

Internationals Ministry Overviews

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After-School Program Overview

Overview:

- Internationals often face difficulties in helping their children with school. Parents may not have attended formal school themselves, but even if they have, the style and language of education are probably different. In addition, many parents must work long hours and have difficulties in supporting their children with homework after school.
- Churches can provide after-school care and tutoring programs for children in their neighborhoods, building trust and relationships with children, parents, and local schools.
- Programs may include time for children to complete homework with adult help, snack time, time to read aloud with adults, Bible lessons, and recreation time (especially since children living in apartments often do not have safe outdoor spaces to play). Other special programs may be offered as staff are available, such as music and foreign language lessons.
- Churches may also decide to offer special programs during the summer for international children. These programs may be academically oriented or may be focused on sports, arts, or other activities.
- Backyard Bible Clubs are afternoon/evening programs focused on teaching the Bible to children within specific neighborhoods. These programs usually incorporate games, crafts, singing, and Bible story time and may take place in a park, community center, or backyard.

Resources required:

- People
 - One or two coordinators
 - Tutors and staff - programs should aim to have one adult volunteer for every 3-5 children in order to build strong relationships and for safety.
 - Staff are needed for recreation, homework help, snacks, and safety.
 - Intercessors
- Time
 - Time will be needed to create a program and policies. Leaders should talk to any partnering schools and learn what needs to be done in order to offer the program, especially in terms of transportation, forms, and legal permissions.
 - Programs may be 1-5 afternoons a week for 2-4 hours, depending on church members' availability and school dismissal times. Volunteers should commit to regularly (at least once weekly) serving for a minimum of one year in order to build deep relationships with students.
- Funding - funds are needed for snacks/dinner, school supplies, and transportation (if provided). Volunteers may find that the participating students have other needs, such as clothing and food needs at home, and further ministries may grow out of this.
- Space - plenty of space is needed for the program, depending on the size and number of offerings.

Training:

- Child protection training should be mandatory for all volunteers. In addition, volunteers should be background-checked.

- Coordinators may also want to offer behavior management training, training for working with English learners, and trauma care training to volunteers. Restoring Hope Roanoke can provide connections for these trainings as desired.

Potential obstacles:

- Strong school and community connections must be established from the beginning in order to have a successful program.
- Churches must be very careful to have plans in place to prevent child abuse, as predators will take advantage of programs like these.

Online resources:

- A story of how Westminster Presbyterian Church in Roanoke started a tutoring program with Westside Elementary: <https://byfaithonline.com/united-by-service/>

Community resources:

- Restoring Hope Roanoke can provide connections to churches who currently or previously have offered after-school programs or Backyard Bible Clubs.
- Roanoke Refugee Partnership offers non-religious summer programs for refugee children. In summer 2019, this program will be hosted at St. John Lutheran Church.

Business Networking Overview

Overview:

- Networks of people are the backbone of society, and for many newly-arrived or even well-established internationals, their lack of networks may be yet another difficulty in finding employment. Internationals may also lack language skills or educational credentials that are accepted in the United States, making it difficult for them to work in the fields they previously worked in.
- Work experience from outside of the United States may not be accepted by employers here, who cannot check the validity of the listed references.
- Commonwealth Catholic Charities' employment liaison assists refugees in finding employment. Refugees are required to accept and keep appropriate employment in order to receive state benefits. For some, this means accepting difficult physical labor, which can be very hard on chronically ill, disabled, or elderly refugees.
- Many refugees are single parents, making childcare a top need and work hours a difficulty.
- International students, such as those at Virginia Western Community College, may need part-time work with flexible schedules so that they can work and study at the same time.

What can this look like in practice?

- Christian business owners can proactively seek to hire and influence others to hire internationals. They can offer temporary work to help internationals gain experience and references, and full-time work with benefits when possible. These business owners can find creative ways to provide other needed services, such as English lessons, within or near their workplaces, and show understanding and flexibility when possible because of childcare needs. They can especially promote any employment opportunities with lower physical demands for ill and disabled refugees.
- Christian business owners can build relationships with their international employees to show the love of Christ to them, and introduce them to their church families, as well.
- Churches and organizations can offer job training to help internationals learn skills and earn certifications that will be accepted here. Church members can offer their insights into hiring in job training, resume writing, and skills development. They can also offer job fairs that cater to internationals.

