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Schweizerischer
Verband für Personelle
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Swiss association for
the exchange of
personnel in development
cooperation

Association suisse pour
l'échange de personnes
dans la coopération
internationale

Asociación Suiza para el
intercambio de personas
en la cooperación
internacional

Associazione Svizzera per lo
scambio di persone
nella cooperazione
internazionale

Associação Suíça para o
intercâmbio de pessoas
na cooperação
internacional

Accompany and encourage

A practical guide for co-ordinators in the
Personnel Development Co-operation



Photo Pia Zanetti

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Change is the only constant

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), German philosopher

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Upgrading and changes under:

Chapter 18.6

Chapter 19.1

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Chapter 26

Foreword

In July 2004, I bade farewell to my job as co-ordinator in Nicaragua. Before collecting my things, I glanced around the office. Over the past four years this room in hot and dusty Managua had become the focal point of my life. During these years, my colleague Mila Incer and I accompanied almost 40 Swiss men and women in their mission in Central America. In German, French and Italian we shared in their successes, their frustrations and their nostalgia for Switzerland. Here we prepared ourselves for our trips to get to know new counterpart organisations, we received visits from the six Swiss volunteer organisations and Unité; here we wrote articles, organised training workshops, exchanges and encounters, and here we formulated strategic targets. And here we also laughed a lot. On the wall, there was still hanging the photograph of the Casitas volcano, which I had taken just after hurricane Mitch in 1998. Natural disasters, emergencies and unforeseen events drove us to our limits many times. Nonetheless, we could always rely upon our team spirit and a well-organised office to see us through.

I made a toast with my successor to celebrate his new appointment. For him as well, this office would soon be the crossroads of the wishes of the counterpart organisations from three different countries, the goals of the six sending organisations and of local needs too. During a seminar in Switzerland we had agreed that the phrase “focal point” was the most appropriate to describe the function of a co-ordinating office.



For four years I attempted to systematise procedures. Due to the constant rush and pressure we were under, I never managed to complete this. Many times I wanted to have a checklist that with just a glance would enable me to identify what I needed to do for any specific task. Just before the arrival of my successor, I had put together a series of notes that would help him settle in to his new job. Out of that sprang the idea for this manual.

The aim of this manual is to provide ideas and advice for co-ordinators working in Personnel Development Co-operation co-ordinators. I have tried to produce a practical guide of living partnership between the organisations of north and south. I have tried to systematise my experiences and describe them in such a manner that this manual can be a source of good counsel in the co-ordinating office whether dealing with the daily routine, for strategic planning or for extraordinary events. I have also tried to make it a guide to simply procedures. As such I have included checklists which can be copied and adapted to suit any office. The manual also tries to promote interchange, and to explain by way of examples, what it means to accompany co-

operants. This manual also aims to provide support to the sending organisations that make up Unité in their efforts to unify and professionalise the accompaniment of co-operants during their mission. I hope that the content lives up to these goals.

The role of a co-ordinator centres around accompanying and encouraging the development workers. Nonetheless, the success or failure of a mission depends upon many factors and people and over which the co-ordinator has little influence, for example:

- *The preparation of the development workers*
- *The physical and mental state of the development workers, their partners and their families,*
- *The «chemistry» between the development worker and his or her counterpart,*
- *Knowledge of one's own history and the history of the people and country of the mission*
- *The social network in the mission country and the country of origin,*
- *The quality, the openness and learning capacity of the development workers and those in the counterpart organisations,*
- *The transparency with which overall procedures and relations are established*

My experiences took place in Central America. Doubtless the needs and realities in other countries are different, and one manual cannot expect to cover all. So I have tried to keep the focus general. Of course, I have not always succeeded. Because of this, this first version is not being printed but being placed on the Internet on the Unité website. The aim is to broaden it, update it with information from other countries where there are missions. In this way we avoid the high cost of printing and postage. The information is accessible to anyone with a computer, and is updated with the additions from the other co-ordinating offices.

Some advice comes from my colleague Mila Incer, some from myself, and others I have taken from Unité and sending organisation documents. At the beginning of each chapter I have included, in italics, my own experiences regarding the issue. These experiences explain by themselves why the issue has been chosen.

Thanks

I want to express my deepest thanks to Mila Incer. She has worked for more than six years as the local co-ordinator in Managua. During this time, she has not only introduced me, supported me (and at times put up with me) as well as other co-ordinators; she has worked with four Swiss co-ordinators to date. The experiences which are described here we have lived and been through together.

My thanks go also to Martin Schreiber, the general secretary of Unité. From the start he has supported the idea of this manual and offered advice and many useful ideas for its production. His specific knowledge and his professional accompaniment have helped round out this manual, and his interest and lobbying enabled it to be financed by Unité/SDC.

A big «thank you» goes to all the counterpart organisations that gave their time to discuss their point of view with me and to describe international co-operation from their perspective.

I also wish to thank all those Swiss men and women that I have been able to accompany in Central America during the past years. Every one of them has shown me new ways to manage the co-ordinating office. The interesting talks and interchange of ideas during field visits, or in the intimacy of their homes at night, have provided valuable insights for this manual.

Special thanks goes to Franziska Wolff, who kindly offered to review my German that after so many years of living far from Switzerland, has become a little rusty. Thanks also to my brother Robert, whose company ENCO AG, has provided me with the base from which to produce this manual. And Tim Coone I thank for having inspired me to take on new adventures over the past twenty years.

Thank you to all the people I have known during so many years in Central America. Your history, your way of thinking and your wisdom form part of who I am now. The most valuable expression of this is my son Jerónimo.

Elsbeth Horbaty



Abbreviations

SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, Berne Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit, Bern http://www.deza.admin.ch/
Unité	Swiss association for the exchange of personnel in development cooperation, Berne Schweizerischer Verband für personelle Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, Bern http://www.unite-ch.org
ONG	Non-governmental organisation

The bibliographic references are marked with a number and listed in chapter 26

1. Expectations

Profile and terms of reference for a co-ordinator

My interview for the job of Central American co-ordinator for Unité took place in a vegetarian restaurant in Olten, Switzerland. The six people that wanted to know and to evaluate me, came from different cities in Switzerland, and it turned out that Olten was the most central for all of them. As an “all-rounder” with both administrative and journalistic experience, my profile looked appropriate for the six organisations I was to represent in Central America. My strong points were my good knowledge of the region, three years of working experience in international co-operation, analytical ability, organisational and improvising skills, and just plain common sense. It was also in my favour that I was working at that moment in an Austrian co-operation organisation, and finally that I was well rooted in Nicaragua. Nobody asked me about my weaknesses, even though I was well aware of them.

I was given the job. On finishing four years later, I realised that what had served me most of all was the network of friends and contacts in Nicaragua that I had cultivated over the years. If I didn't know how to deal with a difficult issue, I sought advice from co-ordinators in other countries, from persons involved in politics, from people I knew socially or from experts in specific issues. Every co-ordinator will undoubtedly have his/her own strengths and weaknesses. But I believe the most important thing is to have enthusiasm and to find pleasure in doing this type of work.

At the beginning of the 90s, SDC handed over the responsibility for the administration and a renewed concept of volunteer work to Unité, in a jointly financed program to promote the interchange of people in international co-operation. The Unité office in Basle was expanded and was assigned new tasks. An improvement was needed in the missions. An important element of this new focus was the opening of regional co-ordinating offices that were to be administered by Unité. According to the framework agreement 2005-2008 SDC-UNITE (1), the co-ordinating offices are set up in the context of north-south interchange and are to work mainly towards the build up and quality development of the partnerships.

The program also required the co-ordination of the co-operation missions, in order to achieve coherency and to create synergies to improve and increase impact and quality.

1.1. Profile of a co-ordinator

According to Unité guidelines, (see Unité guidelines for co-ordinators – individual missions — Unité (2)), a co-ordinator should fulfil the following requirements:

1. Experience in international co-operation and with grass roots organisations and NGOs
2. Familiarity with Swiss co-operation and its function (especially in regard to Personnel Development Co-operation or personal interchange)
3. Knowledge of the country and region
4. Knowledge of public relations and representation
5. Experience in the accompaniment and management of personnel
6. Experience in mediation, communication (social and cultural sustainability)
7. Experience in monitoring and evaluation techniques
8. Basic knowledge of administration, office management, accountancy, planning and finances

1.2. Terms of reference for a co-ordinator

The more than 25 members of Unité that send development workers have drawn up their own terms of reference for their co-ordinators, so that these will meet their specific aims, aspirations and goals. The following terms of reference for Unité were updated in December 2004 and can serve as a reference (further details are available in the guidelines for co-ordinators (2)).

1. To promote quality, synergy and efficiency in the missions (Preparation and accompaniment of development workers and support for them in conflict situations).
2. To develop a consistent mission policy that is based upon the partnership. Co-ordination of the sending organisations' finances in the country or region, and the building and development of relations at all levels between the different sending organisations, development workers and counterparts from the South (preferably within a country or regional program).
3. To contact and co-ordinate with relevant, local NGOs, base organisations, church and state institutions, and to co-ordinate work with other development plans and programs.
4. Institutional representation of the Swiss sending organisations.
5. To assess the actual situation of the country and ensure the safety of the development workers.
6. To support the public relations of the sending organisations.

1.3. Checklist for the selection of a co-ordinator

The following list of qualifications has been drawn up to help the sending organisations in the selection of a co-ordinator:

Themes

Experience

- International co-operation and grass roots organisations
- Swiss international co-operation
- Personnel Development Co-operation and interchange of persons in international co-operation
- Public relations and
- Representation
- Accompaniment and personnel management
- Negotiating skills
- Mediation, conflict resolution

Knowledge

- Languages
- Country and culture
- International co-operation methodologies

Administration

- Management
- Accountancy/finance
- Planning, personnel

Motivations for applying for the post

- Political
- Religious/spiritual
- Career in international co-operation
- Personal or job change
- Clarity over personal and job future

Questions to check on the type of tasks to be faced

- Ask which are the three tasks that will take up the major part of a co-ordinator's time
- Expectations regarding the development of the job, with clear examples
- How to deal with constant changes
- How to face the unexpected

Personal questions

- How do you react under stress?
- Difficulties are a problem or a challenge?
- Do you prefer to work alone or in a team? Why?
- What would your current boss or colleagues say about you?
- What are your expectations of the sending organisations /of their bosses?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses and how do you deal with them?
- Do you use feedback, can you generate it, and how do you go about it?
- What has been your most difficult job in recent years?
- What do you do in your free time, with your family, what are your hobbies?

Explanations regarding work matters

- Vacations / training possibilities
- Overtime
- Work and social rules
- Salary
- Explain the following steps in the application

1.4. Advice in applying for the job of co-ordinator

The following can be useful for someone applying for a co-ordinating post:

Themes

- Have all your necessary documents to hand (diplomas, certificates, references, publications)
- Be clear about the job requirements and tasks involved (sound out other co-ordinators)
- Be clear about your motivations
- Be clear about your strengths and weaknesses
- Consequences for the family and personal situation
- Read widely about the organisation you are planning to work for

2. Organisation

Organisation of a co-ordinating office

I am one of those people referred to a « clear-desk » person. When I started my job in Managua in 1999, the Unité office reminded me of images of the Nicaraguan revolution: images of Ché Guevara, Carlos Fonseca and Daniel Ortega hung on the walls; a few basic wooden chairs, desks and shelves were cramped together in the small room. The smell of stale cigarette smoke hung in the air, and the air conditioner was working at full blast. E-mail and Internet had been installed, but every time a telephone connection needed to be made, one had to carry the computer over to another desk. Backpacks and books of the development workers as they came and went, and papers and documents of all sorts scattered everywhere completed the scene. I couldn't work like this. I needed a good administrative and organisational structure that would allow me to have rapid access to emergency contacts, to documents and to the means of communication. This would enable me to create order, and this – at least I hoped – would give visitors an impression of professionalism.

2.1. Proposals for organising a co-ordinating office

Administration

Emergency addresses

- Photocopies of the passports of all the development workers
- Addresses and contact telephone numbers of two families in Switzerland of each of the development workers
- Addresses and contact telephone numbers (office, private and mobile) of two desk officers of the sending organisations in Switzerland
- List of all the development workers and their counterpart organisations in the country
- Copies of the will of each development worker (to be opened only in emergency; to be kept confidential)
- Addresses and contact telephone numbers of the police, army, hospitals, doctors, psychologists, lawyers and representatives of other international NGOs where development workers work in the capital and region
- Addresses and contact telephone numbers of the Swiss embassy, consulate or co-ordinating office of SDC
- Documents from the Swiss embassy/sending organisations for emergency situations
- Addresses and contact telephone numbers of the people that work in the office, including cleaning and security personnel.

Contact addresses

- Relevant government institutions
- Organisations relevant to the principal themes of the country program
- Addresses and contact telephone numbers for services (car repair, computers, telephones, insurance companies, water and electricity, lawyers etc)
- Other international NGOs
- Data on training opportunities, language courses
- Cultural events

Documents

- A file for each development worker
- Guidelines of the sending organisation
- Unité guidelines
- Country program
- Terms of reference
- Check lists
- Agreements with government entities, visas etc.
- Insurance, maintenance contracts
- Accounts, budgets, bank accounts, petty cash

Library

- Information on counterpart organisations
- Books and documents on the history, economy, politics, culture, society, environment of the country
- Books and documents about the principal themes of the country program
- Novels and books on arts, culture

2.2. Planning

In a country of the South, planning of a co-ordination office is not as simple as in Switzerland. In the South, political disturbances, natural disasters, unexpected economic upheavals, bank collapses and accidents can be commonplace. Because of this, it can be difficult to motivate co-ordinators and assistants to draw up a five-year plan. The annual plans from Switzerland, with their timetables, the dates of arrival and departure of development workers, dates of travel, dates of visits, etc, can be used as an alternative and be updated every month or week as necessary. It is recommended that planning meetings include all the people that work in the co-ordinating office. In this way you can ensure that everyone is aware of what is going on.

