifies 29 children in need of immediate assistance. COTN’s first Children’s Home opens in Lira, becoming home to these 29 orphans. COTN launches the JESUS Film ministry in Uganda.

2008
COTN purchases land in Lira, the future site of our Uganda Children’s Village.

2009
A ground-breaking ceremony and dedication of the future Uganda Children’s Village takes place; construction begins. The first seven homes in the Uganda Children’s Village are completed and the children move in during the fall. Village Partnership Program in Anai-Okii begins to formulate.

2010
Working with Ugandan social services, COTN identifies 26 more children who move into the Children’s Village in March. At the same time, the center house and two school
classroom buildings are completed. Nursery and Primary 1 and 2 classes begin. The Village Partnership Program launches with 176 children from Anai-Okii and surrounding villages enrolled.

2011
The children of COTN–Uganda receive a new van and new lights at the Children’s Village, allowing them to focus on their studies. In addition, many Venture participants provide funding for new buildings, a new motorcycle for the Village Partnership Program, and paint for the Children’s Homes.

2012
Partners help construct two new classroom buildings at our school.

2013
Partners help fund and build two new Children’s Homes at the Uganda Children’s Village. Partners also help build a new office for the COTN–Uganda staff.
COTN’sUGANDA PROGRAMS

Uganda Children’s Village
This 46.5-acre site currently consists of two groups of Children’s Homes, a community center gazebo, a small farming project, a nursery and primary school, a sports field, and administrative offices. It is located outside the town of Lira, near the village of Anai-Okii.

Children’s Homes
Our Children’s Homes provide a family environment for our children to grow up in. These homes, each housing 8 to 10 children, are run by a house mother with the assistance of “aunties” and “uncles” who serve as the primary caregivers to the children.

Village Partnership Program
Our Village Partnership Program (VPP) strategically targets the neediest children living in villages and seeks to come alongside their caregivers in an effort to bring well-rounded care to their lives. Keeping individual children and their needs in mind, COTN works with caregivers and village leaders to identify the unique needs of a village or community. A customized partnership is created. Through child sponsorship, programs are developed to address such areas as nutrition, education, health, clothing, and the child’s spiritual life and development. There are currently about 200 children enrolled in our Anai-Okii VPP in Uganda.

COTN’s Primary School
COTN currently has a nursery and primary school at our ministry site. The school provides education for the primary-age school children living in our homes as well as for children living in the surrounding villages.
**Trauma Counseling Services**
COTN has trained counselors on staff to work specifically with children who have been traumatized by war and loss, restoring them to emotional health. Our counselors work with children in the Children’s Village as well as children and adults in the local communities and schools.

**Agricultural Project**
A small farming/agricultural project is in place to provide food for children living in our Children’s Village and for those in our Village Partnership Program.

**Pastoral Training**
Spiritual mentoring and training of lay pastors is one of COTN–Uganda’s goals. The Ugandan staff, together with Venture participants, aims to host conferences for pastors and church leaders from churches in Lira and nearby towns.

**The *JESUS* Film Project**
COTN uses the *JESUS* film (www.jesusfilm.org) as an evangelical outreach to the surrounding villages. Shown in makeshift outdoor theaters, the film has played a significant role in sharing the gospel as well as helping plant new churches in the area.

**National Internship Program**
Ugandan college students are chosen out of many applicants to serve with COTN as summer interns. These interns, serving alongside COTN staff, are given the opportunity to learn how COTN functions and also help with Venture Teams and interns. They serve as interpreters, role models, and leaders to COTN children and youth.
WHERE YOU WILL STAY

Uganda

Guest House
Venture Teams will stay in the COTN Guest House, located within the residential suburbs of Lira, about a seven-hour drive north of Kampala, Uganda’s capital. Men and women are lodged in the main house, sharing four bedrooms, two bathrooms, and two showers. The home has a kitchen furnished with an electric stove, a dining room, and a living room. There is electricity, running water, and a backup generator. The house is enclosed by a wall with a gate and secured by 24-hour guards.

Children’s Village
Located outside of Lira, Venture Interns (and at various times, Teams) will stay in the Children’s Village. Currently, there is very limited electricity and no running water (a well is close by). Bathrooms consist of a porcelain squat plate and bucket showers. The Children’s Village is secured by 24-hour guards. Accommodations are considered rustic by Western standards, however daily interaction with the children is priceless.
CULTURAL DO'S AND DON’TS

Uganda

LOOK, LISTEN and LEARN when interacting in another culture.