Resources required:

- Time - this will vary depending on the program. Business owners should recognize that hiring internationals may involve a sacrifice of time and money in extra support and training.
- Funding - business owners may choose to provide for other needs of the internationals who work for them, including credentialing certification classes, English classes, and childcare.
- People - individuals and groups can carry out this work.
- Space - events such as job fairs that cater to internationals should be held in safe, neutral, and known locations, such as community centers or even apartment complexes.

Training:

- Cross-cultural awareness training is highly recommended for employers to better understand their international employees and try to avoid miscommunication and misattributions (attributing an incorrect motive to an action because of differences in culture and worldview).

Potential obstacles:

- When offering services such as job training and job fairs, remember that internationals will feel much more comfortable attending if these services are offered in their own neighborhoods and familiar spaces. Entering a church to talk about a job can feel highly intimidating and may not be acceptable to people from certain religious backgrounds.
- Childcare and transportation are the biggest barriers to internationals' abilities to accept work offers. For internationals without cars, employment must be located near the bus stop. For internationals with children who have no one to provide childcare, employment must overlap with school hours and be flexible for snow days, sick children, etc.

Reading resources:

- [A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World](#) by Patty Lane
- this is an excellent resource to understand different cultural perspectives.

Community resources:

- Commonwealth Catholic Charities, 540.342.7561
- Jobs for Life (employment skills training), restoringhoperoanoke.org and jobsforlife.org

Community Classes Overview

Overview:

- As churches take inventory of the gifts of their members, they might begin to see patterns in their interests and abilities. For example, one church might find that they have several members working in the financial industry, while another has a number of members who work in child development and education, counseling, or food preparation. The church might also note that their property includes a commercial kitchen, a fellowship hall, or classrooms suitable for holding community classes.
- A needs assessment of internationals found that some of their needs in certain communities include job training, financial planning training, and parenting classes. However, other needs and opportunities might be identified by a church and other classes offered, such as food handling/ServSafe certifications (for restaurant jobs), counseling and trauma care, or other needs.
- Churches can partner with existing programs to learn from them, gain credibility through connections, and create plans for long-term sustainable community partnerships.
- The goal of community classes such as these is three-fold:
 - To practically serve the needs of community members
 - To share the love and hope of Christ in word and deed
 - To build relationships in a safe environment
- Once a church or group identifies a need and possibility to provide for that need through a class, the long-term goal must be considered. Will more classes be offered? Will the church provide mentors for participants to continue longer-term learning? What follow-up can be offered to continue the relationships begun in the course?

Resources Required:

- People
 - Professionals or highly experienced individuals in the area of training to provide a high-quality resource.
 - One or two coordinators should plan the class, creating community connections, advertising, and coordinating the facility's use.
 - Childcare workers - offering childcare is vital for these events!
 - Interpreters (if targeting non-English speakers) or a teacher of English learners to help adapt curriculum (if targeting English learners)
 - Church members to participate in the class as fellow students and build relationships are also needed.
 - Intercessors to pray before, during, and after the event.
- Funding - professionals should be compensated for their time, unless they choose to volunteer it. Professional interpreters will also need to be paid. Funding will also be necessary for any materials.
 - Note: for courses involving professional certifications, it may be wise to charge a small fee along with requiring preregistration to create commitment and credibility among the attendees.
- Space - this will vary depending on the type of class offered.
- Time - once again, this will vary depending on the type of class offered.

- Advertising - this will be vital to a class's success. Organizers should leverage all possible neighborhood and community connections and strive to offer as professional and useful a course as possible.

Training:

- Training will vary depending on the type of program offered. Program leaders and church members may desire cross-cultural ministry training if they have never worked with people from other cultures.

Potential obstacles:

- Transportation is a large hurdle faced by many internationals. Classes should be offered in locations that may be reached via the bus system to allow participants to come and go freely and independently, or in locations that are directly adjacent to targeted neighborhoods.