Annual planning (1 day)

- Arrival dates of development workers
- Dates of the introduction period of the development workers
- Annual budget date and of budget controls
- Delivery dates of the country program, and of situation updates
- Delivery dates of the development workers evaluations
- Visits to the development workers and counterpart organisations
- Visits of representatives of the sending organisations
- Annual meeting
- This plan is written up and sent to all the development workers in the country, as well as to the sending organisations

Monthly planning (2 to 3 hours)

- Arrival and departure dates of the development workers
- Dates of the introduction period of the development workers
- Delivery dates of the budget and budget controls
- Delivery dates of the country programme, country monitoring report
- Delivery dates of SEP and co-operant evaluations
- Visits to the co-operants and counterparts: monitoring, presentation, final evaluation, conflict resolution
- Visits from sending organisations, journalists
- Dates for renewing visas, residency permits
- Meetings with representatives of other foreign NGOs, SDC, Swiss embassy

- New missions, south-south and south-north interchanges; visits to new counterpart organisations
- Interchanges / training of co-operants
- Interchanges / training of the co-ordinators and office personnel
- Awareness-raising, despatch of relevant information, write articles
- Accounts, payment of bills
- Maintenance of vehicles, computers, office equipment
- Time to read and for strategic thinking and reflection
- These plans are written out in brief and sent to all the co-operants and sending organisations.

Weekly meeting (1/2 hour)

- Review of key dates during the month
- Problems / conflicts / unforeseen events
- Important: review maintenance of vehicles, communication equipment, computers

2.3. Maintenance

The co-ordinating office and the development workers should always have their vehicles and means of communication in good operating order, and their identity documents in order, to be able to respond to any problem quickly and safely. The lack of a jack to change a tyre or a driving licence can prove to be fatal in an emergency. Therefore, the following checks should be made every week:

- The condition of the vehicle, and a gasoline or diesel reserve
- The insurance of the vehicles, of the office, of the office workers
- The means of communications, two-way radios
- The identity documents of all those that work in the co-ordinating office
- Office equipment: fax, computers, photocopiers
- Office items, refreshments for office workers and visitors. Not so important, but useful

2.4. At home

The co-ordinator or a representative needs to be accessible or locatable at all times, whether at the office or at home, during trips for example. As mentioned earlier, unexpected events can occur. Therefore it is important to have the following documents to hand:

- Emergency contacts – see above
- Mobile phone or two-way radio
- Home medical kit, names and telephones of doctors for emergencies

2.5. Travelling

One of the biggest dangers facing a co-ordinator in the mission country is traffic. Vehicles in a dangerous condition, drunken drivers, or drivers which ignore road signs, are a constant danger. A co-ordinator has to drive a lot, over long distances and often alone, and frequently being tired after lengthy and intense meetings. It is when one thinks that you know the route well, is when it is most dangerous. Here is a preventative check list:

- Always have ready and handy emergency addresses and contact numbers – see above.
- Mobile phone or two-way radio
- Spare tyre in good condition and tools to change it
- Emergency medical kit
- Clean water and something to eat
- Defensive driving
- When one is tired it's better to stop and find a safe place to stay the night
- If there is a state of emergency, riots or political disturbances, it is important to check your planned travel route with the police or army.

2.6. Budget

One of the tasks of the co-ordinating office is the proper management of the annual budget. This is drawn up once a year together with the sending organisation. It is important to know in which currency it is presented. The budget can be handled with a simple accountancy system, that consists of just the income (the money sent from Switzerland) and outgoings. It is advisable to note the expenses at the end of every month, and calculate what is left of the budget for the remainder of the year. An Excel worksheet, in the following link could be useful for this. <http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/english/budgetengl.xls> The formulae are already worked out. Just double click on the table to use it. The following tips might be useful:

- It is advisable to draw up the budget together with all the people that work in the office.
- All expenses should have a corresponding receipt. Sometimes it is not possible to obtain an official receipt. In such cases obtain a hand-written receipt from the person who received the money.
- All the receipts should be duly numbered and filed.
- Income and expenses should be checked against bank account balances.
- For expenses exceeding 10% of the annual budget approval should be sought from the sending organisation
- Send the annual financial report along with an inventory

2.7. Inventory

Every co-ordinating office should keep a basic inventory. Once drawn up, it can be easily updated annually. In this way the replacement of vehicles or equipment can be anticipated and these expenses included in the annual budget. On handing over the office to a new co-ordinator, it is most important to present a current and updated budget and inventory.

2.8. Co-ordinating office personnel

Most of the co-ordinating offices of the organisations affiliated to Unité have small staffs, and in general consist of two people – one from Switzerland and the other a local. However, in some cases other personnel are contracted for cleaning, security, accounting or a driver for example. These people should be paid the local going rates, whether for their salary or their social and medical insurance. Experience has shown that paying higher rates does not necessarily produce better results. On the other hand, it would be a serious mistake to contract a driver without insurance, because in the case of an accident significant consequences could result for his family, for the co-ordinating office and for the budget of the sending organisation.

If these additional personnel work permanently in the office, it is advisable to include them in all the weekly and monthly meetings of the office. In this way, all are informed of what is happening during the week. Moreover, it encourages a sense of participation and responsibility towards the co-ordinating office.

3. Strategy

Guidelines for producing a country program, missions, and selection counterpart organisations

Amongst the documents I came across on beginning my job, was the ninth version of the country program for Central America. Within the framework of the program co-financed with SDC, Unité produced different country programs for Africa and Latin America. In the case of Central America, this wasn't so straightforward: a lost revolution in Nicaragua, a yet-to-be implemented peace agreement in El Salvador, a far more prosperous economy in Costa Rica, as well as the viewpoints of six different sending organisations in Switzerland; all this had to be consolidated in one single program. What was the appropriate strategy for the missions in these countries? Should it be fair trade, and support for political and social organisations that are working on the empowerment of grass roots organisations? Or would the right path be to continue to work with the same counterpart organisations of the past 20 years? To answer these questions, we contracted a Nicaraguan advisor, whose job was to investigate the need to receive development workers in these three countries. She interviewed development workers, counterpart organisations, and figures involved in international co-operation, and presented her results in the annual meeting. This study provided a firm basis to draw up country plans for all the organisations that were sending development workers to Central America.

A country program is a strategic document. It is drawn up every four or five years together with the sending organisations and the co-ordinating office. The aim of this document is to produce a coherent policy that will result in a greater impact and synergy between the different missions. The contribution of the co-ordinating office, besides strategic investigation, is to find solid, local counterparts, and to propose possible missions. The following points can serve as guidelines:

3.1. Key points for a country program

- A good understanding of the goals of the sending organisations
- A good understanding of the current country program
- Study the country programs of other institutions such as:
 - Other Personnel Development Co-operation and development worker
 - SDC
 - International co-operation offices of other European countries
- Personal discussions with the authors of these programs
- Participation of the counterpart organisations and development workers
 - Within the framework of individual monitoring
 - Annual meeting
- Interviews with personalities from government, church and civil society
- Take into account possibilities for innovative missions (south-south, south-north interchanges)
- Include public relations in the analysis
- Publication of the country program in counterpart organisations, development workers, and local government, church and NGO entities.

Characteristics of a program: in general and in Unité

What is a program in general (in contrast to a project, an action or a single measure)?	What are the characteristics of SDC-Unité program for institutions, countries or regions?
Long term	Long term
Institutional framework	Co-ordination Sending organisation and its board of directors SDC as partner in the dialogue Agreement SDC-UNITE Institutional framework of the South (Include the counterpart of the South)
Conceptual framework	Design of strategic foci (sectoral, geographic, institutional) (⇒ Selection of counterparts) Concept for the development worker missions within the north-south partnership framework. (Profile, role, function, N-S-N interchange, transfer) Accompaniment of development workers Added value? (contributions or benefits generated in Switzerland???)
Coherence (internal coherence between the different elements)	Share the following... Guidelines, principals, targets Focus Methods, procedures
Expected advantages of a program	Advantages expected of a program according to the documents of the institutions and Unité
Improvement in the quality of individual elements	Improve the quality of individual missions
Synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interchange of experiences • Training and study • Sectoral concepts (combine resources to share training of development workers and counterparts) • External advisors in common (available to various counterparts) • Sectoral skills (development workers, co-ordinating offices, sending organisations) • Better identification of the missions • Facilitate dialogue between the counterpart organisations • Facilitate the participation of counterpart organisations
Greater weight	Promotion of the sending organisation program (externally and internally)
Greater influence and impact	Greater influence of the missions Impact at the level of strategic foci

The sum is greater than the parts

Presentation of Walter Egli in the country program workshop 2.9.99 / adapted to the new structure of UNITE (Martin Schreiber/2004)

4. Decisions

Selection of the counterpart organisations and the search for new postings

What sort of organisation should we choose as the co-ordinator? What are the good, difficult or exceptional missions? Central America is not an easy place to answer these types of questions. Even though we had good relations with dozens of organisations that grew up during the revolution in Nicaragua, and which grew stronger during the phase of construction of a new civil society, we had to find new counterparts for the new type of partnership which was envisaged in the country program (fair trade, forest management etc).

We saw the role of the co-ordinating office as a “hinge” between the interests of the north and the needs of the south. We often received excellent curricula of interesting or interested people from Switzerland, but whom we couldn’t place, and on the other hand, we sent proposals to Switzerland for postings but never found the right person for the job. A great deal of energy and time was spent both here and there to find the right people and posts, and frequently – both in Managua and Switzerland, we had reason to feel somewhat frustrated. Over time I learnt to accept that this is part of the normal process when looking for appropriate partnerships, postings and development workers.

4.1. Selection of the counterpart organisations

Some sending organisations have been working for years with the same counterparts. A countless number of organisations have been created in the South in recent years, working in the development and strengthening of civil society and it is not always a simple matter for the co-ordinating office to find its way through this diverse landscape of organisations. The SDC-Unité agreement for the 2005-2008 period (1) contains, amongst other things, the following conditions for an appropriate counterpart organisation in the South:

Status and relation to the sending organisation

The organisation of the South should be locally based and be legally incorporated in the country. The relationship with the sending organisation could take the following forms:

- Direct partnership with the sending organisation
- In the case of weak organisational structure in the South, Personnel Development Co-operation with a larger entity than that of the small organisation should be considered.
- Co-operation with an entity which agrees with the sending organisation to take on a clearly defined mandate. The mandate should include important contributions to strengthen local systems and the training of local people.

Requirements for the organisations of the South

The organisation of the South should fulfil the following requirements, or otherwise be supported by the sending organisation in its organisational development to be able to meet these requirements:

- It should be rooted in the population and be respected by its peers; it should have a proven capability to develop its strategy, be able to apply it efficiently and effectively and have the appropriate professional capabilities, particularly in the area of Project Cycle Management
- Meet the requirements of « corporate governance», in other words the approval of the members, democratic and transparent decisions, clear structures and delimitation of

functions (operating strategy, executive, control), transparent accounts, and independent auditing;

- Follow a proven strategy and have institutional and financial autonomy, in case this does not yet exist (Transfer of strategic, operating and financial responsibilities);
- To be co-ordinating and co-operating with other local organisations (governmental and non-governmental) regardless of political or religious differences;
- Provide its own and appropriate financial support for the desired post (in principal this concerns assuming the local costs of the development worker)

Collaboration

The organisation of the South keeps up a permanent dialogue with the development workers that are working within it, with the co-ordinating office and with the sending organisation. It participates in agreements and in the evaluation of the development worker. It supports the development workers in their personal and professional integration. It gives time off to the development workers for them to participate in meetings and training sessions organised by the co-ordinating office, and in the awareness-raising tasks for Switzerland. It produces reports and documents required by the co-ordinating office and the sending organisation.

The goals of the sending organisation country programs may designate specific, potential counterparts. Nonetheless, a deeper evaluation is required to build a solid partnership. Organisational analysis methodology can be used to identify the basic structures and processes in an organisation that reveal its executive and co-operation capability.

The following check list maybe of use. Some data come from a much more detailed manual that was produced by development workers in Bolivia (3). Here we mention only the most important that can be enumerated (e.g. on a scale of 1 to 10) and later compared. In other words, if there are various organisations which are “competing” for the assistance of Unité, a score can be made to see which of them will better meet expectations.

4.2. Checklist for evaluating counterpart organisations

Themes

Institutional profile

- Vision and mission
Does the organisation exist and is its presence felt?
To what extent does this vision and mission agree with that of the sending organisation?
- Does a strategic plan exist?
- Is the strategic plan in operation? Who is responsible for it?
- Is there an organigram?
- Is the organisation registered in the public records?
- How many years has the organisation existed?
- Who are the beneficiaries?
- How frequently has the management been changed?
- How frequently have personnel been changed?
- Do rules exist for the workers’ functions in the organisation?
- How are meetings, planning, internal communication carried out?
- How are decision taken?
- How transparent is the organisation?

Finances

- Who finances the organisation?
- How is project finance accounted for and who is responsible for the accounts/finances?

Participation and workforce training

- How do you qualify the participation of the workforce ?
- How do you qualify the training of the workforce?

Projects

- Experience in project management
- Do the projects agree with the strategic plan?
- Opinion of the beneficiaries
- How are projects and activities planned and evaluated?

Infrastructure

- Office
- Field visits

Security

- Office
- Field visits

Knowledge of accompaniment of foreign development workers

- Level of experience
- Level of awareness of difficulties

Opinion of other international co-operation organisations

- Level of experience with this organisation
- Finances
- Knowledge and experience in the accompaniment of foreign development workers

A very useful tool for analysing an organisation is one known as SWOT. In French it is known as SEPO and in Spanish FODA. SWOT is used to analyse the general situation of an organisation or project. Many will already know of it. It is always important to consider the point of views from outside and from within. Here we present a summary in the use of this tool.

Internal analysis:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses

External analysis:

- Opportunities – possibilities, needs and opportunities to improve a post or mission
- Threats – unfavourable tendencies and processes surrounding the mission, for example, lack of financing in the future, economic difficulties, little security

To simplify the analysis the following questions can be made and answered

S	Strengths Satisfactions	What is going well? What are our strengths? What are we proud of? What gives us our energy? Where are we at this moment?
W	Weaknesses	What was difficult? What obstacles, traps difficulties do we face? What problems affect us? What are we lacking?
O	Opportunities	What are our opportunities in the future? What can we expand? What possibilities do we have of concrete improvements? What can we take advantage of in this situation? What are we capable of doing besides what we are already doing? What are we failing to cover?
T	Threats	Where are the future threats? What kind of specific difficulties can we expect? What are the possible risks and critical? What do we need to take into account in the current situation?