Dress / Hygiene

- DO wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes outside of the guesthouse.
- DO dress nice/clean cut—nothing sloppy.
- DO cover tattoos and piercings (women may have one earring per ear).
- Do wear long pants or capris if doing a construction project (women).
- DO wear skirts that cover your knees and wear a slip if you can see through the skirt (women).
- DO NOT wear spaghetti straps (women); only straps that are 3 to 4 inches wide at least.
- DO continue to shave/maintain your facial hair.
- DO tell your team leader immediately if you feel sick.
- DO bring hand sanitizer with you (please use it discreetly so as not to offend locals).
- DO fill your water bottle each day before going into the villages.
- DO NOT drink the water off COTN property unless it is bottled or filtered. (Water in the guesthouse is safe to bathe with.)
- DO use wisdom when eating what is served to you outside of COTN property.
- DO NOT play with or touch any animals.

Miscellaneous

- DO register all gifts for sponsored children with the Sponsorship Coordinator.
- DO try to bring your money in hundreds and/or fifties with a series date newer than 2006. (Your currency exchange will be better with larger bills.)
• DO recognize that if you are inquiring about a local person’s situation, people often interpret your questions as meaning you are going to help them. (Education, home, travel to the U.S., etc.)
• DO ask your team host or in-country Venture Coordinator if you see a need or want more information.
• DO expect for most scheduled things to run late.
• DO bring toilet paper with you if you are traveling off the mission center property.
• DO NOT talk about alcohol.
• DO NOT give out anything to children, adults, staff, or translators (gifts, food, candy, money, clothing). All donations should go through the COTN–Uganda office to be checked in and distributed.
• DO NOT talk about money.
• DO NOT walk alone off COTN property at any time.

Housing
• DO expect for the house to be hot.
• DO close and lock all gates and doors after opening them.
• DO keep all passports in a safe location.
• DO NOT put toilet paper in the toilet; rather put it in the trash can nearby.
• DO NOT invite visitors onto COTN property. They must remain outside or be invited in by a COTN staff member.

A Few More Tips on Culture
• Public displays of affection between men and women are taboo. Even a couple being alone in public is slightly odd—it will be assumed that the couple is married. However, holding hands with people of the same sex is considered a sign of friendship and trust.
Men will often hold the hand of a man they are speaking to.

- Never leave belongings unattended where they are visible, even with people you trust. It’s important not to put people into situations of temptation.
- Be especially careful of relationships between single Americans and single Ugandans. Conversations alone should be avoided because this can lead to misunderstandings and wrong assumptions about the relationship.

Special Note on Alcohol / Drinking
We ask that you refrain from drinking alcohol while in Uganda. Christian culture in Uganda associates drinking alcohol with a certain negative lifestyle. Since you are a representative of Children of the Nations, participating in drinking alcohol or even talking/joking about needing a beer or a glass of wine could potentially offend or cause confusion about the standards and beliefs of COTN. Though you might not share the same views on such topics, please respect the beliefs of the culture and remember you are representing the values of COTN in Uganda.
Immunizations
Please contact your health care provider or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for up-to-date information on immunization requirements for Uganda. (http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list)

NOTE: Immunization for yellow fever may be needed if you will be taking a safari. It may not be included on the required/recommended list for travel to Uganda. However, if you plan to travel across borders in Africa, many countries recommend or require proof of yellow fever vaccination. If you plan to be in Uganda for several months or more, you may have the opportunity to travel to a neighboring country for a safari. (One dose at least 10 days prior to travel. Protects for 10 years.)

You will need to carry your immunization record with you any time your passport is required.

Malaria Prevention
Malaria is endemic in Uganda. Risk is significantly lower during the dry seasons in Uganda, from December through February and June through August. The rainy seasons attract more mosquitoes. Anti-malarials must be taken for travel to Uganda at any time.

Preventing Insect Bites
Mosquitoes that transmit malaria bite between dusk and dawn. Prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants and by applying insect repellent to exposed skin. Use insect repellents that contain at least 30 – 35% DEET; however, this will cause skin to be more sensitive to the sun, so use with precaution. If not sleeping in well-
screened or air-conditioned housing, use a mosquito bed net. (COTN provides nets for all Venture Team members.) For greater protection during seasons of higher risk, spray clothing and bed nets with permethrin. Permethrin will repel insects for several months. Repellents should be purchased before traveling and can be found in hardware, camping, and military surplus stores. Do not buy repellent in aerosol cans, as they are not allowed on airplanes.