Community resources:

- Jobs for Life - hosted in churches, this Biblically-based program teaches job and life skills to help unemployed and underemployed individuals (www.jobsforlife.org). It has already been offered in the Roanoke area several times. Contact Restoring Hope Roanoke for more information.
- Commonwealth Catholic Charities' employment liaison - this would be a good resource for connecting job and life skill classes to refugees. CCC's main office is 540.342.7561.

Cross-Cultural Ministry Training Overview

Overview:

- Individuals and small groups who feel a desire to help and get involved in serving internationals, but who are anxious about cross-cultural ministry and not sure how to get started, can benefit from small groups geared specifically towards learning about cross-cultural ministry. These groups can provide training, prayer, encouragement, and accountability. A church may decide to form a new small group for this purpose, or existing small groups may decide to change their focus for a season to specifically consider these areas.
- Alternatively, a church might choose to host monthly seminars about cross-cultural ministry topics that are open to all church members, or offer a Sunday School class for the same purpose.
- The goal of these groups is to lead group members to action: volunteering, intercession, making friends with international neighbors, etc. Groups should continually ask, "How is God leading us to respond to this need, and what does the Bible say about it?" as they learn about the situations and needs of internationals, and pray about how God might be leading them to be involved.

Resources required:

- Time - groups should plan to meet for about 2 hours every week for discussion, study, prayer, and possibly hearing from a guest speaker who has experience in cross-cultural ministry.
- Funding - funding may be required to purchase books or study materials.
- People
 - One or two small group leaders, preferably with some cross-cultural ministry experience, though this is not required.
 - 3+ small group members
 - Guest speakers, if desired
- Space - a room in which to meet (in a church or home)

Training:

- No training is required, though leaders should plan to put time into preparing each week to lead/facilitate discussion and/or teach. Leaders with cross-cultural ministry background are suggested but not required.

Potential obstacles:

- Churches may not wish to break up existing small groups to form new ones. They can consider forming separate groups (in-person or even virtually) to meet every one or two weeks at a time when group members are not meeting with their regular small groups.
- Groups should begin with the understanding that they are not meeting to discuss politics, but rather, to keep their focus on serving and loving the internationals who live here now and may come in the future.

Reading resources:

- Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis, by Stephan Bauman, Matthew Soerens, and Dr. Issam Smeir. This book, from three experts from World

Relief, explains the global refugee crisis, the plight of refugees, and how we can offer hope and help to them.

- Welcoming the Stranger: Justice, Compassion, and Truth in the Immigration Debate, by Jenny Yang and Matthew Soerens (World Relief). This book contributes a broad overview on the history of immigration, how Christians understand immigration, and how churches can love immigrants in the United States. (See small group guide linked below).
- Loving the Stranger: Welcoming Immigrants in the Name of Jesus, by Jessica Udall. This book offers excellent tips to welcome immigrants and refugees into one's home and life and can be easily used for small-group study.
- A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World, by Patty Lane. This book explains the worldviews of different cultures and how to work with people of different cultures.
- Across the Street and Around the World, by Jeannie Marie. This book also offers practical suggestions to show love to internationals in our own neighborhoods, as well as tips for people feeling called to cross-cultural ministry in other countries. It is recommended for small-group study.

Online resources:

- *Every International* has free courses about cross-cultural ministry geared specifically towards working with international students, but can be applicable to all kinds of international ministry. <https://everyinternational.com>
- Welcoming the Stranger: Small Group Guide (from World Relief) contains six lessons intended to help groups study what the Bible says about immigration and move towards action. It is available for free download at <https://worldrelief.org/welcoming-the-stranger>.

Community resources:

- The Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course is a 15-week course (meeting one night per week) that explains the historical, Biblical, cultural, and strategic vision of Christian missions throughout the world. Courses will be offered in both SW Roanoke County and Bonsack in fall 2019. Contact Mark Plumb at 540-759-0341 or pwcmroanoke@gmail.com or visit <https://class.perspectives.org> for more information.
- Contact Restoring Hope Roanoke for more information on hosting and teaching cross-cultural training seminars or groups.