Other questions to focus the SWOT in another way:

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	How can we use our strengths to take advantage of our opportunities?	How can we reduce our weaknesses to take advantage of our opportunities?
Threats	How can we use our strengths to face the threats?	How can we reduce our weaknesses to face the threats?

5. Profile of a development worker

Drawing up a development worker profile according to local needs

To get to Wawashang on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua you have to travel for more than two hours by a fast boat from the regional city, Bluefields. We had received a request for a Swiss biologist to work in a tropical forest research station. To get a better idea I travelled with another Swiss development worker and a local person who worked in Bluefields. The scenery was breathtaking. As I lived in the capital Managua, the trip made a big impression upon me: biodiversity in full colour and in your face, a dream for any Swiss biologist I thought. The representatives of the counterpart organisation showed us the project and we had a chance to talk with the people that were working there. A representative of the Norwegian organisation that was financing the project was also there. However, during the trip and during a conversation in the evening my colleagues raised a number of points that I had overlooked: the place was very isolated; the tropical forest in this region is a region of drug smugglers and hunters of « protected » species; it is difficult for people to spend long periods alone in this zone, and to cap it all the transport by fast launch is very expensive. I had to review my notes and I was glad I had taken along my colleagues and to be able to count upon the network that had been built up for the co-ordinating office.

Having chosen the appropriate counterpart organisation, the process then begins to evaluate possible posts for future development workers. Many organisations want to have an advisor or expert financed by Switzerland immediately. It is very important therefore, and one needs to take the necessary time to explain this, to clarify what are the aims and conditions of the sending organisations that make up Unité. Often there are other development workers from Europe or the US that work in the same organisation and whose approach can be very different to the sending organisations in Switzerland. So it is always very important to be very clear about the aims and conditions of the Swiss sending organisations: even to the counterpart organisations with which we are already working. A useful tool for this purpose is the document produced by Unité «Between Utopia and reality: an investigation into counterpart relations in the exchange of personnel in international co-operation. (4)

The framework agreement 2005-2008 SDC-UNITE (1) also covers this type of mission:

5.1. Types of missions

Personnel Development Co-operation in its different forms of north-south, south-north, and south-south, require different types of missions and exchanges, and are carried out in different ways by Unité's member organisations.

- Swiss development worker – long term mission
- Short term mission
- Local personnel
- South-north mission
- South-north mission
- Workshops and studies
- Internships
- Return missions

Long term missions of Swiss development workers last from three to five years and are carried out in the area of «*capacity development*» (technical, social, organisational development). A major part of the mission involves training and advising, with the aim of strengthening corresponding human resources in the South. The flow of information to Switzerland is also an important part of the mission.

Short-term missions are limited to six months and are carried out by specialists to fulfil specific requirements in the organisation of the South in the fields of methodology, pedagogy, or in sectoral, organisational or human relations.

Support for **local personnel** is provided in the form of a salary supplement, or special training, and which helps to strengthen the operational and institutional autonomy of the organisation in the South in which Swiss development workers are working or have worked before.

South-north missions are aimed at developing skills in the South and the partnership between organisations in the South and North. People from organisations in the South are needed to contribute to the debate on international co-operation in Switzerland, to be trained or to help in awareness raising in Switzerland.

South-south missions are those aimed at strengthening sectoral, methodological and organisational skills, as well as solidarity networks and relations through interchanges of particular knowledge or experiences between organisations and movements in the South.

Workshops and studies on the issues of international co-operation are aimed at training people that work in the field of partnership in international co-operation.

Internships are for young professionals to obtain working experience within an organisation of the South, to help develop understanding of countries in the South and for them to obtain their first experience in the field of international co-operation.

Occasional **hiring of development workers on their return to Switzerland** are done to make use of their experiences in the South to contribute to public awareness-raising and political lobbying activities, and to help in fund-raising. These assignments are also used by the sending organisations to improve their training programmes and to accompany its activities in Personnel Development Co-operation and are an important source of conceptual and institutional strengthening.

It is therefore important for co-ordinators to always be thinking of these different possibilities and not to limit options to just sending a Swiss development worker. A local program person for example, can better explain the benefits of organic coffee production to a *campesino* than a Swiss development worker. If good partnership relations already exist with organisation in the South, a short-term mission of a former development worker or of a specialist may produce better results than a new person who has first to get accustomed to the country, the sector and be settled in.

To produce the required profile, the co-ordinator should take sufficient time to do so. It is not enough to visit the place, see the post, and talk to the director. The most important details are often discussed over dinner. The co-ordinator should spend at least a whole day and night in the place of the new post, to be able to get a feel of it and to communicate this vividly to the sending organisation and a future development worker. The following check list may help:

5.2. Table for a profile for a new post

Type of mission

- Institution building
- Empowerment
- Capacity building
- Advocacy
- Peace building
- Other

Goals of the mission

- What are the goals of the mission that the counterpart organisation wishes to achieve?
- Can the counterpart organisation formulate these goals clearly?
- What specific results does the counterpart organisation want to achieve?

Tasks

- Can the counterpart organisation clearly formulate the tasks of the future development worker?
- Will the future development worker work in a team, as an advisor to a team or to management?
- Is the counterpart organisation very clear about the additional tasks involved in taking on a Swiss development worker?

Contribution of the counterpart organisation to the mission

- What is the financial contribution of the counterpart organisation? What is the exact amount?
- Is the counterpart organisation very clear as to why it must make this contribution?

Office

- Is there adequate infrastructure to carry out the assigned tasks?
 - Desk
 - Computer (single or network)
 - Telephone, Internet, communication
 - Photocopier, paper
 - Field trips, expenses for these trips
 - Training material
 - Other (transport, travel allowance, etc)

Surroundings

- Security, also for partners and children
- Climate
- Schools and training in the area
- Places for rest, relaxation
- Social/religious mores
- Other

Building a partnership

- Is the counterpart really interested in a partnership with the Swiss sending organisation?
- Does the counterpart know about the goals and philosophy of the sending organisation?
- Has it received any documentation in this respect?

- Are the counterpart organisation and the direct counterpart of the development worker really interested in the following?
 - In interchanges with other counterpart organisations
 - In training (of its own personnel and the development worker)
 - To participate in the annual encounter of the co-ordination
- Free exchange of ideas between the counterpart organisation and the sending organisation regarding the job and the contribution of the development worker in his/her posting.

Various

- Discuss proceedings, official request, follow-up of the request, possible dates
- Explain dates and timeframes between receipt of the request, acceptance/rejection, search for an appropriate development worker, arrival of the development worker, time to settle the development worker in.
- Information for the counterpart organisation regarding the working conditions for the Swiss development workers, health insurance, vacations, periods for training and participation in exchanges.

The counterpart organisation has been chosen. The goals and tasks of the development worker have been defined. What is the most important information that the counterpart organisations must to send to the sending organisations in Switzerland, so that an appropriate person is selected for the post? This is one of the **key jobs of the co-ordinating office**. The co-ordinator does not only have to be clear about the tasks and goals of the post, but also know how to put these into a political and social context and be aware of the local organisation's thinking on human rights, social justice, the environment and peace. Moreover, all this has to be explained clearly to the sending organisation in Switzerland. So it is not just about filling in a form: the co-ordinator has to be a cultural translator. The following tips might be useful in filling out the request form:

5.3. Tips for filling out the request form:

- The goals and tasks of the mission should be previously drawn up by the counterpart organisation on its own.
- Having received this proposal, the co-ordinator should spend at least one day and night where the development worker will work, as part of a field trip in order to:
 - Better understand and visualise the proposed aims
 - Have time for deeper discussions with the counterpart organisation and with the people of the target group over the posting and the proposed goals
 - Get a better idea of the location: climate, security, culture
- It is a good idea to take another development worker along who knows the relevant sector (for example someone who is already working in the area of fair trade, if the new posting deals with this)
- Take photographs and send them to Switzerland
- Fill out the request form and discuss it with your colleague in the co-ordinating office
- To avoid any misunderstandings and to ensure transparency, it is important to first send the duly filled out and corrected request form back to the counterpart organisation, before sending it to Switzerland

6. Selection

Search for the appropriate development worker

As I have already mentioned, the procedure for setting up a new mission never happens in a lineal manner. One has to fulfil the expectations of the south, and at the same time keep an eye on the task of awareness raising in the north. Even so, there are sending organisations that insist on the co-ordinating office finding a suitable post for a person whose CV and experience are valuable and appropriate for the sending organisation. The selection process is very complex and the co-ordinating office must sometimes assume the role of intermediary and at other times must put itself in the place of either one or both of the parts. It usually takes a year from the time of filling out the request to the arrival of the new development worker. During this period, good communication is needed between the co-ordinating office, the sending office and the counterpart organisation. The co-ordinating office should establish direct contact with the new development worker as soon as possible, to avoid any misunderstandings or problems.

The following chart explains the process of the search for an appropriate development worker:

6.1. Flow chart for the search for an appropriate development worker

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request of the counterpart organisation	Counterpart organisation/co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review and discussion of the counterpart organisation request and sending of the request to Switzerland	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review by the sending organisation and gathering of more complete data by the co-ordinating office and other NGOs in Switzerland that know the country and/or the counterpart organisation	Sending organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Selection of the development worker	Sending organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sending of the CV of the development worker to the counterpart organisation	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirmation of the profile and mission of the development worker	Counterpart organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct contact between the development worker and co-ordinating office	Development worker/ Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparation of the development worker for the mission in the south	Sending organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparation of the counterpart organisation to receive the development worker	Co-ordinating office / Counterpart organisation

<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct contact between the development worker and the counterpart organisation	Development worker/ Counterpart organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirmation of the arrival date of the development worker	Sending organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparation for the arrival and introduction of the development worker	Co-ordinating office

7. Preparation

Preparation of the development worker and the counterpart organisation

In the symposium held in Berne in 2004 to mark the 40th anniversary of Interteam, the Nicaraguan psychologist Martha Cabrera was one of several speakers. She had been working with the co-ordinating office in Managua for the previous two years in accompanying Swiss development workers. Martha Cabrera explained to the symposium that to achieve an impact in a mission in the south, it is not enough for the development workers to simply have good intentions. It is difficult to change something one doesn't know she said. It is therefore very important that the development workers first understand their own history and then the collective history of the people where they will carry out their mission. She said that the development workers should not just prepare themselves in general and administrative issues, but should read books about where they are going, and not just tourist guides, although these can be useful. It is in books on history, politics and literature most of all, where one will really start to understand a country before visiting it.

7.1. Preparation of the development worker

The sending organisations are responsible for providing an adequate preparation of the development workers. Together with their families, the development workers will thus have a chance of being prepared for their mission in the south. To live and work in a country with different cultural, social and economic values is a constant learning process. To get to know the « Other », always goes hand in hand with getting to know one's self. The preparation phase can be a start, or better still a continuation of, this learning process about one's self. This phase has the aim of developing intercultural and communication skills, and at the same time to reflect upon one's own culture and one's future role as a foreign development worker.

Why should we know our own history and that of others?

- The more we know about our own culture and ourselves, the better we will be able to understand a different culture.
- A person who has worked on his or her own background, can support others more effectively, instead of becoming a problem for them.
- The following ideas of the gynaecologist Christiane Northrup (6) might help to start or continue a process of personal growth in order to know one's self better.

Personal growth

- Imagine the future
- Participate actively in your own life
- Know your own history from your medical, social and family points of view
- Respect your emotions and give yourself permission to feel them
- Learn to listen to your own body
- Question your relation with your own body. Where do you feel the strength of your body?
- Question your deepest convictions, your ideology, your religion and recognise your own skills and talents
- Improve your nutrition, not only of your body but on your mind and spirit
- Healing is a permanent process, and requires lifestyle changes and abandoning bad habits

The co-ordinating office can do a lot to ensure that the new development workers have a clearer idea about their work and their new place to live. The Internet and e-mail simplify this task greatly these days. In order to not keep having to write long explanations, it is a good idea to draw up a manual for the new development workers (for example see “Information for development workers arriving in Central America (10) and Uruguay (11)”. This information can be sent to the development workers in Switzerland, before signing their contracts, in order to give them a clearer idea for their preparation. The following points may be helpful in drawing up this type of manual:

7.2. Key points for an information manual

- Documents that will be needed in the mission country
- Information: reading list, tourist guides, Internet links
- Health: hygiene, water, local health system
- Education system, schools, vacations, public holidays
- Electricity (voltage, coverage)
- Computers
- Internet, e-mail, telephone
- Banks, credit cards
- Arrival, baggage
- Proceedings and sequence of events in first months, school, introduction
- Explain the accompaniment programmed by the co-ordinating office: introduction, monitoring, training, interchanges, encounters
- Who is responsible for what? Sending organisation, co-ordinating office, development worker
- Emergencies
- General information about life in the mission country

A few weeks before the arrival in country of new development workers it is important to clarify the following points:

7.3. Pre-arrival check list

<input type="checkbox"/>	The place of work is clear	1 month before arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing possibilities reviewed	1 month before arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contract signed	Before boarding the plane	Sending organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Authenticate documents for staying in the mission country (if this is required)	1 month before arrival	Sending organisation / development worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plane ticket and dates and exact time of arrival	1 month before arrival	Sending organisation / development worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Travel documents are ready	1 month before arrival	Development worker

7.4. Preparation of the counterpart organisation

The time taken between filling out the request form and the arrival of new development workers, is nearly always one year. A lot of unforeseen things can happen in the mission country in this time, in which politics and political and economic actors can change suddenly. Because of this, it is very important to visit the counterpart organisation one month before the arrival of the new development worker and review the following points:

- What has changed in the counterpart organisation or the place of the mission since the request was sent?
- Review the request
- Review of the commitments made by the counterpart organisation:
 - Place of work
 - Preparation for the arrival of the development worker
 - Introductory program
 - Economic support from the counterpart organisation
- Review of the commitments made by the co-ordinating office
 - Information regarding support the co-ordinating office will provide to the development worker and the counterpart organisation
 - Insurance for the development worker which is covered by the sending organisation
 - Swiss labour law and rules regarding vacations
 - Introduction of the development worker by the co-ordinating office
 - Procedures for the monitoring process/ accompaniment of the development worker
 - Training possibilities for the counterpart organisation/development worker
- What does the counterpart organisation expect from the development worker?
 - Tasks
 - Obligations
 - Working hours, workplace rules
- Review of the goals and philosophy of the counterpart organisation/documentation
- Review of the goals and philosophy of the sending organisation/ documentation
- Put dates to the mentioned agreements

8. Arrival

Preparation in the co-ordinating office for the arrival of development workers from Switzerland

It seemed that the dog was the least affected by the journey. The trip from leaving home in Switzerland to arriving at the hotel in Managua takes almost 24 hours. To make this journey to a new stage in one's life, full of hope and uncertainties, accompanied by restless children, with enough baggage for next three years, together with valuables and important documents, can cause a great deal of stress, even in very well-adjusted people. The Iberia flight arrived in Managua after midnight. To avoid travelling across the city with newly arrived people, at such a late hour we decided to put them up in a hotel next to the airport. Early in 2004, I picked up a group of eight: two couples, three children and a dog. With their arrival, the small co-ordinating office, and myself, had reached our organisational, logistical and personal limits. Just two days before, I had arrived back from a personally difficult visit to Switzerland. To deal with so many people, we had to hire a vehicle with a responsible driver, find two houses to rent, two schools and also sort out the permits for the dog. Everything turned out fine in the end, but as I said, the dog was least affected by it all. He leapt out of his travelling box, sniffed the different air, lifted his leg and then lay down quietly in his new place.

