

FAQs about the Sister Church Program

Frequently Asked Questions about the Hope for Kids Program

What is a Sister Church Partnership?

One of the greatest relationships your church can be a part of is a Sister Church Partnership (SCP). It is two churches from different cultures, languages and countries, coming together to break down boundaries, demonstrating and celebrating the oneness of the Body of Christ through the Holy Spirit. As you partner together with your sister church you will be experiencing a relationship that is reciprocal, intimate, in-depth, practical, on-going, and most of all spiritual. The impact that each church will have on one another is awesome as you come together to encourage one another to greater spiritual maturity and ministry. The national church will have a great impact on your church as teams visit. You will even have the opportunity to do pulpit exchange as your pastor visits your sister church and as you bring your national sister church pastor to visit you. Truly you will be "building forever relationships" across cultures as you minister one to another, church to church, building up the Body of Christ for His Glory.

What is the Hope for Kids Program?

Flowing directly out of the Sister Church Program, Hope for Kids (HFK) is a program that RMI started to meet the educational and physical needs of the many children who are unable to attend school due to severe economic conditions in their country. When one is struggling to feed a family, school must be sacrificed. Here is how it works. An individual, Sunday school class, family, club or business can sponsor one or more children. It costs \$200 to support a child for 1 full school year. The sponsorship provides:

- school books for that year
- one set of new clothes for school (uniform when needed)
- if applicable, one church uniform
- one pair of shoes
- school entrance fee
- school tuition
- medical checkup (where available)
- most importantly - hope!

If you want to participate in this program, you will want to appoint a Hope For Kids Coordinator. This is the point person who will act as the facilitator, liaison, communicator and organizer on your end to implement and facilitate the Hope for Kids Program in your church. They will communicate regularly with the RMI office as well as with the RMI Field Office.

What about Pre-Trip Training?

A comprehensive study program is provided by RMI to prepare each visiting team to relate well across cultures. There is a "Team Leader Information" booklet for the team leader as well as a "RMI Team Training Workbook" for each team member. It includes Biblical, cultural, geographical, historical as well as practical training to prepare the teams for what they will encounter. Some of these studies are on cassette tapes and some are on video. This training is designed to be used during the 6 weeks leading up to a trip. These manuals are \$15 each and can be ordered from the RMI International Office (FL).

What is a "Team"?

RMI's unique ministry requires dedicated teamwork. Therefore we constantly refer to teams. The teams that you will hear us refer to most often are the "Administrative Team", the "Cross-Cultural Bridge Team" and the "Sister Church Team". The "Administrative Team" is the group of people in the RMI International Office (FL) that will work closely with you to facilitate your partnership and trips. The "Cross-Cultural Bridge Team" is the group of RMI missionaries and nationals in your host country (Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica) that will care for you and help you to bridge cultural and language barriers. The "Sister Church Team" is the group of people from your church that will go to visit your sister church.

What do you need to know about your first trip?

Your first trip to visit your sister church will have 2 goals:

Goal #1: For the leaders of your church to get to know your sister church, the surrounding community and come to fully understand the depth, scope, & potential of the partnership. We want your leaders to understand how this relationship can impact not only the national church, but your own church. This is why we want your first team to be a leadership team. This team should be made up of leaders from all areas of church life. For example, pastors, elders, deacons, youth, women's and men's ministries, children's ministries, etc. As the leaders of these various ministries experience the Sister Church Partnership first hand and take ownership of it, they will desire for their people to be involved in the future. This will help your entire church to grasp the burden, catch the vision and commit to being involved. This way, it will become a church-wide endeavor and not just a special project of a few faithful members.

Goal #2: For your national sister church to get to know you, their sister church. What better way to get to know a church than by meeting and hosting their leaders for several days? Being involved in leadership meetings to share each other's passions, participating together in a small project (such as building church or school benches), visiting members in their homes, or ministering together (such as holding an open air meeting showing the Jesus film) are just some ways they can get to know you. This will better enable them to pray for you and your church more effectively.

What is a Sister Church Coordinator and Team Leader?

As it was already stated, RMI's unique ministry requires dedicated teamwork. Therefore, we have found it strategically important to have one person from each church designated as the "Sister Church Coordinator". Although it is often the case, this person does not always have to be the "Team Leader", the person leading the team of people that are visiting your sister church. The Sister Church Coordinator is the facilitator, liaison, communicator and organizer on your end to implement and facilitate the ongoing sister church relationship. This is the person that we will communicate with most regularly throughout your sister church relationship.

What costs are associated with your partnership?

There are four costs that you will need to consider.

1. *Affiliation Donation.* We ask our US Sister Churches to donate a minimum of \$50 each month to the general fund for the field of your Sister Church to help cover some of the field administrative costs.
2. *Ministry Enablement Donation (MED).* The MED is \$625 for Haiti and \$675 for Guatemala for each team member visiting your sister church. Additional costs may apply if your trip deviates from the standard schedule. The MED covers all in-country expenses, as well as costs associated with the ongoing administration of your Sister Church Partnership.
3. *Flights.* You will be responsible for covering the costs of your flights from your home town to your host country. Note: There is an additional \$145 in-country flight in Haiti.
4. *Projects.* You will be responsible to cover the costs of the projects that you would like to accomplish for your sister church. The projects are often throughout the year, as well as directly related to a team's project during your visit.

How are RMI Administrative and Operational costs covered?

In addition to donations given directly to operations, there is a 15% fee assessed on all donations (Field and Missionary support, HFK, MED and Projects included). 10% goes toward operations and ministries of the RMI International Office (FL) and 5% goes either toward a general operating fund for your field or directly to the association of churches that we enjoy a contractual partnership with.

How often should you plan to go and how does scheduling trips work?

We encourage our churches to plan to go once a year, or at a minimum of every 18 months. You contact the RMI International Office (FL) and ask for available dates. Once you pick a date, you will send in a \$700 deposit to reserve that date. If for any reason you need to cancel that reservation within 9 months of your trip, we will be unable to return that deposit to you. Trips are often reserved on a first come basis 1-2 years in advance.

How do you choose a project?

For your first trip, a small project can be arranged by communicating directly with the RMI International Office (FL). While you are there, your team will meet with the leadership of your sister church for collaboration and future planning. You will want to know and understand your sister church's felt needs and priorities in order to plan subsequent projects and ministries. Each time your team visits your sister church, a leadership meeting will take place to help you keep up to date on those felt needs. It is also vitally important for you to communicate with RMI through the year as you plan for future projects.

What about insurance?

RMI purchases short term team insurance for the time your team is on their trip from Adams & Associates International (<http://www.aaintl.com/>). We can provide you with exactly what is covered upon request, but it is important to note that it does cover emergency air evacuation coverage.

Who do you contact if you have questions?

Initially, you should contact Rob Thompson, Vice President of Operations, with all questions. Once it is appropriate, Rob will refer you to the appropriate RMI field leader for items related to your field. In general, it is important for you to remember to always communicate both with the RMI Field Office, as well as the RMI International Office (FL) so that everyone is on the same page and up to date.

Where can you access more information, help and resources?

You can always contact Rob Thompson at 239.368.8390 or rob.thompson@rminet.org. For resources directly related to coordinating your partnership, an archive of all our publications, trip calendars, news, forms and church partnership blogs, we encourage you to visit www.rminet.org/information (note: this link will be active in the next month or so).