**Water-Borne Disease Precautions**

**Drinking water**

COTN will provide purified water on COTN property. While in the city, you should only drink beverages, including water, from a bottle. Do not drink water in the villages, from the taps on COTN property, or in the guest house. Tap water on COTN property and/or the guest house may be used for bathing, but you must not drink it. In a case where tap water must be used for drinking, it should ALWAYS be boiled to a vigorous rolling boil for 3 minutes and allowed to cool before consumption (recommended treatment by CDC) or treated by filtration with a 1-micron filter combined with iodine or chlorine.

**Food and beverages**

Be especially cautious of fresh fruits and vegetables that may have been washed in untreated water. COTN kitchen staff will always clean produce properly before serving it, but others may not. Also, water on the outside of beverage cans or bottles is most likely contaminated. Therefore, wet cans or bottles should be dried before being opened, and surfaces that are contacted directly by the mouth in drinking should first be wiped clean.
Food-Borne Disease Precautions
If eating outside of COTN property, be sure food is well cooked and meats have been properly handled. Beef is commonly contaminated with parasites, often improperly handled, and is best avoided in Uganda except when purchased from reputable companies. Salmonella (on eggshells) is common, so be sure that eggs are completely cooked. Wash hands well before eating anything. Carry antibacterial hand sanitizer for the times when soap and water are not available. Being very cautious will pay off—and neglecting to be careful may result in traveler’s diarrhea!

Other Health Issues
HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis
HIV is widespread in Uganda, as are Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. Precautions must ALWAYS be taken during any activity with risk of body-fluid contact (mending scraped knees, etc). Talk to a health provider about what the risks are and precautions necessary to protect yourself. Be sure to bring plenty of Band-Aids to cover any scratches or open sores you may have. Also, carry medical gloves (that are the correct size) even if you do not plan on any medical contact.

Tuberculosis (TB)
Tuberculosis is common throughout Uganda. Tuberculosis infection is generally transmitted through the air by coughing. Travelers who anticipate possible prolonged exposure to tuberculosis should have a tuberculin skin test before leaving. If the reaction is negative, they should have a repeat test after returning home. Avoid prolonged close contact to someone who has a constant cough. When traveling on public mini-busses, be sure to sit next to the window to reduce your exposure to TB.
Worms
To decrease your chance of contracting worms, avoid walking barefoot anywhere (inside or outside). Many varieties of worm larvae live in the soil or are present in rural areas contaminated by animal or human feces. Such larvae can enter the body through the soles of exposed feet or toenails. Wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes at all times.

International Health Insurance
COTN uses several reliable medical clinics and well-trained doctors for any minor health issues that Venture Team members and interns may have. For anything more serious, there are hospitals available in Lira, Uganda.

In the case of a medical emergency COTN purchases medical insurance to ensure the ability to airlift someone out of the country to the nearest medical facility with the needed capabilities (most likely South Africa). COTN uses Seven Corners Emergency Medical and Evacuation Insurance for all Venture participants. This insurance costs about $3 per day, per person, and is included in the cost of your trip. Please ask your team leader or your COTN Venture Coordinator if you would like more information.

Medicine
You should bring over-the-counter pain and cold medication with you, especially during June through August (cold/flu season). Bring any necessary prescriptions for the duration of the trip and CLEARLY marked with the pharmacy label. (Label can be on a Ziploc bag.) All prescription medication that you take needs to be filled in advance, with enough to last you the duration of your stay in Uganda.
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELING

Uganda

Passport, Visa and Immunization Record
You will need a passport and your immunization record (you will be required to show this record at the customs office in Uganda) to travel to Uganda, and once you arrive in Uganda you’ll purchase an entrance visa for $50 USD (with a series date of 2010 or newer). This price is not included in your total cost, so be sure to bring this extra cash to spend right away in the airport. (The best exchange rate in country is for large bills in denominations of $50 or $100 with an issue date more recent than 2010.)

Be sure to make photocopies of your passport before you leave. Carry one copy somewhere other than with your passport. A second copy should be on file with the COTN—USA office so it can be faxed if any problem arises due to a lost passport. It is also a good idea for your team leader to have a copy of all team members’ passports.