The arrival of new development workers is one of the busiest times for the co-ordinating office. Good planning begins well before their arrival. The following list can be of use:

8.1. Check list for the arrival and introduction of new development workers

	Activity	Date	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	Send information about the country well before arrival (see previous chapter)	2–3 months before arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Send the following data to the new development workers Co-ordinating office and cell phone Home address of the co-ordinators Hotel for night of arrival List of all development workers in the mission country Swiss consulate or embassy	1 month before arrival and once again one week before arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	New development workers must give the co-ordinating office the names and details of two people whom to contact in case of emergency	1 week before arrival	Co-ordinating office / Development worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have the hotel reservation confirmed	2 weeks before arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Be sure the new development workers have received all this information before leaving from Switzerland, if necessary call by telephone.	1 week before arrival	

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have the flight number and arrival time ready	1 week / 1 day before arrival	Co-ordinating office Development worker Sending organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have reservations made for the first weeks (to acclimatise, recover and begin fresh)	1 month before arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have reservations made for language courses and a temporary residence for this period (when the development workers do not speak Spanish they are found a family to live with)	1 month before arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Once arrived, the following documents should be given to the new development workers : Address of the temporary residence/language school Emergency contact numbers Important events during the first weeks and months Copy of the request form Country and city maps	On arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Having arrived, the development workers must give the following documents to the co-ordinating office: Photocopy of their passport Vaccination record/Blood type Two contact numbers in Switzerland Will and testament (required by some sending organisations)	On arrival	Development worker/ Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	First visit to the co-ordinating office: welcome, go over the meetings and appointments made for the coming week, interchange of documents mentioned above.	1 day after arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparation of all the documentation for the stay in the country	1 week after arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare documents for the import of baggage that was sent separately	1 week after arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit to the Swiss embassy/representation	1 week after arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Language school	1–3 month (according to level)	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	First visit to the counterpart organisation to have a first impression	1-2 weeks after arrival	Co-ordinating office / Counterpart organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organise the documents required for the stay in the country with the relevant authorities	During the first month	Co-ordinating office

<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm date and nature of the formal presentation to the counterpart organisation	Before arrival, confirmation after arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm date of start of work	Before arrival, confirmation after arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare the introduction to the counterpart organisation	After arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sign contracts	On the start of work	Co-ordinating office / Counterpart organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visits to other development workers in the same field	2–3 months after arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduction to the country by the co-ordinating office	2–3 months after arrival	Co-ordinating office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Produce a report on the introduction	After language school and the introduction	Development worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Produce a workplan for the first six months	After having started work	Co-ordinating office / Counterpart organisation / development worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree a date for the first monitoring visit	After having started work	Co-ordinating office / Counterpart organisation / development worker

9. Starting Out

Organisation of the first week: basis for a successful mission

The soul is supposedly free to travel everywhere, but at times one can have the impression it moves more slowly than the aeroplane. A Swiss person who travels straight from the airport to their job, and starts work the following day, will have countless new impressions to absorb. Everything is different: the language, the culture, the workplace, the food, the climate, working hours. Contradictory feelings of euphoria, fear, adventure, insecurity and happiness are all mixed together. Nonetheless, the strongest feelings are still those of the farewells in Switzerland. For this reason, we try and organise the first days for the new development workers and their families in such a way so that they have the space to really arrive in the country. In other words, give time for the soul to leave its home in Switzerland and open up to the smells, sights and sounds of the new surroundings.

A mission to an unknown country goes through several stages, a little like the development of a human being. It is important to recognise these stages, because in this way the co-ordinator can be more alert and spot problems more rapidly. I list here the development stages that a person goes through during their mission. I don't claim it is complete, but rather it tries to identify some of the problems and to facilitate their solution. This list is a result of my own experiences. The organisational chart Cinfo (culture shock) is another useful tool to understand this issue.

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/english/Handbuch%20culture%20shock%202006.doc>

Human development	Mission
<p>0 to 3 years: small child stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learn the language ➤ Learn to walk ➤ Building of social relationships with one's parents and other family members ➤ Dependency upon one's parents and other adult persons 	<p>0 to 3 months: Start</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learn a new language ➤ Settle in to a new place ➤ Build a new network of social ➤ Dependency upon the co-ordinating office and other development workers <i>in situ</i> ➤ Comments which are often heard from development workers during this stage « I don't know how to.. », « Can you help me? », « Thank you ».
<p>3 to 6 years: Move towards independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Independent discoveries ➤ Stubborn phase ➤ Learn to recognise more complex structures at both social and physical levels 	<p>3 to 4 months: Move towards independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wants to learn new things without depending upon the co-ordinating office and other development workers in the country ➤ Frequently ignores the advice and opinions of the co-ordinating office and other development workers ➤ Puts oneself in danger consciously or unconsciously ➤ «I know», «I can do it», «I don't need anything» are typical comments.

<p>8 to 16 years: Puberty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Confusion, frequently depression ➤ Search for one's own ➤ The person gets irritated and can easily feel hurt ➤ Social relations change a lot 	<p>6 to 8 months: Doubts about the purpose of the mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Confusion, disorientation, consternation ➤ It is very easy to hurt the person ➤ «What am I doing here?», «Why did I decide to do this type of work?» «Should I go on, or go back to Switzerland?» are frequent questions.
<p>18 to 45 years: Adult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The person has created his/her own identity ➤ Goals in life are visualised more clearly ➤ Social relations are based on equality 	<p>15 months to three years: Adult - Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has clear why is on this mission and knows what to expect. ➤ Works with clear goals in the counterpart organisation ➤ Has new and solid social relations and is supported by a social network. ➤ Should be developed by the co-ordinating office through training and interchanges.
<p>Around 45 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Midlife crisis 	<p>After some 3 years: Identity problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ «Do I want to continue this mission or not?», «Do I want to make a new application?» ➤ «Am I still Swiss? » ➤ «What is my future, and how and where do I want to live it? »

Every person is different and as such needs, and has the right to, individual accompaniment from the co-ordinating office. The following structure may help to organise the first six months and thereby facilitate the introduction to a mission.

1. Arrival	1 week
2. Language and cultural introduction	1–3 months according to level and previous experience
3. First visit to the counterpart organisation	1–2 weeks after arrival
4. Formal presentation to the counterpart organisation	After learning the language
5. Introduction program in the counterpart organisation	The first days of work
6. Interchanges with other development workers in the country	2–3 months after starting work
7. Introduction program by the co-ordinating office	2–3 months after starting work.

9.1. Arrival

After arrival and the first visit to the co-ordinating office, the development worker can be taken on their first visit to their new place of work. If necessary, it is worthwhile allowing at least a week so that the person can settle in well. Co-ordinate this with the language school and counterpart organisation.

Goals for the first week:

- Assimilate new sights, sounds and smells
- Adjust the body to the new surroundings, allow jetlag to clear
- Learn about new types of food
- Adjust to the new climate
- Acclimatise to the new situation, and start to appreciate and recognise possible dangers
- Get accustomed to the new pace of life
- Explore and get to know cyber-café, libraries, banks and other important places in the first months
- Feel the certainty of having really arrived

Language and cultural introduction

Language schools exist in many countries where there is international co-operation, which not only offer language courses, but are also specialised in providing cultural introductions. The co-ordinating office can improve this cultural introduction by discussing specific points of interest for the new development workers with the school.

Goals:

- Learn the language and begin to understand the other culture
- Settle in to the new place of work
- Visits to governmental and non-governmental offices, media organisations, grass-roots, women's and church organisations
- Living with a local family, can help accelerate this first learning stage for the development worker

9.2. First visit to the counterpart organisation

Following this first stage, and before beginning the language school, development workers should make a brief visit to their counterpart organisation.

Goals:

- Get to know the work surroundings and the workplace atmosphere
- Form a personal idea of the workplace and of how life will be in the place of the mission
- Know the faces of the members of the counterpart organisation
- First contacts to find living accommodation
- Take advantage of the visit for the co-ordinator to remind the counterpart organisation that it must draw up and structure an introductory program for the new development worker.

10. First Kontakt

Presentation and production of an introductory programme to the counterpart organisation

It is a well-known saying that the first impression is the most important. For this reason we think it important that the development workers should be given a formal presentation at the counterpart organisation. The majority of the people that work in this organisation should know why, what for, and for how long a Swiss development worker is coming to work with them. They should also be informed about the purpose and utility of the awareness-raising work the development worker will do in the future. The majority of the members or personnel of the counterpart organisation should be present during this presentation, as well as representatives of the target group. The following schema for a presentation could be used. Using this, all should be left clear as to the purpose of the mission and the development worker's position within the organisation. Starting dates, as well as follow-on and finishing dates should also be made clear. The presentation should ideally be done on the first day of work.

10.1. Presentation in the counterpart organisation

With all the members or employees of the organisation. Duration 1 to 2 hours

- Make sure the following people are present:
 - Director
 - Direct counterpart of the development worker
 - The majority of the workforce; it is also worthwhile to include cleaning and security staff.
 - Representatives of the target group
- The director of the counterpart organisation opens the meeting.
- The co-ordinator presents him/herself, explains the reasons for the presentation and briefly describes the goals and philosophy of the sending organisation. Write your name, the sending organisation and the name of the development worker on a sheet of paper and hang it up on a board.
- Each one of the personnel of the counterpart organisation presents themselves and writes their name (if they are able to write) on a piece of paper.
- The director can organise these pieces of paper as an organigram and the development worker can therefore visualise the counterpart organisation's structure.
- The development worker also writes his/her name on another piece of paper, and then asks where should it be placed. In this way the development worker can see where he/she is located within the organisation.
- The development worker presents him/herself fully and explains the reasons for coming on this mission.
- Each participant makes a note of his or her expectations of this mission, as does the development worker.
- The co-ordinator arranges the papers according to the different areas of work: institutional strengthening, empowerment, advocacy, peace strengthening, etc. S/he explains and discusses these issues with the participants.
- The development worker explains and discusses his/her expectations.
- The director explains why the counterpart organisation wants to have a development worker working with them.
- The director explains what is expected from the development worker as a new addition to the organisation's personnel: working hours, place of work, security, workplace rules.

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- The co-ordinator explains the support given by the sending organisation
 - Accompaniment and monitoring of the goals of the development worker
 - Possibilities of training for members of the counterpart organisation and the development worker
 - Possibilities of innovative missions: south-south, south-north
 - Information and awareness-raising in Switzerland
 - Cost of living allowance
 - Life and health insurance
 - What to do in an emergency
 - Confirmation of the direct counterpart to the development worker
 - Selection of a person who has the role of “godmother” or “godfather” to the development worker during his/her time with the institution. Such a person should be of the same sex as that of the development worker, so that intimate problems can be discussed more easily.
 - Review of the introduction program drawn up by the counterpart organisation.

With the director and the direct counterpart

- Detailed workplan for the development worker for the first three to six months
 - Introductory program
 - Review and possible adaptation of the goals in the original application
 - Review of the dates for the introduction by the co-ordinating office, training and interchanges with other development workers
- Administrative matters, financial contribution by the counterpart organisation, documents
- Review of the living accommodation for the development workers
- Signing of the contract
- Lunch or dinner together

10.2. Production of an introductory program by the counterpart organisation

The counterpart organisation should produce this introductory program together with the co-ordinating office. The way of starting a job in the south is very different to that in the north. The counterpart organisations are awaiting the arrival of a development worker, which for some counterparts means that the development worker is an expert. It can often be assumed that the development worker knows exactly what to do. The co-ordinating office must play a facilitating role here to explain that the Swiss people will understand their goals and work better if the first days and weeks are properly organised. An example of such a program is given below:

	Activity	Date	Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show the place of work - Present direct workplace colleagues - Visit the organisation - Working hours, workplace rules 	First day of work	Director
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide and explain information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Philosophy of the organisation - History of the organisation - Goals and activities of the counterpart organisation, preferably with supporting documentation 	First day of work	Director
<input type="checkbox"/>	The development worker receives a list with the following data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name of the director, of the direct counterpart and of the « godmother » (see previous section) - List of important telephone numbers and addresses: doctors, hospitals, police - Addresses and telephone numbers of other organisations relevant to the work 	First day of work	Director
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explain the work processes and procedures and meet the relevant people	Second day of work	Direct counterpart

<input type="checkbox"/>	Do a tour of the locality of the workplace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where to buy food, clothing; banks, cyber-cafés - Security - School - Free time 	Second day of work	“Godmother“ (See previous section)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the documentation of the counterpart organisation	Third workday	Direct counterpart
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit target groups	Fourth workday	Direct counterpart
<input type="checkbox"/>	Detailed work description	Fifth workday	Direct counterpart
<input type="checkbox"/>	The development worker talks individually with key members of the counterpart organisation, to get a better idea of the work involved.	Fifth workday	Direct counterpart
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend a weekend together in the locality of the workplace.	First weekend	“Godmother “/ Development worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit together other important organisations in the locality that are relevant to the job (NGOs, grass roots organisations)	Second week	“Godmother “/ Development worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce the development worker to important figures in the community: mayor, head of police, church representatives, political figures, people relevant to the job, technicians, academics, etc.	Second week	“Godmother “/ Development worker

11. Introduction

Personalised program for new development workers by the co-ordinating office

“I don’t need to call to confirm the meetings, I’ve got them all arranged!”. The Swiss woman was annoyed. Part of the introductory programme that the co-ordinating office in Managua organises involves learning about working practices in Central American organisations and institutions. This implied, amongst other things, that the appointments that had been made weeks earlier by the co-ordinating office needed to be confirmed by the development worker the day before. In Nicaragua it is the only way to be sure that the person will in effect be waiting for you in their office. Otherwise, one will be met by a secretary who will calmly tell you “No, he’s not here. He had to go to an important meeting out of the office”. The co-ordinating office makes the appointments, but the development worker has to confirm them the day before. The woman mentioned above had come from working in a large company in Switzerland, and it seemed absurd to her to be wasting her time. That is until she realised that by not confirming the meeting previously, nobody was waiting for her and she had travelled across a hot, steamy Managua in vain.