Discovery Bible Study

Overview:

- Discovery Bible Study (DBS) is a method of reading the Bible to find what it says in a safe community environment. It is not *taught*, but rather, *facilitated* by a Christian leader.
- DBS can be a first step into finding out what the Bible says for an international who may be hesitant or unable to visit a church. It might also be appealing as another avenue to study English with native speakers. DBS provides a safe community among group members and facilitators.
- DBS group members meet together weekly for about two hours each time. They start with sharing their own lives and experiences, as well as prayer requests, then read the passage and discuss it following shared discussion questions. Finally, they discuss the passage and how it applies to their own lives and to the lives of others in sharing it with them.
- Suggested sets of Bible passages suitable for DBS are available online (see “online resources” below).

Basic Framework of DBS (taken from dbsguide.org):

- 1) Opening time:
 - a) What are you thankful for?
 - b) What is causing you stress?
 - c) Who needs our help? How can this group help them?
- 2) Look back (sessions 2+):
 - a) Retell story from the previous meeting.
 - b) What did you do differently because of this story?
 - c) Who did you tell and what was the reaction?
- 3) Read and retell:
 - a) One person reads the Bible passage out loud, and the rest follow along.
 - b) Group members can read it silently in other languages, if desired.
 - c) Someone else retells the passage by memory, if possible. Others can fill in what is missing.
- 4) Look:
 - a) Read the passage again.
 - b) Discuss what this passage says about God, Jesus, or His plan.
- 5) Look again:
 - a) Read the passage once more.
 - b) Discuss what this passage says about humans.
- 6) Inside me:
 - a) According to this study, what am I doing well?
 - b) What do I need to change?
- 7) Who else?:
 - a) Who needs to hear this story?
 - b) How can I tell them?
 - c) Who can I invite to study the Bible?

Resources required:

- Time - facilitators should commit at least three hours per week for this ministry (one hour of preparation and two hours of group time). However, they should be prepared for more time spent together as group members may want more time in community and/or in individual meetings, and for more time spent in prayer for the group members.
- Funding - funding to purchase Bibles (especially multilingual Bibles) is suggested (though many free Bible apps are available), as well as funding for refreshments.
- People - each group should have one or two facilitators. An additional one or two intercessors are needed, as well, to pray for group members and especially pray during the Bible study time.
- Space - DBS requires a comfortable space in which to meet that is accessible to the members and fairly private, such as a home or group meeting space.

Training:

- M28 (from an international student outreach) offers weekend trainings in multiplicable DBS groups. More information can be found at <https://www.m28global.org/training.html>.

Potential obstacles:

- Creating a safe and comfortable space to learn, discuss, and ask questions is vital. Take care to build relationships that are focused on love and seeing friends as people, not projects.
- DBS facilitators should keep in mind that they are not teaching a lesson, but rather, helping guide participants in reading and understanding the Bible. Their role is to keep the discussion on track and flowing comfortably. It may be hard for some facilitators and participants to adjust to this style of study and will take time, accountability, and practice.
- Likewise, group members may sometimes want to dispute items from the passage or make connections to ideas from other religions or cultural ideas. DBS facilitators are trained to ask, "Where do you see that in this passage?", leading members back to the substance of the text.

Reading resources:

- [Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery](#) by David Watson and Paul Watson

Online resources:

- DBS Guide has videos, explanations, and questions: <http://dbsguide.org/>.
- M28 has lists of Bible passages and questions that can be used: <https://www.m28global.org/resources.html>.

Community resources:

- Ask Restoring Hope Roanoke to be connected with someone who has facilitated a DBS group and can share experience and ideas.

English Program Overview

Overview:

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are offered by churches and community organizations to help international adults learn to speak, listen, read, and write in English and integrate into the community. Church members grow in love, relationships, and understanding of internationals, while internationals learn practical skills, make friends, and are loved and encouraged and learn the Gospel.
- The ultimate goal of these classes is to love internationals in two ways:
 - 1) By providing a quality English class to help them practically in their lives here
 - 2) By sharing the love of Christ in word and deed
- As relationships are built with students, other needs will come to light, and the church as a community will find new opportunities to love their international neighbors.
- Churches that are primarily English-speaking may partner with multiethnic churches to offer classes. For example, an English-speaking church might send ESOL teachers to a Spanish-speaking church, equipping that church to reach out to their neighbors and friends in a new way.