Airport Issues
Luggage
For international travel, most airlines allow two pieces of checked luggage (each no more than 50 pounds) and one 13- to 40-pound carry-on (depending on the airline). If you’re traveling on two separate tickets (one to Europe, for example, and a second one to Entebbe) your baggage allowance will change in your layover city. So, be sure to check with each airline on the baggage allowance to ensure that you stay within the guidelines of the lesser allowance. You don’t want to have to discard anything in your layover city or pay excess baggage fees.
If you are transporting resource items for COTN, please note that the excess baggage cost is considered an additional cost to your team. If you prefer not to pay those extra fees, please consult with your team leader.

Check with your specific airline, especially if your luggage is an odd shape/size. Nothing valuable should be carried in checked luggage. It is recommended to use the luggage locks issued by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration to ensure luggage content safety. When you arrive in Entebbe, only claim your own bags so there is no confusion with others in your group.

If traveling with British Airways, missionaries can apply in advance by letter to be allowed three (instead of 2) pieces of checked luggage per passenger. This helps COTN when sending over supplies/donations with teams and interns. All checked luggage should be marked with the following information:

Your Name  
Attention: Pr. James Okalo Ekwang  
Truth Evangelistic Fountain  
Plot 76/77 Aloi Road  
Lira, Uganda  
Phone: 0772-611-996

Your Name  
Home/Group Address  
Phone Number

If using boxes for one or two pieces of your luggage, cardboard moving “dish pack” boxes work well. Using duct tape to seal will ensure they don’t fall apart with abuse. Be sure to bring duct tape with you in an accessible place in case
boxes get opened at customs and need to be closed again, and for sealing boxes when returning home.

**Carry-On Baggage**
Many airlines have varying guidelines regarding carry-on baggage. Make sure you are well acquainted with your airline’s rules. In some cases, you may be flying on multiple airlines that have different rules, so double check each flight.

In addition, some airlines will ask or even force you to place your carry-on in the checked baggage compartment—as a courtesy, free of charge. Although this may sound like a great deal, be prepared to speak with the representative at the gate.

Explain to the representative that you and your team are a part of a mission team going to visit COTN’s ministry sites, which are far removed from the airport. To lose your carry-on would be a major headache and could cause problems for the health of your team as your carry-on baggage has all your clothing, toiletries, medicine, and other valuable items you need when arriving at your final destination. Express gratitude for their offer, but ask them to allow you to board with your carry-on and find a place to put your baggage.

*NOTE: In the event that the representative refuses to allow you to carry on your baggage, remove your medicine, any valuables, and no less than one day’s worth of clothing from your bag and place it in your backpack. If lost, your baggage may not arrive for up to 3 days.*

**Checking In**
Check-in for an international flight is three hours before boarding. However, teams usually bring quite a few pieces of checked luggage, which results in a need to be at the airport at
least four hours before flying to be sure that all complications can be dealt with.

Another reason for early check-in: seat assignments are not made until passengers check in. Be sure to have the ticket agent make your seat reservations for the entire trip, not just the first leg.

You may want to reconfirm your return tickets from Uganda a few days before leaving. Again, when checking in at the Entebbe airport, have the ticket agent make your seat reservations for the entire trip if possible.

**Airport Cash**
Be sure to save about $100 US for any emergencies at the airport(s) on the way home. You may not need it, but it’s always better to be prepared.
ENTRY PLAN
Uganda

In the case of last-minute problems, questions, or flight schedule changes:
Contact the COTN–USA office at 360-698-7227 during business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time). If it is after hours, contact your designated Venture Emergency Contact (found at cotni.org/pages/venture-overview) to inform them of the situation.

En route to Uganda
You will receive an immigration card to fill out either on the airplane or once you arrive in Uganda. It will ask for basic personal information like your name, passport number, citizenship, etc. You’ll also need to include the address of where you are staying: Children of the Nations–Uganda, Atoo Sebi Road, Junior Quarters, Lira Town. It will ask for the reason for your travel. Check “Tourist” (not “Missionary”) to avoid any confusion or problems. If it asks for the phone number of where you’ll be staying, use the number that is on your luggage tags.

At Entebbe Airport in Uganda
The international airport in Uganda is quite small, so don’t worry about not being able to find where you’re supposed to go. Follow others from your flight to immigration, baggage claim, through customs, and then out to where people will be waiting for you.