A country programme can only become a reality if each development worker identifies with and is convinced that s/he forms part of it. The co-ordinating office should organise an introductory programme for the development workers so that they can get to know the programme’s aims and at the same time get a better understanding of their workplace surroundings. Meetings with, and visits to local experts, foreign development workers, journalists, as well as academics, can give the new person a much clearer idea about their job and its possibilities. This programme should only be started after the new development worker is able to speak the language and has been working for a while. In this way s/he will have many more questions to ask the experts during these meetings, and will get more out of them.

11.1. Co-ordinating office introduction

Aim: At the end of the programme the development workers should:

- Have a clear idea regarding the development and possibilities of their field of action and sector
- Have made contact with the people and organisations relevant to their work
- Have developed a sense of identity with the programme and its goals
- Know the local history better

The programme can be organised in the following way:

Meetings and chats with:

- Experts in the field of work (e.g. fair trade, social sector)
- Representatives of government organisations (e.g. Agriculture Ministry and their local representatives)
- (Even though the goals of these institutions may be different to those of the counterpart organisation, it is important to know about them, compare them and discuss them)
- Local organisations in the same field of work
- Other experts and foreign development workers that work in the same field or sector
- The other Swiss development workers that work in the same field or sector, to build up an identification with the programme

Documentation:

- Draw up a list of organisations specialised in the particular field of work
- Technical and professional documents in the co-ordinating office library
- Visit local libraries
- Photocopies of documents obtained by other development workers
- Relevant websites

Get to know about the political, economic and cultural realities of the country

- Meetings and discussions with:
 - Political figures
 - Academics in the philosophical and social spheres
 - Economists
 - Environmental experts
 - Legal and human rights specialists

Length

This type of programme can take from one to two weeks, according to requirements. The co-ordinator plans the programme, together with the development worker and the counterpart organisation, and makes the appointments. The co-ordinator sends the programme to the development worker, along with the precise addresses of the meetings, information on hotels (for those that come in from the regions) and any other necessary information. With this in hand, the development worker can then follow the programme her/ himself, because the co-ordinating office rarely has the time to accompany every person. Nonetheless, there may be a particularly interesting meeting that the co-ordinator may wish to accompany the development worker, and maybe invite other development workers as well.

Conclusions

At the end of this introductory programme, it is a good idea for the co-ordinator to talk it over with the development workers and to listen to their views and experiences. The development workers should write a brief report about the introductory programme, which should include the names and addresses of the people they met with, as these will be useful for future reference during their missions. The sending organisations should make sure that they have assigned part of their budgets to cover the costs of these activities (transport, accommodation, food etc)

12. Accompaniment

Planning of follow-up visits, conflict resolution, mediation with the counterpart organisation in the south

According to the 2005-2008 framework agreement between SDC and Unité (1), one of the principal tasks of the co-ordinating office is that of the monitoring of the development workers and their missions. The co-ordinator should therefore plan to visit them every six months, whether at the counterpart organisation, at their homes, or in the field. Monitoring is not just about a straightforward evaluation of the development workers. It is more a matter of accompanying them in a regular review of their tasks and goals, to identify looming problems and to deal with them promptly. The co-ordinator can help them to better meet their targets, by providing training courses, sharing experiences from other missions, or by recommending another person from the country program that can offer help. The co-ordinator needs to be able spot conflicts arising between the Swiss and local people, and to provide assistance in resolving them. The co-ordinator should be properly trained in this.

Most of the sending organisations use their own monitoring tools or methodology, or those of Unité. The following may be useful however:

12.1. Tips for the monitoring visit

- The monitoring visits should be made at least once every six months
- It is advisable to have a long talk with the development worker and another independent one with a representative of the counterpart organisation.
- Be sure to give adequate time to these visits, preferably at the counterpart organisation, in the development worker's home or during their fieldwork.
- The monitoring sheets should be filled out jointly by the counterpart organisation and the development worker and sent to the co-ordinating office before the visit, so that the visit can be prepared properly and have time to be able to come up with possible solutions in the case of conflicts.
- The monitoring sheets should be reviewed together in a meeting with the co-ordinator.
- The co-ordinator should explain clearly the use of these procedures to the development worker and the counterpart organisation.
- Conflicts should be seen as part of the mission and not as a problem.
- Conflicts should be resolved constructively (see following section)

12.2. Constructive solutions to conflicts

Conflicts are part of every mission. Their discussion and resolution are an intrinsic part of the social interaction between different cultures. Conflicts are necessary for people to be able to recognise their own limitations, and to find ways of continuing. The problem is not that conflicts exist, but in the manner in which they are dealt with and resolved. The following thoughts can maybe offer some assistance in finding a constructive solution to a conflict situation:

There are basically four **causal factors of conflicts**:

- Conflicts over control of resources.
- Conflicts over differences in cultural values or beliefs
- Conflicts over preferences
- Conflicts over differences in goals and objectives in

Traditional methods for conflict resolution that need to be **avoided** nowadays are

- Ignore them, treat them lightly, cover them up
- Forceful strategies, intimidation and threat
- Use of penalties
- Make use of threats and violence
- Appeal to ethical values or dogmas
- Separation of the conflicting parties

Elements for **constructive** solutions:

- Fundamentally change the point of view to resolve the conflict
- Abstain from threats or violence
- One's own perception should not be viewed as the only valid one
- If necessary, seek a third party to help resolve it (**This is and should be the role of the co-ordinator**).
- Joint discussions instead of ready-made solutions
- Design solutions that satisfy all the participants and the interests of those that suffer the consequences.

Some successful methods for conflict resolution are the following:

- Conflicts can be dealt with better when the moment is right
- Conflicts can be better resolved leaving out negative emotions and aspects
- Use integrated and unified strategies to resolve conflicts
- The more people are ready to change their perspective and make use of reason, instead of being led by emotions, greater will be the empathy they achieve in their social relations

(Taken from Günther Gugel/Uli Jäger: Gewalt muss nicht sein (Violence is not necessary))(7)

13. Encouragement

Education and training for the development workers, local counterparts and the co-ordinating office personnel

Each person is different, and in my opinion has the right to a tailor-made accompaniment from the co-ordinating office. I frequently had insufficient time to fulfil this goal, but during field visits or in the evenings I would always make the effort to get to know the deeper wishes, and most of all the potential, of each development worker. With appropriate training or a workshop, it is possible to open up previously unimaginable possibilities for the development workers. I paraphrase the French aviator and writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900-1944) here, who expresses it better than I can: “If you want to build a boat don’t browbeat your workmen to get the timber, prepare their tools, or to divide out the work and assign tasks, better show them how to long for the infinite vastness of the sea”.

Training and interchanges are an essential part of the mission. Each sending organisation has a budget – although a limited one – for the training of development workers. The co-ordinating office should consider training as an integral part of the country programme. The knowledge acquired by the development workers and local personnel can and should be shared and multiplied through the use of workshops. The following points may be helpful in promoting the sharing of experiences and training:

13.1. Advice for the training of development workers and representatives of counterpart organisations

- Assign time to find out about the « potential » and « dreams » of the development workers
- Add new skills and knowledge to existing ones
- Include the counterpart organisation on the training programme
- Organise courses to be given by the development workers themselves
- Invite them to participate in courses of other foreign NGOs.
- Send development workers to find about other counterpart organisations (see below)
- Find out about possible courses on the Internet
- Check out education and training courses at local universities. These probably don’t have the same academic level as a Swiss university, but is nonetheless an excellent way to get to know local experts, and local perspectives and projects in the field of interest.
- Take the country programme into account, so as to be promoting coherence between this and the development of the local and regional network
- The simplest, best and cheapest method is the interchange (workshop)

13.2. Mission of the Swiss development workers and local experts in other local counterpart organisations

After one or two years of work, the Swiss development workers get to understand the needs and problems of the mission country. They frequently acquire specialised skills or knowledge that could be useful in other counterpart organisations. For example, a Swiss marketing expert who works in a local women's organisation, could train the director of a co-operative where a development worker working in agricultural biology already works, and organise specialised workshops in marketing. In return, the agronomist with experience in organic production could train the women's organisation in the setting up of family vegetable gardens. Our experience has shown that good results can be achieved with these interchanges. However, it is important that they do meet a real need in the counterpart organisations. Also, they should not be offered for free, as there is a tendency to place greater value on something that has to be paid for. If the organisation does not have a great deal of resources, it could perhaps pay for the travel, accommodation and food expenses involved. Also, a modest payment or allowance might be made to the development worker that provides the training, on account of the learning experience involved for the development worker. To reduce the administrative work of the co-ordinating office in this aspect, the development worker should seek to organise and carry out such interchanges themselves, once approved by the co-ordinating office.

14. Interchange

Promotion of synergies within the country programme framework

The Nicaraguan zoologist was enthused. Following a training course financed by the Unité programme, he went on to present workshops on the organic raising of chickens, pigs and cattle, to a group of women in the region where he worked. "I thought I already understood what gender focus in projects was all about" - he said after finishing the course – "but it's only now that I realise that us men are a long way still from understanding the extent of the enormous changes that women are bringing about in Nicaragua". Such moments are very gratifying for us working in the co-ordinating office. With just minimal resources, it was possible to link two counterpart organisations, develop common interests, and promote local experts.

The interchange of experiences is certainly the surest and most economical way to train development workers and representatives of counterpart organisations. Once or twice a year, it is worthwhile for the co-ordinating office to consider the knowledge and skill gaps within the country programme, and to identify whom amongst the development workers or local personnel could cover these. It is very useful for the development workers to exchange their knowledge, their frustrations and their successes with other colleagues in their field or sector, whether these are other Swiss people, foreign experts, or local personnel. These exchanges between experts are very gratifying, and promote the skills and information network, at the same time as helping to providing concrete solutions for the target groups.

14.1. Tips for interchanges within the country

- Think of who might make most use of an interchange:
 - Swiss development workers,
 - Representatives of local counterpart organisations,
 - Representatives of target groups.
- It is worthwhile to organise an interchange for all three groups at the same time, by visiting a successful project for example.
- It is worth spending time on informal interchanges.
- Before embarking on the training programme, be sure to work out all clearly all the costs and expenses involved.
- Establish beforehand who will organise and pay for the accommodation and food
- Produce a short written report on the interchange of experiences
- Network the information, documentation, addresses of organisations – in other words make it widely available.
- Experts from the same culture, tend to understand each other better

14.2. South-south interchange

The 2005-2008 framework agreement between SDC and Unité (1), defines south-south interchange as follows:

- Occasional interchanges of knowledge and experience between organisations of the south that have similar backgrounds, to strengthen methodological, sectoral and organisational skills, and to develop a network. The conditions for such an interchange are:
 - The organisations that participate in an interchange should be working in similar or complementary fields, and be able to take advantage of these similar backgrounds.
 - At least one of the organisations should be a counterpart organisation of one of the sending organisations in Switzerland.
 - The organisations that participate in the interchange should meet a substantial part of the overall cost.

The co-ordinating office should try and promote these south-south interchanges, as the results are usually very positive and substantial. People from the South understand each other better and can offer advice and concrete solutions. A local expert is better understood than a Swiss development worker, although both may say the same. Full instructions on this issue can be found in Annex 2 of the 2005-2008 framework agreement between SDC and Unité (1).

14.3. South-north mission

The 2005-2008 framework agreement between SDC and Unité (1) defines the north-south interchange as follows:

Definition

This concerns the mission in the north of a person from the south, to strengthen their skills in international co-operation, methodologies and intercultural issues. Such missions can be used to provide training for and preparing future development workers, and for helping in public and political awareness raising in Switzerland. The person and organisation that participate in such a mission must be a counterpart organisation of one of the sending organisations in Switzerland.

Conditions for participation

The person who does this kind of mission must have the necessary skills to be able to carry out the tasks in Switzerland, and must have a broad knowledge and understanding of the north-south situation.

Length

These types of mission, and their subsequent follow-up, can not be longer than three months.

Full instructions can be found in Annex 2 of the 2005-2008 framework agreement between SDC and Unité (1).

Co-ordinating offices are encouraged to promote these kinds of missions and interchanges in the north. Besides the goals mentioned earlier, it is often difficult for a representative of a counterpart organisation to get a clear idea over how societies in the north work, or of their values and beliefs. Once a representative of a counterpart organisation has visited Switzerland, it is easier for him or her to then understand and accompany development workers from Switzerland. Without this understanding of the society in the north, it is often difficult to understand the thinking and behaviour of the development workers. The role of the co-ordinator is to promote this type of interchange with the north, and to organise the trip and stay of the local person.

South-north interchange: Information and accompaniment of a local person in their trip to Switzerland

- Work out the goals and activities of the interchange with the counterpart organisation
- Preparation to deal with cultural differences, the co-ordinator plays the role of a cultural translator.
- Preparation in dealing with the media in the north.
- Administrative support: passport, air ticket, tickets and explanations about transport to and with Switzerland, accreditation letter for the Swiss authorities,
- Discussion on return: Evaluate and promote the interchange of experiences with work colleagues and people of the same sector.
- Produce a final report together with the local person

15. Encounter

Annual encounter of development workers and counterpart organisations

You can never please everybody. At each encounter there is always someone who is thoroughly impressed by it, and at the same time someone else who didn't like it at all. This is how it was at our encounter in Ometepe in 2004. Each morning and evening, we did an exercise with all the participants to inspire ourselves with the natural beauty of this island in the Lake of Nicaragua. Opinions on this type of activity ranged from "This is psychological terror" to "It has been the best experience of my mission". However, on this occasion most were happy. What was the key to success? Instead of arid discussions on programmes and content, we invited a local expert to run a workshop on the topical theme of the sustainable management of NGOs in the south. We didn't reach any concrete conclusions, but we nonetheless came away with new viewpoints, ideas and means of proceeding. What the participants most liked was that we had finally given sufficient time for informal exchanges.