Sample schedules:

Community Church already has activities on Wednesday evenings with a community meal and childcare provided during classes. They decide to add ESOL classes to their schedule.

6:00-6:45 dinner

6:45-8:15 English class (3 levels: beginners, intermediate/advanced, and citizenship preparation; a 5-10 minute devotional is shared in every class)

~ OR ~

Community Church has learned that its surrounding neighborhood contains many international stay-at-home mothers. They offer a morning ESOL class with childcare provided.

10:00-11:30 English class

11:30-11:40 break

11:40-12:15 Bible study

Resources required:

- Funding for classroom supplies, textbooks (cost may be fronted by church and reimbursed by students) and teacher books, supplemental materials, teacher training, refreshments (if desired)
- Staff: 1 coordinator; teachers (3-5 to start a program); teaching assistants and/or tutors (3-5); childcare workers (2+, if the church doesn't already offer childcare at the time of classes). Other staff may be desired, such as hospitality coordinators, greeters, and volunteers to provide transportation, if needed.
 - The only definite requirements of staff are to love Jesus and to be able to speak English. Training is available to provide teaching skills. Desirable character traits of teachers include patience, friendliness, and gentleness.
 - If possible, childcare workers should be bilingual and/or have experience in working with children who do not speak English.
 - Intercessors to pray for classes and students are also highly recommended.

- **Time:** classes should be 1-2 hours in length. (If class is over 1 hour in length, students should be given a short break in the middle.) Bible studies may be held for an additional 30 minutes after class.
 - Classes may be offered in the daytime or evening hours, depending on the needs of the students. Working adults may prefer evening or weekend classes, while stay-at-home parents might prefer daytime weekday classes. If students will be riding public transportation, the bus schedule should be consulted to find a convenient time for students to arrive and depart while buses are running.
 - Teachers should plan for an additional 1-2 hours per week to prepare and plan for classes.
- **Space:** Separate rooms with tables, chairs, and whiteboards/blackboards should be available for each class. A gathering space to welcome students is also desirable. It is helpful if the location is easily accessible by the Valley Metro bus line, if in Roanoke City, or within a neighborhood with a large number of internationals.

Training:

- Weekend (Friday night and all day Saturday) ESOL teacher training sessions are available from the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and Mission to North America (MNA). Blue Ridge Literacy also welcomes church-based volunteers to attend their training sessions. Restoring Hope Roanoke can arrange for training sessions.

Potential obstacles:

- Timing: many internationals struggle to learn English because they do not have the time and ability to attend classes because of demanding work schedules, lack of childcare, lack of secure transportation, and other factors.
- Trust and security: unauthorized immigrants may be nervous to attend classes; church volunteers should *never* ask about someone's immigration status or documentation. Women from Muslim/Arab cultures might feel uncomfortable attending mixed-gender classes. Research and creativity are needed to find solutions that are culturally appropriate.
- Volunteers should be aware of dietary restrictions of different cultural/religious groups.

Reading Resources

- Teaching English in Church: A Practical Guide to Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language to Immigrants, with a Focus on English for Christian Mission by William Bradridge and Louisa Walsh
- A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World by Patty Lane
- Loving the Stranger: Welcoming Immigrants in the Name of Jesus by Jessica Udall

Online Resources

- Mission to North America ESL outreach - <https://pcamna.org/esl-ministries/>
- SEND Relief ESL resources (including English Bible lesson materials) - <https://www.sendrelief.org/poverty/esl/>

Community Resources

- Blue Ridge Literacy - training sessions available. blueridgeliteracy.org/esol
- Church-based ESOL programs - contact Restoring Hope Roanoke for a full listing.