Immigration
Have your passport and immigration card handy. You may be asked some questions about what your plans are. Please remember you are NOT working for COTN. You have come
as tourists and are planning to volunteer some time with Children of the Nations while you are there.

**Baggage Claim**
You will need to retrieve your bags from the luggage carousel and proceed through customs. Talk with your team (big or small) before you land and establish someone to go first and lead your group and someone to bring up the rear—ensuring everyone stays together. Have your luggage claim tickets ready (normally they are stuck onto your airline tickets). If, after all the bags have been run through the carousel, a bag is missing, report it to an official; you’ll need to make a lost luggage claim. Our staff will coordinate with the airport to make sure your bag(s) get picked up when they arrive.

**Proceed through Customs**
When answering questions, please remember that, for now, the items you are carrying are “your personal items” and you are “volunteering your time with Children of the Nations, which is an NGO (non-governmental organization) caring for orphaned and destitute children.”

On the other side of customs, a COTN staff member will be waiting for you with a Children of the Nations sign. They will assist you with luggage and transport you to our ministry center, about a seven-hour drive north.
UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE

Most people in the Anai-Okii area speak Luo or another dialect of Langi, the primary language in Lira District. Below are some common words and phrases in Luo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Luo</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Itye</td>
<td>Hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itye ningo?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atye aber. Kono yin?</td>
<td>I am fine. And you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyingi nga?</td>
<td>What is your name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyinga….</td>
<td>My name is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwaka ni adi?</td>
<td>How old are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibedo kwene?</td>
<td>Where do you live?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An aya i…</td>
<td>I am from…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paco tye ni ngo?</td>
<td>How is your family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omege kede amege ni tye?</td>
<td>Do you have siblings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manno ber!</td>
<td>That is good!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apwoyo</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But (pronounced ‘boot’) aber.</td>
<td>Good night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orwat-te</td>
<td>Goodbye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kong kit enno</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aco gong</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>aya ba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dong aber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obanga ber!</td>
<td>God is good!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opako Rwot!</td>
<td>Praise the Lord!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obanga mi gum.</td>
<td>God bless you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DRESS CODE

Uganda

Two important things to consider when packing clothing for your trip are: 1) **Culture** and 2) **Climate**

Culturally, you will be **seen as professionals** and should dress accordingly for most ministry activities in the villages. In this culture, the way you dress communicates how much respect you have for those around you. When you are being presented, presenting, teaching, or leading something you will need to wear nice clothes. A general rule of thumb would be to try not to allow your clothing be the thing that most sets you apart from the culture. When in doubt, it is better to err on the side of being too dressed up as opposed to being too casual.

The climate in Uganda is tropical for the most part—hot, humid, and rainy. The two dry seasons are December through February and June through August. These seasons will be less humid and cooler in the evenings and mornings.

In order to help you prepare for your trip, we have devised five levels of dress available as a means to be culturally sensitive in Uganda.

**Appropriate Dress for Uganda**

**Church Attire/Public Speaking/Professional Speaking** – Men: Business-casual dress including clean, collared, wrinkle-free shirts (ties optional, but preferred) and dress shoes.

Women: knee-length dresses/skirts and shirts with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps, dress shoes, no short skirts.

**Village Ministry and Outreach Attire** – Business-casual including collared shirts and khaki trousers for men; casual
below-the-knee dresses or skirts and tops with three-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women. All team members must wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes.

**Construction Attire** – Clean T-shirts with work pants for both men and women; closed-toe/closed-heel shoes.

**COTN Guest House** – Conservative casual including shirts worn at all times for men; skirts or loose pants (no yoga pants) and tops with 3-inch-wide (minimum) shoulder straps for women; long shorts (at least to bottom of fingertips) for both men and women. These guidelines apply to ALL casual/house attire including pajamas. Flip-flops are okay on COTN property.

**Swimwear** – Traditional, one-piece swimsuits for women. Women should bring shorts to wear over swimsuits at all times, even while swimming. No bikinis or tankinis. T-shirts, shorts, and wraps are recommended.

**Sportswear** – Men are permitted to wear shorts and T-shirts when participating in a sporting activity. Shirts should be worn at all times. Women may wear knee-length, loose shorts while playing.

**Shoes** – You are required to wear closed-toe/closed-heel shoes any time you are outside the mission house, unless you are at the beach.