Once a year an encounter is held with all the Swiss development workers and their direct local counterparts to discuss, learn, and draw up proposals together related to a specific theme. These encounters aim to strengthen the network involving all the actors in the country programme and to promote dialogue between the development workers and the local counterparts. These workshops place a heavy organisational and administrative workload on the co-ordinating office, and they also require a considerable amount of conceptual effort. The following checklist can help to define goals and to prepare and organise these encounters. Willing development workers and local counterparts should be included in the organisational tasks.

15.1. Annual encounter content

- The theme should be one that is really relevant to the people that will participate (local counterparts and development workers)
- A small survey can be carried out to find out what the participants are most interested in.
- Find out which people can help the co-ordinating office in:
 - Moderating, visual aids.
 - Organisational tasks: driving vehicles, preparing the locale
 - Digital photographs, website, minute taking and report
 - Cultural part
 - Emergencies (nurse, doctor, psychologist)
- Remember to make time for informal discussions and meetings that everyone wants
- Compare and contrast Swiss and local culture

15.2. Organising for the event

- Choose the date and inform the participants six months beforehand
- Send a list of participants to everyone one month beforehand. This should include:
 - Names, addresses, e-mail, and telephone numbers of the participants,
 - Details of the counterpart organisations where the development workers and local personnel work,
 - Activities of the counterpart organisations,
 - Activities of the Swiss development workers,

- Target groups,
- Themes of personal interest that would like to be discusses in an informal manner during the event

(To see an example from Nicaragua see «List of participants» on the web page http://unite-ch.org/COCAM_2004/Documentos/Participantes-Encuentro-2004-Final-2.pdf)

- Details of the locale where the encounter will be held:
 - Travel distance for all the participants,
 - Budget for: presenters, accommodation, food, documents, emergencies, air tickets, etc.
 - Reserve the locale well in advance,
 - Check what equipment will be required and whether the locale has these available (projector, blackboard)
- Work out beforehand who will take responsibility for what, with dates, and include support from the development workers
- Free time – free space
- Climate, emergencies

15.3. Checklist for the encounter

- The locale has been reserved and all the participants know how to get there.
- Travel and transport has been organised for the participants
- The budget is clear and complete
- The list of participants has been sent out.
- The goal of the encounter has been clearly defined.
- The programme has been well-structured and sent out
- Documents about the content have been sent out.
- Cash is on hand to cover the travel costs of the participants.
- The list of participants, the programme and other documents have been printed out to give to the participants
- The nametags and their fastenings with the participant names have been prepared
- Office material: paper, staplers, adhesive tape, markers, thumbtacks, scissors, material for the moderator, and a notebook and pen for each participant
- Technical equipment is ready and working correctly (projector, slides, microphones, recorder etc)
- A chart showing the programme for each day, written in large letters is placed in a visible place for all
- Camera (ideally digital) to publish information on the encounter on the website of Unité and the sending organisation
- Report on the encounter: Who will do it and how?
- Emergencies:
 - Emergency documents: addresses, telephone numbers, id documents (see chapter 2)
 - First aid box,
 - Candles, torches, toilet paper, bottled water, gasoline,
 - Determine beforehand who will take charge of what in case of an emergency

15.4. After the encounter

- Circulate a sheet of paper during the event to gather feedback, preferably before it finishes. Otherwise have participants send it by e-mail to the co-ordinating office as soon as possible. Evaluate and send the conclusions to the participants and sending organisations.
- Note the proposals, constructive criticisms, suggestions etc, to take into account in planning the next encounter
- Draw up an expenses list and compare with the budget
- Send the photos, discussion summaries and documents to Unité and the sending organisations for inclusion on their websites (For example: http://unite-ch.org/COCAM_2004/sostenibilidad.htm)
- Decide the date for the next encounter

16. Myself

Personal development of the co-ordinator

My job as co-ordinator was an 80% post, in other words I was only supposed to work four days per week. Nonetheless, as happens with most people who work part-time in the NGO world, I ended up working more than 100%. It would seem my sense of responsibility is stronger than my sense of freedom. Despite this, it was always very important for me that I, Elsbeth Horbaty, also existed without Interteam, without Unité, without development workers, and to know that as an individual I could do things that had nothing to do with work. So I always tried to find a way of doing something for myself on Mondays – which I had free – although this meant at times that I would be working late on other nights or making field trips at weekends. Mondays became sacred for me, and after four years I could appreciate that I had used this time well: I learnt yoga, I completed three years of a psychology course by distance learning, and I supported organisations that were working in Nicaragua to help people overcome the traumas of the war. All these became very important in my own development.

Co-ordinators are always pressed for time. The work involved is varied, requires a lot of empathy as well as a capacity for strategic thinking. There is a great deal of travel involved and the administrative load is always more than desirable. All of these activities require a deal of effort from the co-ordinator. In my opinion therefore, it is vital that one should make time for activities that have nothing to do with work. I believe every person needs their personal space, and it is difficult to develop this in development workers and work colleagues if one has not made the effort oneself.

Of course, one needs to be on-hand in the case of emergencies, that is part of the job. However, this responsibility can be shared with the other person in the co-ordinating office, or even with responsible development workers.

Every co-ordinator will surely have their own way of doing things, and will have to work out for themselves which development workers they wish to mix socially with, and with what frequency. One has to decide whether you have a professional or a social life with the development workers. Do I invite them every Saturday to eat at home, or do I prefer to have my own private social life? It is important that the co-ordinator discuss this with his/her family at the beginning of the job, to determine which work style suits all the family members and how they wish to spend their spare time.

Besides on-the-job training, the following themes may be of interest to promote one's personal development:

Training and learning

Every co-ordinator has to travel a lot, and as such it is difficult to embark on a formal study programme which doesn't conflict with working hours. Nowadays however, there are many possibilities to study via the Internet. There are also occasional short courses conducted by other local or foreign NGOs, as well as local universities.

➤ **Contacts**

The co-ordinating office keeps in contact with other foreign NGOs, embassy and foreign aid personnel, counterpart organisations, target groups and others in the world of the arts and politics. One should also make other contacts at a personal level however. Informal contacts and meetings can often be more interesting and can give a broader view of the country, than when one only exchanges ideas and views with the people one meets every day and who mostly work in foreign aid.

➤ **Hobbies – time for myself, my partner, my family**

In general cultural activities and opportunities in the south can be somewhat restricted and may be limited to Hollywood movies and discotheques. Because of this, the co-ordinator may spend more time at home or with his/her family than they would in Switzerland. Take advantage of this time. Discover a new hobby and dedicate this free time to oneself and the family. It could be a precious time that one is never able to enjoy in Switzerland.

17. Emergencies

Crisis situations: Be prepared, listen, and delegate

What do I do? How do I deal with this situation? The telephone call took me by surprise one afternoon. The wife of one of our development workers called me to tell me that her husband had spent several days without eating or sleeping; he was behaving in a confused manner. It was too late to catch a plane or take a bus, and the trip by boat would take eight hours. I called a colleague at the German Development Service (DED). He had worked more than thirty years as a co-ordinator, and could surely give me some idea how to deal with this emergency. "Get there immediately, bring him to the capital and get a flight for him to Switzerland as soon as possible. I'm not joking. We have had several cases like this and we got there too late". His answer startled me somewhat, as I suddenly realised the enormous responsibility I had as a co-ordinator. At moments like these, a cool head is vital to take the right decisions. In this case however, I knew I was not alone. I could count on the support of the people in the sending organisation in Switzerland. Together we organised his trip back home, where they were awaiting him.

Emergencies in a mission country are not out of the ordinary; they are part of the job. In most of these countries, natural disasters, political disturbances and sudden chaos can occur. Emergency services may not exist or be very slow. The co-ordinating office team must therefore take charge in an emergency situation. Likewise, development workers can fall seriously ill, have accidents or emotional crises. As such it is vitally important that the co-ordinating office is well prepared to respond quickly and efficiently to emergency situations. Here is some advice:

17.1. Preparation for an emergency

As mentioned in Chapter 2 on organising the co-ordinating office, it is essential to be prepared for emergencies and to take them into account during planning meetings. It is advisable to review the following checklist every three to six months. Updating information is something that can be frequently overlooked.

Checklist to be ready for an emergency

- Emergency addresses and numbers are **up-to-date**
- The instructions of the Swiss consulate or Embassy in the country for dealing with emergencies have been read and are to hand.
- The cell phone and radio communication equipment are working well and have charged batteries.
- The first aid box is fully equipped, medicines are not past expiry dates, and doctors' telephone numbers are current.
- Vehicles are kept well maintained, and there is gasoline/diesel on hand for emergencies. It's a good idea to keep the fuel tank full.
- Telephones and other means of communication are in working order.
- Identity documents of all the development workers and personnel of the co-ordinating office are up-to-date as well as visas and residency permits.

Checklist on how to react to an emergency

Every emergency is different. but there are certain basic rules which can be followed. The following points can help establish priorities. Having determined the nature of the emergency, it is essential to assign responsibilities. One person should stay in the office to be a common contact point. Meanwhile, another person – maybe a development worker who lives near to the situation, can go to look for injured or missing persons and start to organise transport.

- Keep calm, set priorities.**
- Turn on the radio, listen to the news
- Assign responsibilities.
- Have contact numbers to hand.
- Communication equipment, vehicle, fuel, and identity documents are ready.
- Make contact with the army, police, Swiss consulate or Embassy, other foreign NGOs.
- Make contact with all the development workers in the country.
- Send reports and regular situation updates to Switzerland

17.2. Personal emergencies

One of the key tasks of the co-ordinating office is to be the contact point for any development worker in an emergency situation. The co-ordinator's support and presence is expected in the case of an accident, serious illness or severe emotional problems. Every co-ordinator will have their own way of dealing with people facing an emergency. The following tips though may be of some help.

Accidents and illness

- Prevent illness (see next chapter).
- Find out if the sick person needs to go to a doctor, a hospital, or should be sent abroad for treatment.
- Find out if the presence of the co-ordinator is needed and welcome.
- Have to hand telephone numbers and addresses of doctors and hospitals in the capital and in the places where development workers are working
- Have to hand contact numbers of other foreign development workers, counterpart organisations, churches and public entities.

Psychiatric emergencies

Development workers are exposed to many physically and psychological stressful situations during their mission. Living in a different culture, eating different food, and being in an unfamiliar climate can cause disturbances not only in the body, but also in the mind. A small, additional event – such as a work or family problem – can provoke a more serious crisis. Here are some tips for the co-ordinator to deal with such a situation.

- Find out the precise circumstances, information and facts
- Listen well and correctly (see below)
- Establish the procedure to follow together
- Organise the support of experts/trusted people
- Organise professional support and transfer to psychologists or psychiatrists

17.3. Know how to listen accurately

1. What happened exactly?

- Make a real connection with the person who needs help
- Don't question all the details; listen for at least three minutes without interrupting. It is the feelings, not the facts and information that is important.

2. Emotions

- Then ask: What do you feel about this situation?
- This question helps to let the emotions emerge freely. Don't interrupt, just listen.

3. Let me hear the hardest part

- What is and was the most serious and most difficult part of this situation?
- If someone does not want to be overwhelmed by their feelings, they must go to the centre of the pain, where the pain is deepest. Only being very down, is it possible to lift oneself up again.
- This question can be the starting point for clearing the confusion that a person is going through in their mind. Thoughts can begin to be ordered around the pain instead of shooting off in all directions.

4. Resistance

- Ask the person: What is it that can help you to deal with this right now?
- With this question, the person's attention turns to his or her own resources in their surroundings, which can help them, come through their crisis and recover their strength.
- One should not underestimate the ability of the human being to confront the most difficult situations. Usually, people need help to keep themselves up, but not to have the problems solved for them.

5. Empathy

- At the end of the conversation, tell the person who is having the crisis, what you have felt. Pain is reduced when it is shared.
- Sometimes, the simple fact of saying that this must be very difficult, or that you feel a lot for the person and what they are going through, is already enough help.

6. Confidence

Following this communication, the person is not "cured", but feels stronger and less alone. Communicating in this way can help more than any medicine. Our emotional brain develops during this type of communication, and one gains confidence in one's own ability to make contact with other people and to express what one needs. This confidence gives protection against fear and depression.

(Taken from the book „Die neue Medizin der Emotionen“, (The new medicine of the emotions) (8)

18. Personal problems

Practical advice for health and personal relations

Stress

As I have described in the chapter on the arrival of the development worker, a mission demands a lot from a human being: balanced character, good health, emotional balance and a lot of patience, to name a few. Most of the sending organisations provide interviews, preparatory courses and training to candidates to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and to prepare them for their future work in the south. When the development workers eventually arrive in their mission country, they are full of expectations, they try to apply what they have learnt and nearly always end up highly stressed. As the “culture shock” diagram illustrates in Annex A of this manual, euphoria predominates at first; this dissipates quickly however, and people hit their lowest point after six months. The following scale can help co-ordinators and development workers be aware of stress factors they will face during their first months.

The stress scale according to Holmes and Rahe

Event	Points
Death of husband/wife	100
Divorce	73
Separation from companion	65
Imprisonment	63
Death of close family member	63
Sickness, accident, injury	53
Marriage	50
Loss of job	47
Retirement	45
Sickness of a close family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sexual problems	39
A new family member	39
Work problems	39
Financial problems	38
Death of a close friend	37
Change in working conditions	36
Marital problems	35
Debts over US\$ 200,000	31
Children leaving home	29
New responsibilities	29
Problems with in-laws	29
Exceptional personal demands and work	28
Partner stops working	26
Begin or end studies	26
Different living conditions	25
Change of personal habits	24

Differences with the boss	23
New working hours	20
Move house, change school	20
New pastimes	19
Change of social activities	18
Debts under US\$200,000	17
Different sleep pattern	16
Different food	15
Vacations	13
Spend Christmas alone	12
Minor infringements	11

This stress scale was drawn up by the US psychologists Holmes and Rahe in 1967, and gives a good idea of the stress factors that a person faces on arriving in the mission country:

Change in working conditions	36
New responsibilities	29
Different living conditions	25
Change of personal habits	24
Move house	20
New rhythm in pastimes	19
Change of social activities	18
Different sleep pattern	16
Different food	15
Total	202

As can be seen, just these changes result in 202 points. According to the psychologists who drew up this system, a person who scores 150 points is already in the orange zone, and heading for the red danger zone. Above 200 points, one can probably not handle the problems alone. This means that even as they start out on their missions, development workers are under extreme stress. As a result, it just needs a few more drops for the glass to overflow. A small event that adds to the score – such as marital or work problems — can provoke a more serious crisis.