Sunday Schools for English Learners Overview

Overview:

- Attending an American Christian church service for the first time can be overwhelming to someone from another country. Even after an international becomes used to attending church, the language of church may be difficult to understand. A specialized Sunday School class for English learners can help learners feel welcomed, introduce them to Christianity (if they are not already familiar), provide a safe place for questions, and help learners better understand and participate in the service. It also provides a place for church members to build deeper relationships with their international friends.
- This type of class ties in well with ESOL classes, international student outreach, or other types of outreach groups.

Class theme ideas:

- An overview of major Bible stories. (Note: it might seem simpler to use a children's Bible storybook, but be careful not to come across as talking down to English learners. Try to use the full Bible whenever possible.)
- The parables
- Elements of the worship service and their meanings
- The day's sermon (coordinate with the pastor for a basic outline with key vocabulary and themes, and read and discuss the passage)
- Frequently sung hymns (read and discuss the words, then sing together)
- Be creative in lesson delivery, incorporating pictures, skits, and video clips (when appropriate) to illustrate concepts, as well as reading the Bible passage in students' first languages (whenever possible) and English.

Note: it is a good idea to integrate the Good News of Salvation into every class, whatever the topic, as students may cycle in and out of class often.

Resources required:

- People -
 - Teachers: at least two teachers should commit to lead this class for each term to have continuity of relationships. Teachers should be able to teach using simple English.
 - Other volunteers: it would be best to have one church member for every 3 internationals in the class to help them with finding Bible verses and help facilitate and participate in small group discussions. Consider intentionally recruiting Christian internationals who are part of your church; they may be able to relate to your students in a different way and may provide key cultural insights or have translation skills that are invaluable!
 - All teachers and volunteers should exhibit patience and welcoming attitudes towards all students.
 - Recruit a few prayer warriors to pray during the class and during the week for your students.
- Time - this class would typically be offered during the Sunday School time of the church, although a similar program could be offered after church or in small-group fashion in the evening. Teachers should also commit to the time to prepare during the week; this will

vary depending on what kind of curriculum is used. Teaching using simplified English may actually require more time for preparation, as it is necessary to define all terms in simple words.

- Funding - Bibles in different languages and/or bilingual Bibles (with English and another language side-by-side); printing for classroom materials and Bible passages in other languages; refreshments (if desired)
- Space - a standard classroom with tables and chairs and a whiteboard/blackboard; a computer and projector may also be desired

Training:

- Reading about cross-cultural ministry could be very useful to teachers and volunteers. Church members might also like to research the backgrounds of their students using a resource like www.operationworld.org
- Basic training for teachers and volunteers in best practices of working with English learners is recommended; contact Restoring Hope Roanoke for training.

Potential obstacles:

- Creating a safe and comfortable environment for students is vital, as this may be their first experience with any church, and they may come from backgrounds in which it would be dangerous to enter a church. Be careful not to demand any commitment or participation, but make it safe for students to volunteer to read aloud and ask questions if they choose to do so.
- Class sizes may fluctuate weekly, so it is probably best to plan to have classes with topics that can stand alone unless it seems that a base of the same students attend each week.
- Students with lower levels of English may feel shy, embarrassed, or ashamed to speak up. Provide opportunities for them to speak in small groups or with partners.

Reading resources:

- A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World, by Patty Lane
- Loving the Stranger: Welcoming Immigrants in the Name of Jesus by Jessica Udall
- Books on cross-cultural ministry by Duane Elmer

Online resources:

- Multilingual Christian materials (including Bibles): <https://multilanguagemedia.org/> ; <https://www.scriptureearth.org/>
- Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary (defines words in simple English): <http://learnersdictionary.com/>
- Easy English Bible: <https://www.easyenglish.bible/>
- Discovery Bible Study is a simple method of reading and discussing the Bible: <http://dbsguide.org/>
- Students from Asian and Arab cultures will be more familiar with an honor/shame worldview, while students from tribal backgrounds may be more familiar with a fear/power dynamic worldview, impacting how the Gospel may be understood. Learn more at <http://honorshame.com/>.