Recommendation: One pair of nice shoes for church; one pair of closed-toe/closed-heel shoes that will dry quickly if soaked in the rain (or that are washable if covered with mud), for use with work projects; one pair of flip-flops for inside the mission site and in the shower.
Additional Specifics Regarding Dress and Appearance

- Men should not plan on wearing shorts except during sporting activities, lounging at the Guest House or swimming.
- Earrings, gauges, shanks, and other piercings are not permitted to be worn by men during the trip. All piercings (including tongue piercings) must be removed for the duration of the trip.
- Women should not wear piercings apart from one small hole in each lower ear. Other earrings may be worn at night, but must be removed during the day.
- Male hair should be kept short.
- Facial hair should be shaved daily. Existing facial hair should be kept neatly trimmed.
- Women should not wear tight clothing (shirts or skirts).
- Women may wear shorts/leggings/tights under opaque skirts if desired (especially for warmth!)
- Women should avoid heavy makeup and a lot of jewelry.
- Women should not wear low-cut shirts.
- No see-thru clothing. Women should wear slips if the shape of their legs can be seen through their dress or skirt.
- Women should not wear spaghetti or thin straps unless a T-shirt is worn underneath. No strapless dresses/shirts should be worn.

Reasoning for Dress Code Guidelines
There is a conservative mindset that still prevails in Africa and is different from that of the United States. In Africa, many people will make assumptions as to whether or not you are a Christian based on the way you dress. This assumption
is becoming less prevalent in larger cities, but is still very much present in the smaller communities where COTN serves.

It is not just the cultural conservatism that contributes to COTN’s dress code; it is also the role modeling we are trying to provide for the children. Teenage and extramarital sex is a big problem in African communities, so one way COTN combats that is with conservative clothing.

You will see many Africans—even some of our children—who do not fit this dress code. This is partly because the society is increasingly changing as a result of outside influences (such as television, movies, and imported goods) and partly because there is a different mindset between Christians and non-Christians. It is also because there are many families that simply cannot afford to choose their clothes. However, it is in the spirit of service that COTN chooses to err on the side of being conservative, so as not to be a distraction to God’s work.
Appendix A: Bible Study

BIBLE STUDY FOR SERVANTS

Being a servant brings the privilege of serving others. Serving is one of the greatest challenges of being Christ’s disciple. Most of us like to be served, but fewer of us find joy in serving others. It is in serving, not in being served, that our discipleship is demonstrated.

Christ calls His followers to follow His example. We are called servants and are commissioned to act as servants. Jesus was submissive all the way to the cross. He opened new depths of servanthood, modeling the role of God’s servant with humility and compassion in his own lifestyle.
DAY 1 – JESUS THE MODEL

Read the following verses and answer the questions on Jesus:

- What did He say? (Luke 22:26)

- What did He do? (John 13:3–9)

- What did He mean? (John 13:15–17)

- What can we learn from these passages?
**DAY 2 – READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1–14**

Complete the following chart:

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How can we apply the attitudes and actions above in our mission experience?
DAY 3 – READ COLOSSIANS 3:12–23

Complete the following chart:

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A servant’s attitude shows through his or her actions. The manner of a servant reflects a good understanding of his or her responsibilities.
DAY 4 – EXAMPLE OF SERVICE

Record the attitude/action in each of the following people (as stated or implied):

- Martha – John 12:1–3

- Peter’s mother-in-law – Mark 1:31

- Seven chosen disciples – Acts 6:1–7

What can we learn from these passages?
DAY 5 – PRACTICAL SERVICE IS NOT ENOUGH BY ITSELF

   
   • How is “serving” wrong?

   • How can “serving” be right?

   • How do these verses apply to you? To the team?

2. Analyze Mark 10:44 – The Way to Greatness

   • Paraphrase (write it in your own words)

   • What does the next verse teach? (Mark 10:45)
DAY 6 – SECRET OF BECOMING A SERVANT

List the characteristics of God’s servants:

- 2 Timothy 2:24

- 1 Corinthians 4:2

- Romans 6:16–19

- Galatians 6:9–10

- Galatians 5:13

What can we learn from these verses?
DAY 7 – SUFFERING SERVANTHOOD

1. Describe “suffering servanthood.” (1 Peter 2:18–20)

2. Relationship to Authority (Hebrews 13:17)

How does this verse instruct servants concerning our work for the Lord?