18.1. Health

The above-mentioned factors can also affect one's health. Changes in diet are frequently underestimated. At the start of their mission, development workers often live with a family to learn about the new culture, and so are not able to prepare their own food. The co-ordinator should advise development workers to think about their health and nutrition. In Central America for example, a lot more sugar is consumed than in Switzerland, and the oil that is typically used is more difficult to digest. Moreover, antibiotics tend to be over-prescribed, even for quite minor ailments. These changes in nutrition and medication can bring about significant changes in one's metabolism. People can gain or lose weight quite rapidly, and this can even have effects on one's mental health.

Preventative care can do much to keep healthy. Most of the serious illnesses in mission countries – such as salmonella, cholera, hepatitis or typhoid - occur due to the drinking of contaminated water, or by eating fruits and vegetables that have been washed in contaminated water. The co-ordinator should emphasise time and time again that water must be boiled, filtered, and disinfected, to disinfect the vegetables that are eaten raw, only eat fruits whose skin can be peeled, vaccinate against regional diseases and follow hygiene recommendations.

It is a good idea to get a copy of the book «Where there is no doctor» by David Werner (9), which enables one to recognise the symptoms of the majority of the illnesses that are likely to occur in the mission countries. Using this book, the development worker, his/her family and the co-ordinator have the ability to make a preliminary diagnosis and to follow an appropriate course of action.

Health advice

The following is basic advice for the development workers, and should be part of a manual that the co-ordinating office produces for future development workers in the country:

- IF THERE IS VERY HIGH FEVER FOR MORE THAN A DAY, SEE A DOCTOR
- Filter, boil or disinfect water. Disinfect raw vegetables and peel fruit. Take the appropriate vaccinations. Follow basic rules on hygiene.
- Due to the fact that carriers of infectious diseases often have a higher resistance in the south, doctors tend to prescribe much stronger anti-biotics than in Switzerland. Although this can bring about a rapid cure, it can weaken one's body and own natural resistance. Yoghurt can be eaten to restore stomach and intestinal flora. Vitamin supplements can also help to rebuild resistance and restore the body's health.
- One's diet should be as varied as possible: Fruits and vegetables are often cheaper than in Switzerland. Garlic is an excellent home remedy against a number of illnesses, and is to some extent an insect and mosquito repellent. Olive oil (although invariably expensive) can substitute for the heavy local oils that are more difficult to digest and that can induce indigestion and fatigue.
- For light cases of diarrhoea drink a lot of clean water, and drink lemon juice with salt. For more serious cases, eat a spoonful of papaya seeds
- In severe cases (diarrhoea many times per day, pains, fever, vomiting): seek medical help and drink a home-made serum consisting of clean water, lemon juice, salt and a little honey.

Personal hygiene – the means for preventing illness

In many countries in the south, people pay much more attention to personal hygiene than people do in Switzerland. As illnesses and diseases are more common, people living in tropical climates in the south wash their hands more frequently, bathe or shower at least once a day, and change all their clothes daily. Foreigners who do not follow the same hygiene standards are often referred to as « smelly gringos » - in Latin America at least – and this can certainly be a disadvantage for someone just starting a new job.

Public health services in these countries are no comparison to those in Switzerland. As the development workers have Swiss health insurance (or the sending organisations pay for their medical bills), development workers should use recommended private doctors, as well as reliable laboratories and pharmacies. There are also likely to be reliable herbalist doctors who are able to treat minor illnesses with alternative medicines.

In the case of a serious illness, consideration should be given to sending the person to Switzerland. Most are insured for such eventualities. This option should be first discussed calmly with the development worker and the sending organisation, before the co-ordinator takes any initiative.

18.2. Development worker couple relationships

Each person will act differently faced with a new situation. Some can adapt quickly to a new way of life. Others need more time, more space or have less patience with themselves and others. It is important that the co-ordinator is able to recognise how this different rate of adaptation can affect development worker couples in their relationships. Every child also has its own pace of adapting to so much change in such a short period of time. The following tips may be use:

18.3. Advise for supporting couples

- It is a good idea for couples to visit a psychologist or « coach » before leaving Switzerland, to see how they are likely to react to stressful situations and to know how to recognise and deal with them when they start working in their future jobs in the south.
- When problems occur, it is best to talk to each partner separately and support them to find their own solutions.
- Encourage socialisation with other development worker couples in the country.
- Seek professional help if necessary
- The well-being of children should take priority

18.4. Relations between development workers

Contact with other development workers is very important during a mission, especially when personal problems occur. The development worker can feel better understood, can learn from others' experiences and find possible solutions. The co-ordinator should encourage and support these interchanges, and take advantage of the field trip to make it also a work interchange.

Nonetheless, the co-ordinator should advise development workers that they should not just mix amongst themselves. Clique behaviour can lead to a stigmatisation of the foreign culture and to judge it as something negative.

18.5. Relations with the other culture

Most development workers receive preparation for this in Switzerland. When they arrive in the country however, they can sometimes feel confused and alone. The co-ordinator should be trained to deal with these types of problems and to understand what it is going on in a development worker's head. During monitoring visits, and conflict-resolution discussions, the co-ordinator should always try to explain local people's focus and their way of thinking and behaving, even though these ways of thinking and behaving can sometimes be difficult to understand for the development workers. Here are some points that can be useful in dealing with intercultural relations:

- A smile and humour are worth gold and are free.
- Many organisations in the south improvise. Planning and evaluation tools may be absent or under development. This can lead to frenetic activity, which can be difficult to understand for someone who has just arrived.
- Work rhythms are different to Switzerland. People often work long hours with no fixed schedule, and often less efficiently. « One works to live, not lives to work » could perhaps sum up this approach.
- Some people in the south have the same prejudices towards Europeans as Europeans may have towards people from the south. Missions and country programmes should include measures to reduce such prejudices from both sides.
- In nearly all mission countries, the development worker is seen as a person with a lot of money. The co-ordinator should advise them not to lend money, as this can often ruin a friendship. They should also be told to be cautious about making gifts or donations, because this can lead to the development worker being seen simply as a source of money.
- The word "different" can often be more appropriate than the words "better" or "worse" when comparing cultures.

18.6. Ideas for resolving personal and professional problems

Given that the co-ordinating office is frequently pressed for time, it can be very difficult on occasions to deal with the individual problems of each cooperant. Eric Keller, the current co-ordinator in Nicaragua, has had very good results with the following method.

Group problem-solving: Inter-vision

This is where a group of development worker discuss a problem in order to try and find a solution between all of them.

Requirements: One person should be designated to lead the proceedings

Proceedings in 10 steps:

- **In a few words**, each participant presents to the group a case from their personal life
What is the problem and what is it that continues to worry me up to now?
- Each person (excluding one's own case) indicates which case he or she finds most interesting, and why, and the group chooses that case which proves most interesting for all.
- The selected person presents his or her case **without being interrupted**.
- The listeners may ask questions to understand the case better, or to be sure that they have understood it **well (only questions that serve to improve understanding may be made)**.
- Reaction to the case: The listeners tell the person who presented the case what they felt and perceived during the presentation (regarding the form and content of the presentation) **without any interruptions**. The presenter of the case responds afterwards whether he or she feels understood or not.
- The listeners define the problem **from their point of view** (problem definition from different perspectives).
- The presenter chooses a version from his or her point of view (definition).
- The listeners come to agreement with this version and propose possible solutions (different options).
- The presenter chooses one of the possible solutions and tries to define the following steps to carry it out.
- The group makes a final and **open** round of discussion regarding the solution that has been decided upon.

19. “Sex ‘n Drugs ‘n Rock n’ Roll”

Facing the taboos of daily issues in the South

“Elsbeth, why do women here want me so much?” An exasperated young Swiss man was sitting in front of me in the office. “I don’t know how to deal with my feelings. There are girls that come up to me, as beautiful as any I have seen anywhere, they look me straight in the eye and tell me that I am the most handsome man in the world. You know, at such moments the blood rushes out of my head and heads somewhere else”. I was a bit surprised by this forthrightness at first, but inside happy to have learnt something more about men. What could I answer? I tried to deal with this common issue in a frank and open manner, although in Central America it is frequently taboo to do so. I tried to find a way of explaining that this type of intercultural relationship can be mixed up with countless motivations: love, sexuality, money, possible travel abroad, a change of status. I don’t know if I succeeded in explaining this well. Several months later he had fallen in love with a young and dynamic young businesswoman and seemed very happy.

19.1. Life style and sexuality

Almost half of the development worker that leave Switzerland do so as single people, a quarter as couples and the other quarter as families. In each of these life styles, people are more exposed to themselves in the mission country than in their own (and not only those who travel singly). It also almost always happens that people are more open to novelty than in their own country. They see the novelty as a possibility and a challenge to develop their own strengths.

Nevertheless, many development worker can experience difficulties in the host country in the matter of relationships and sexuality. Not only there, but also in Switzerland, these can be taboo issues and they can be difficult to deal with openly. Sex is part of the private life of each individual. It is therefore essential that each co-ordinator deals with these issues with as much open mindedness as possible, although we know this is not always easy.

In Switzerland each person lives out their sexuality according to their own criteria. In the mission country sexuality can acquire another dimension. For example, it requires much tact, prudence and cultural sensitivity to know if it is appropriate for a couple to show physical affection in public. In other countries, the development worker may have the impression that sexuality can be demonstrated much more openly and freely. However, it should be taken into account that in this country a relationship with a person is not necessarily just with that person. Most people form part of a family or a clan that in many cases can have their own interests that are greater than normally encountered in Switzerland.

For new arrivals, the culture and the cultural scene are still unknowns. We might be living in a neighbourhood or part of a town that has many social controls, it may also happen that the "radius" of action is restricted for security reasons, or that the limits between working and social life are not so clearly defined as is customary in Switzerland. New arrivals cannot be expected to know these social rules beforehand.

Swiss development worker are not the only foreigners in these countries. Hundreds of Europeans or Americans live there each with different interests and behaviours. This is most notable in the tourist areas: prostitution, drugs, night clubs and casinos are all part of society in the countries of the South. Sex tourism has also increased greatly alongside globalisation.

The following tips can be useful:

- Be clear what issues are taboo.
- Inform development workers about AIDS/condoms, and which neighbourhoods should be avoided.
- In many countries in the South, there are young women and men who look for contact with foreigners. In this way they may hope to find a partner who doesn't beat them, who doesn't drink excessively and who shows them more respect than their local partners, and - if they are lucky - may be able to travel to Europe one day. At times it can be very difficult for the development workers to distinguish between love and when other type of interests are at stake.
- It is advisable to encourage contact with mixed couples, both in Switzerland and in the mission country.
- For some people, the mission in a country in the South may also imply saying goodbye to, or distancing oneself, from an existing partner in Switzerland. In such cases, these persons should think carefully about how they will deal with a lack of intimacy, affection and sex.
- Although it is not so common, it can happen that - consciously or sub-consciously - the development worker is hoping to find a new partner in the mission country. The coordinator can try and forestall possible let-downs or complications in this regard by talking frankly with the development worker in a manner that they themselves can have their wishes and expectations clear.

Sexuality and HIV/aids

<http://www.aids.ch/e/index.php>

<http://www.aidsnet.ch/index.php?newlang=english>

Bi-national Couples

<http://www.binational.ch/en/fragen/vorbemerkung.html>

http://www.frabina.ch/index_e.php

Sextourismus

<http://www.sociology.mmu.ac.uk/globalization/sextourism.php>

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~drclas/publications/revista/Tourism/hannum.html>

Although not frequent, there are European development workers that harbour the hope that – frequently not very consciously – they will find a new partner during their mission. The co-ordinator can help to prevent or to mitigate possible disillusionment if these issues are discussed openly.

19.2. Drugs

This is another theme that is not easily discussed. A mistake can have serious consequences. In Switzerland soft drug use may be much more tolerated than in other countries. The following is advisable:

- Explain clearly the effects, the dangers and the penalties involved in drug use to development workers, and that it may land them in prison.
- Be careful during trips: keep an eye on baggage, never carry bags or packets for other people without first checking what is inside.

20. Country Monitoring

Country monitoring by the co-ordinating office

20.1. Annual reports to the sending organisations

Over a period of more than ten years, Unité has created a monitoring system that includes mission evaluations as well as country reports by the co-ordinating offices. The system includes forms in which details of the mission are filled out according to established norms, and which are then evaluated.

It is a good idea for the co-ordinating offices to also fill out a sheet with a SWOT analysis (see Chapter 4) which could be as follows:

Most significant data

- Number of development workers, in which sectors
- Number of innovative missions (south-south, south-north)
- Number of training programmes
- Possibly some personal data: marriages, births, separations.

20.2. SWOT analysis for the annual report

S Strengths

- What has been the co-ordinating office's main success?
- What have we achieved?

W Weaknesses

- Where did we have problems?
- What were we not able to achieve?

O Opportunities

- What possibilities are there for the coming year?
- Where does the potential of the co-ordinating office lie?
- What are the emerging trends?

T Threats

- What problems will the co-ordinating office have to face next year?
- What kind of negative changes are likely?
- How are the finances doing?

Besides this brief and clear analysis, the co-ordinator is expected to describe the situation in the country.

20.3. Monitoring of the situation by the co-ordinating office

In 2003, I began an evaluation report on Cuba in the following way: "If in 1983, in the middle of the Nicaraguan revolution, I had written that in ten years' time the Nicaraguan people would freely elect a right-wing president, I would have been branded disloyal or crazy. So I limit myself to describe the facts about Cuba, without reaching any conclusions". I included economic and political data, and tried to describe what I had been able to see in the few days I was there: new cars everywhere, a free exchange market for the US dollar, many foreign church representatives, sects dancing on the Havana esplanade. Cuba, just like Nicaragua, is a theme, which tends to divide public and personal opinion. So I always tried to make my reports as objective as possible, although this might make them somewhat cold or impersonal.