Ethnic Church Partnerships

Overview:

- As individual ethnic communities grow in an area, they often form churches that worship together in their heart languages. (A heart language is the language in which a person feels he/she can best express his/her thoughts and feelings). These churches have diverse needs and unique gifts that they can offer to English-speaking churches in partnerships together.
- Partnerships between English-speaking and ethnic churches can take many forms, including sharing building space, having joint worship services, meals, and service projects, and exchanging church members for language and theology teaching sessions.
- It is vital for leaders of English-speaking and ethnic churches to carefully explain their expectations for partnership (short-term and long-term) and be willing to learn about one another's cultural backgrounds. Conflicts stemming from cultural differences can severely damage partnerships and relationships among church members.

Resources required:

- Time - time commitments will depend on the type of partnership. Expectations for time commitments should be clearly stated by both sides. Leaders should also seek to understand each other's views on time, such as perspectives on start times and length of gatherings together. For example, does an event begin at the advertised time, or when all of the key individuals have arrived? Do worship services last one hour or four?
- Funding - this is another area in which caution, clarity, and patience are needed. Churches should recognize that in committing financial support, they may be creating an expectation for further financial support.
- People - the leadership of each church should be fully committed to the partnership. Church members should also be committed and seek to find how they can build intercultural relationships with their brothers and sisters in the other church, as well as to pray for one another and their relationships. It may be useful to have an outside mediator who assists in setting up the partnership and dealing with conflicts; mediators are often used in many cultures to work through problems.
- Prayer - it is vital for churches in partnership to pray with and for one another.

Potential obstacles:

- Intercultural conflicts will occur. This is the nature of relationship. Churches should not be discouraged by this fact, but rather, spurred on to prayer and seeking to learn from and about one another.
- Members of the minority cultural group may feel as if they are beholden to the English-speaking church, rather than equal partners. This is important to be mindful of and address as needed.
- Be aware that styles of addressing conflict vary among cultures. Americans prefer to be more direct in facing conflict, but members of certain African groups, for example, may prefer to use mediators, while members of certain Asian groups may prefer to speak more indirectly about problems in order to save the relationship. A cultural informant (a

person who can explain cultural values and their reasoning), such as someone from the ethnic culture who has lived in the United States for several years, can provide valuable insights and advice.

Reading resources:

- [A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World](#) by Patty Lane - this is an excellent resource to understand different cultural perspectives and includes several stories of church partnerships, authored by a Christian cultural consultant.

Community resources:

- Contact Restoring Hope Roanoke for local churches that are partnering together.

Incarnational Ministry

Overview:

- Individuals, couples, and families who feel called to in-depth, life-on-life ministry among internationals may choose to move in apartment complexes and neighborhoods in or near where many internationals live. By joining their communities and showing hospitality to their neighbors, they can build deep and trusting friendships that lead to sharing life and the hope of Christ.
- People who choose to do this are in need of support from their church families, as they may face both spiritual opposition and cultural difficulties.
- Other ministry opportunities that allow for regular contact within neighborhoods of internationals include
 - Playing sports in leagues with internationals
 - Washing clothes regularly in a laundromat in an international neighborhood
 - Becoming a “regular” in international restaurants and grocery stores
 - Regularly attending services of an ethnic church
- The goal of these intentional choices is to build friendships.

Resources required:

- Time - building trust and friendships may take a long time. People who feel called to these ministries must be willing to commit to long-term work and care.
- Funding - ideally, this kind of ministry will be incorporated into everyday life. However, funding for moving costs, food for extending hospitality to neighbors, etc. may also be required.
- People - people who choose to directly engage in this ministry will need a team of others to support them and pray for them.
- Space - hospitality ministries will require space to host guests.

Training:

- Contact Restoring Hope Roanoke for connections to other Christians who have moved into international neighborhoods for this type of ministry.

Potential obstacles:

- Individuals who move into neighborhoods with different cultural makeups may experience culture shock and difficulty adjusting. It may take a long time for the residents to accept them in the community.
- Many internationals live in low-income complexes with maximum income limits, so it may be necessary to find housing near those neighborhoods, rather than within them.