DAY 8 – ULTIMATE MOTIVATION

Paraphrase (write in your own words) Colossians 3:24

Read Revelation 2:10. “Be ________________ until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

What, from this verse, can you apply to your own life?
DAY 9 – READ ACTS 1

Select one verse in this passage that stands out in your mind and explain why.

How would you apply this chapter to what you have been doing the past eight days?

DAY 10 – READ ACTS 2

From these verses, what do you learn about how God works?

Which verse(s) would you consider as the key verse(s) in this chapter? Why?
DAY 11 – READ ACTS 13
What can you apply personally to your life from these verses?

What new insight did you receive from this chapter?

DAY 12 – READ ACTS 15
How does this chapter help you understand God better?

How does this chapter apply to missions?
Appendix B: Discussion Questions

Answer the discussion questions on the following pages as you read *Foreign to Familiar* by Sarah Lanier. Answering these questions will help you better understand the culture you come from and the culture you will be entering as a Venture participant with Children of the Nations.
QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTERS 1–2 of
FOREIGN TO FAMILIAR

1. What is the difference between “hot” and “cold” cultures? Which do you fit into better?

2. What is the difference between “relationship orientation” versus “task orientation”?

3. Are you a “thinker” or a “feeler”? How do you deal with someone who is the opposite? What do you appreciate about the opposite?
QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTERS 3–4 of
FOREIGN TO FAMILIAR

1. What is the difference between “direct” and “indirect” communication?

2. Which type of communication are you accustomed to? How do you relate to someone with a differing communication style?

3. How do you deal with frustrations in communication?

4. What is the difference between “individual” versus “group” identity?

5. How do you see yourself working as a team in relation to individual versus group identity values?
QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTERS 5–6 of
FOREIGN TO FAMILIAR

1. What is the difference between “inclusion” versus “privacy”?

2. Are you more inclusive or private? Since you will be living in community with one another this summer, what adjustments might you need to make to accommodate your inclusive roommates (if you are a private person) or your private roommates (if you are an inclusive person)?

3. What does hospitality mean to you?

4. This summer there will be many short-term teams and visitors coming to the country where you are serving that you will be helping to host. What areas in the role of hospitality do you need to work on and prepare for as you think about this summer?
QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 7 of
FOREIGN TO FAMILIAR

1. What is the difference between “high-context” culture and “low-context” culture?

2. What does that mean when you think about the clothes you will be wearing?

3. What does that mean when you think about power distance?

4. What does that mean when you think about gender differences?

5. What does that mean when you think about greeting someone?
QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTERS 8–9 of FOREIGN TO FAMILIAR

1. Going from a cold-climate to a hot-climate culture, what are some differences one might expect in regards to time and planning?

2. Culture Shock and Stress – have you prepared yourself for these things? Have you realized that you are leaving behind everything you know about your culture, and going into a place where you will really know nothing? What steps have you taken (in your mind) to ready yourself for the differences you will experience? Have you allowed yourself to start moving out of your comfort zone?

3. Please reread pages 124–125, point 10, of Foreign to Familiar. Highlight it; underline it; and remember that there are reasons for the way a culture works.
QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 10 of
FOREIGN TO FAMILIAR

1. Think about the phrasing of “Ethnocentrism” (page 128 of Foreign to Familiar). Do you think Americans have this point of view? Do you think it is deserved, earned, or arrogant? What ethnocentric ideas might you have in coming to a foreign culture? (If you don’t think you do, consider what stereotypes you may have here in the US.)
Contact Phone Numbers and Addresses

Prior to departure, review emergency protocol listed below.

In the case of an emergency in country, COTN will phone our on-call staff contact in the U.S. The staff contact will then phone the emergency contact listed on your application and any specified group contact.

In the case of an emergency at home, please phone our COTN–International office during business hours or visit our website to determine the on-call staff contact for after business hours.

If you need to call an in-country contact while outside that country, dial 011 before the number listed below (except for the Dominican Republic).

**UNITED STATES:**
- COTN Int’l/USA Office: 1-360-698-7227
- COTN Int’l/USA Fax: 1-360-337-2499
- Venture Director: 1-360-698-7227 x 1039
- Venture Team Manager: 1-360-698-7227 x 1023
- Consultant Manager: 1-405-640-1735

**Mailing Address**
- Venture Program
- Children of the Nations
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- Silverdale, WA  98383

**Ship via FedEx or UPS**
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- Children of the Nations
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- Silverdale, WA  98383

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Fax: 509-2229-8028
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