One of the co-ordinating office's jobs is to describe the situation of the country in such a way that the sending organisations in Switzerland are able to get a real sense of what is going on. The frequency and timing of these reports depends upon the requirements of the sending organisation, events happening in the country and the rate of change of these events. Long, deep analyses are not to be recommended, because people in Switzerland don't have the time to read so much and details can be found on the Internet in any case.

SDC uses a system known as MPED (Monitoring of the political and development environment). Following the events in Rwanda and the Balkans another was added: MERV (Monitoring of relevant development changes). To carry these out, SDC has developed a methodology that can be adapted for use by the Unité co-ordinating offices. A form is included in [http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/english/Country%20monitoring.doc](http://www.unite.ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/english/Country%20monitoring.doc) that has been adapted for Central America. The personal opinion of the co-ordinator is appreciated and important for the sending organisation. So it is worth adding a brief summary of one's view to this evaluation report.

21. Information

Support for the development workers in their information work for Switzerland. Awareness-raising in Switzerland

21.1. Support for the development workers in their information work for Switzerland

The majority of the sending organisations want their development workers to send reports and accounts about the experiences that they have had during their missions. These reports are sent to family and friends, but are also used to help in finding financial support for their work. The development workers spend a lot of time in writing these open letters, and so the co-ordinator and sending organisations should read them and provide feedback to their authors. The development workers' reports also provide input and information for the analyses done by the sending organisations in Switzerland.

Not every development worker can be a great journalist, and these personal accounts can only occasionally be used directly as an article for a newspaper. Nonetheless, the development workers have specific knowledge that can be of interest to a technical publication. For example, a report on the creation of a forest management system for *campesinos* in Latin America or Africa could be of interest for a forestry magazine or journal. For this specialised public, it can be valuable to know if the expertise that the Swiss person brings has been applicable in his or her mission, and what lessons have been learnt.

On the other hand, the development workers should be encouraged to write down the personal problems they have had to deal with. In writing them down, one can distance oneself from them and see them from another perspective. This type of information is of course not for publication, but – with the person's permission – they can be sent to the sending organisation so that they can get a better idea of what the real situation that the development workers have to deal with, and in this way take appropriate actions in preparing development workers that follow.

21.2. Awareness-raising in Switzerland

My Nicaraguan colleague Mila Incer and I were travelling by train in Switzerland. We were heading for a co-ordinators' meeting in Berne where we were to map out new strategies and goals in our work. We were in a restaurant car, and in front us sat a man who was totally absorbed with his new laptop. Two stations later and we had established that he worked as a consultant in the creation of paperless offices. For us, having just arrived from Nicaragua, the idea sounded pretty exotic. "What are you going to do in Berne?" he asked us. I told him about our work in Nicaragua, about international co-operation and the development workers that worked there. He looked at us in surprise. "Are there still people who work as development workers," he asked incredulously. It struck me for the first time just how important the issue of awareness raising is in Switzerland.

Unité/E-Changer has drawn up a guide for this job of awareness-raising in Switzerland: "Basic guide on information work for development workers, counterparts and regional groups (Sending ONG)", which is written in Spanish and can be obtained at <http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/info-guia.doc> There is also a good summary of this guide in French (http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/fran%E7ais/SENSIB_CH_SEP_251103.rtf). So I will only add a few personal observations.

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- There are certain journalists who like to write about international co-operation issues and are interested in doing interviews. There is a better chance that a published article can result if it touches the following issues:
 - If there is a connection to Switzerland: “Our colleague, our neighbour is on a mission to...”
 - If there is an issue of relevance or interest for people in Switzerland: indigenous people, rituals, fair trade, gastronomy.
 - If the article can be published in a specialised magazine.
 - It is difficult to get an article published in the Swiss media by a development worker that doesn't have journalistic experience. So the following can be done:
 - Before development workers leave Switzerland, they should make contact with freelance journalists. For example, a woman who is going to work in Africa on the issue of AIDS, could make contact with journalists that work with “Aids-Infothek“ and have a better chance that they will take an interest in her work in the mission country.
 - The co-ordinator should stay in touch with the correspondents of Swiss newspapers. The reorganisation of many Swiss publications has left few Swiss correspondents in Latin America. Today they can only be found in Buenos Aires and Mexico City, and they only travel now and then to places like Bolivia or Nicaragua. For this reason they may be very glad to get a different view from these countries from local sources. The co-ordinating office should be a permanent contact point for the Swiss correspondents.
 - The sending organisations should send details on the co-ordinating offices to the principal media organisations in Switzerland. When disturbances or natural disasters occur, these media want information from the spot. The co-ordinating office can be a contact point before their own journalists arrive.
 - Through contact with local and foreign journalists in the country, the co-ordinator can sometimes pick up news or information that is different to that circulating amongst the foreign NGOs or the international co-operation offices. This type of information can help give the co-ordinator a broader viewpoint on the country, and they can be a good contact for Swiss journalists.

22. Leaving

Preparing development workers and the counterpart organisation for the end of the mission.

All too soon the time arrives: the mission ends. Reactions are diverse: satisfaction, sadness, relief and even fear of the coming change. Sometimes a development worker has difficulties to leave a project which at that moment, after three years, is at its best moment; or maybe he or she is worried about what they will do in Switzerland.

The co-ordinator should visit the development worker six months before the mission ends, to carry out an evaluation and discuss the following topics:

22.1. Advice for the end of the mission

- Find out in principal if the mission is ending definitively or if there is a wish to extend.
- Note down the targets that can be achieved by the end of the mission, and those that cannot.
- Draw up a plan for the final six months.
- Discuss the final evaluation.
- Decide upon the final day of work and inform the sending organisation.
- The development worker should be encouraged to make a summary of his/her experiences and what has been learnt — a manual, teaching material, a detailed analysis— so that the counterpart organisation has something tangible from the development workers' work and which can be used after he or she has departed.
- Check to see if the transfer plan for the development worker will be as originally planned or if there are changes.
- Check on whether a recommendation should be made for a local person to apply to continue in the development worker's job.
- Provide counselling to the development worker on the coming change to Switzerland (see next chapter)

23. Return

Preparing development workers and the co-ordinator for the return to Switzerland

I am going through this myself. Having lived decades abroad, I returned to Switzerland at the end of 2004, coinciding with the start of winter. Everything was dark; nobody seemed to have time to spare. At times everything is real and clear, and then suddenly there is a contortion, a tangent and everything is different, confused, a grey zone. It's logical; Christmas time on Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich has very little to do with the work of campesinos in the north of Nicaragua. I thought I knew how to handle these contrasts for having experienced them over many years, but the definitive return and readaptation to this world provoked feelings very different to those when I was just visiting Switzerland. It is not the same to go and live in another country, and to return to one's own country. Some colleagues seemed almost envious of the work I had been doing in the south, but there wasn't a real interest in the country. Other development workers have been through the same on their return: from one day to the next one feels exhausted, or gains weight, or starts losing hair. For me, this manual has helped me to summarise this chapter of my life as a co-ordinator in Nicaragua. It seems to me that the important thing is to find some continuity, a connecting thread through my life. On moving back to Switzerland, the friendships in the Unité environment have become more important. Nature has become very significant. In this global world, not only are the computer programmes the same wherever you go, the sun and the stars are the same, flowers and trees are made of the same materials although their aromas are different and they take different shapes. My body is also the same, although the food is different. Walking, yoga and breathing exercises I can do here just as well as in the tropics. All of these steps signify that a little more ground has been gained each day.

Preparation for the return of the development workers and the co-ordinators should be dealt with in the same way as their departure. Frequently, not enough attention is given to this step because it is assumed that one is returning to one's own country and that this doesn't therefore require any further thought or reflection. A quote from Mario Benedetti, the Uruguayan writer is appropriate here: « Nobody returns from exile: he who comes back is always someone else ». And in fact it is not about returning, it is about making a new start in Switzerland. The time one has been abroad inevitably determines how difficult it is to readapt. After two years, family and friends will not have changed much, but after five or eight years changes there are indeed. Just as with departure, the soul stays behind for many months in the mission country. There is also a reoccurrence of the stress factors mentioned in chapter 17.

23.1. Advice for returning to Switzerland

- Preparing for the return should begin six months beforehand
- Six months before, check the following points:
 - Money to start out with
 - Accommodation to start with
 - Work; here the regional search network (RAV) can help. It has an office in every city and a website.
 - Social network.
- Prepare the final evaluation with the counterpart organisation and the co-ordinating office.
- The mission and the project should have a special ending. This could be the official transfer of the job to a local person, or the handing over of a manual.
- It is important to say goodbye to the project, to colleagues and to the target group with a party, a cocktail or a ritual.
- Go on a trip or do something new which one has never had time to do during the mission.
- Make notes about the differences between the people in the mission country and in Switzerland. What will be awaiting me? These types of notes can be useful when one compares them with the reality one finds on returning.
- Ask someone to meet you at the airport. Its good to know that one is welcome.
- The same as with departing, give oneself sufficient time to truly arrive.
- Accept the difficulties that will be encountered and if necessary seek professional help.
- Some sending organisations offer seminars for those returning. Cinfo has specialised courses on this issue (www.cinfo.ch).

24. Handover of the co-ordinating office

Important steps in the handover of the co-ordinating office

Two people, one Swiss and one Nicaraguan manage our Managua office. When I explained the job to my successor and what to expect in both the positive and the difficult aspects of it, I knew that for the presence of Mila Incer the Nicaraguan co-ordinator would be fundamental for him. Only she could guarantee a smooth handover and offer a real support to the new co-ordinator.

Each chapter of this manual has been aimed at professionalising the work, and facilitating the handover of the co-ordinating office to a new person. The checklists and advice can be adapted to different countries, and can also be reorganised and printed out. In this way, each new co-ordinator can have a comprehensive description of their new tasks in their hands. Here is some final advice for the handover:

24.1. Advice for the handover

- Draw up a checklist for the handover:
 - Keys
 - Bank accounts, new signatures,
 - Handover of documents mentioned in chapter 2 (contacts, emergency addresses and numbers, documents on each development worker),
 - Registration and presentation with the pertinent governmental entities.
- Visit all the development workers in the country; the successor must make personal contact with all of them.
- Present the successor to friends, important political and church figures, police or army officials.
- Informal meetings (these can be easily arranged during trips, and when one is awaiting upcoming appointments).
- Make a good farewell to the co-ordinating office, to personnel, to development workers and welcome the new co-ordinator with a party, a cocktail or a ritual.
- Use the same checklist for the arrival of a development worker for the arrival of the new co-ordinator (see chapter 7)
- Use the same advice for the return of the development workers, for the return of the old co-ordinator (see previous chapter).

25. Personnel Development Co-operation: basic documents

The following links will open up documents published by Unité on the issue of **personel development co-operation**

Portrait: Who is Unité?

The Exchange of Personnel between the North and the South: Development with a Human Face

http://www.unite-ch.org/tx_portrait_en.html

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/english/PEZA-ENG.doc>

Personnel Development Co-operation

A pertinent contribution to international co-operation

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/unite%20basis%20paper%20eng.doc>

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/english/UNITE%20Basis-Paper%20eng%20appendix1.doc>

Mehrwert der personellen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, Vortrag vom Direktor de DEZA, Botschafter Walter Fust

La plus-value de la coopération par échange de personnes pour les acteurs étatiques, conférence de l'Ambassadeur Walter Fust, DDC (français)

El plusvalor del intercambio de personas en la cooperación internacional para actores estatales, Palabras del Embajador Walter Fust, Director COSUDE (spanisch)

Deutsch: <http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Fust%20dt.pdf>

Français: <http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/FUST%20FR.doc>

Español: <http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/FUST%20ESP.doc>

"The heart of co-operation is interchange"

(Interview with Unité president Armand Heiniger)

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/deutsch/UniteHeiniger%20D%20def.doc>

International Forum on Development Service

<http://www.forum-ids.org/>

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Added%20value%20final%20report.pdf>

"Rol of the personel Development Co-operation: "Be innovators and work in synergies"

Interview Martin Schreiber UNITE during the encounter of Forum in Oslo, 2005

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/UNITEMSeng.doc>

More texts at the homepage of Unité: http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/tx_docindex_Archiv.html

The following links will open up documents published by Unité on the issue **of Partnership within the personal development co-operation**

Annual report on Brasil, Beat (Tuto) Wehrli (portugiesisch)

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/espa%F1ol/Partnerschaft%20Brasilien2.pdf>

Partnership - criterias (International Forum on Development Services) (in english)

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/IVSO%20partnership.pdf>

Chooosen literature on partnership:

<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/deutsch/Partnerschaft%20Literatur.doc>

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- français: http://unite-ch.org/form-download/fs_download_priv_f.htm (seulement pour membres d'UNITE)
- 2) UNITE-guidelines, UNITE-Leitlinien für Koordinationen (Einzeleinsätze), UNITE 2004:
deutsch: http://unite-ch.org/form-download/fs_download_priv_g.htm (nur für UNITE-Mitglieder)
français: http://unite-ch.org/form-download/fs_download_priv_f.htm (seulement membres d'UNITE)
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- 8) Where there is no doctor, David Werner
Deutsch: http://reisebuch.de/specials/praxis/wo_es_keinen_arzt_gibt-112.html
English: Where there is no doctor <http://www.knowprose.com/node/1095> (online, no cost)
Französisch: Là où il n'y pas de docteur <http://www.afrilivres.com/index.asp?navig=livre&no=1346>
Español: Donde no hay doctor <http://www.healthwrights.org/publications.htm>
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Literaturhinweise (in German)
<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/deutsch/3%20Afrika%20Literaturhinweise.doc>

Cameroon
Climate, Infrastrukture and Literature (in German)
<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/deutsch/5%20Kamerun%20-%20Hinweise%20auf%20Klima,%20Infrastruktur,%20Literatur.doc>

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/deutsch/6%20Presbyterian%20Church%20in%20Cameroon%20-%20Geschichte,%20Literatur,%20Organigramm%20.doc>
- 16) Pidgin-English
<http://www.unite-ch.org/Diverse/Archiv/deutsch/4%20Pidgin%20English.pdf>