Reading resources:

- Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis, by Stephan Bauman, Matthew Soerens, and Dr. Issam Smeir. This book, from three experts from World Relief, explains the global refugee crisis, the plight of refugees, and how individuals can offer hope and help to them.
- Loving the Stranger: Welcoming Immigrants in the Name of Jesus, by Jessica Udall. This book offers excellent tips to welcome immigrants and refugees into one’s home and life.

- [A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World](#), by Patty Lane. This book explains the worldviews of different cultures and how to work with people of different cultures.
- [Across the Street and Around the World](#), by Jeannie Marie. This book also offers practical suggestions to show love to internationals in our own neighborhoods, as well as tips for people feeling called to cross-cultural ministry in other countries.

Online resources:

- More information from Mission to North America about outreach opportunities:
<https://pcamna.org/refugee-and-immigrant-ministry/>

International Clubs Overview

Overview:

- Individuals, couples, and families who feel called to in-depth, life-on-life ministry among internationals may choose to move in apartment complexes and neighborhoods in or near where many internationals live. By joining their communities and showing hospitality to their neighbors, they can build deep and trusting friendships that lead to sharing life and the hope of Christ.
- People who choose to do this are in need of support from their church families, as they may face both spiritual opposition and cultural difficulties.
- Other ministry opportunities that allow for regular contact within neighborhoods of internationals include
 - Playing sports in leagues with internationals
 - Washing clothes regularly in a laundromat in an international neighborhood
 - Becoming a “regular” in international restaurants and grocery stores
 - Regularly attending services of an ethnic church
- The goal of these intentional choices is to build friendships.

Resources required:

- Time - building trust and friendships may take a long time. People who feel called to these ministries must be willing to commit to long-term work and care.
- Funding - ideally, this kind of ministry will be incorporated into everyday life. However, funding for moving costs, food for extending hospitality to neighbors, etc. may also be required.
- People - people who choose to directly engage in this ministry will need a team of others to support them and pray for them.
- Space - hospitality ministries will require space to host guests.

Training:

- Contact Restoring Hope Roanoke for connections to other Christians who have moved into international neighborhoods for this type of ministry.

Potential obstacles:

- Individuals who move into neighborhoods with different cultural makeups may experience culture shock and difficulty adjusting. It may take a long time for the residents to accept them in the community.
- Many internationals live in low-income complexes with maximum income limits, so it may be necessary to find housing near those neighborhoods, rather than within them.

Reading resources:

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Online resources:

- More information from Mission to North America about outreach opportunities:
<https://pcamna.org/refugee-and-immigrant-ministry/>

International Students Overview

Overview:

- 80% of international students will never enter an American home. Only 10-20% will ever be touched by a campus ministry. Church members can show the love of Christ by welcoming international students into their homes and sharing their cultures, families, and lives together. International students are far from home and familiar life, so having a family to love and care for them can comfort and encourage them.
- International students are often the brightest and most privileged young people from their home countries. They are open to making friends and learning about American culture while they are here.
- Loving international students can take many forms:
 - Helping with practical needs (transportation to the store, airport, or other location, help in setting up a bank account, etc.)
 - Hosting students over school breaks and on holidays
 - Including students in family life and American traditions (sporting events, local points of interest, spending time at home, attending church, going to the lake, etc.)
 - Including students in church family (festivals, community events)
 - Helping with English skills (conversation partners)
 - Mentoring, tutoring, job and life skills (if desired)

Resources required:

- People - individuals and families can commit to supporting an international student for a set period of time; ideally, this would be the length of time the student is studying in the US, but a minimum period of time is one year (unless a student is only here for a semester). Families should commit to praying for their students at least weekly.
 - Skills required include hospitality, welcoming attitudes, and willingness to learn about other cultures.
- Time - host families should commit to seeing their student at least once a month. Holidays are especially important to share. Students may need housing over extended breaks, as well.
- Funding - the only costs associated with individual/family ministry would be personal costs for entertainment and food. If churches choose to host larger events for students, these may incur additional costs.
- Space - if families choose to host their students at their homes, they should have a suitable bed available for the student.

Training:

- No training is required, but some can be found online (see below).
- Research about the student's home culture is strongly encouraged, but the student is ultimately the authority on his/her background and worldview. Keep a humble attitude of a learner when seeking to find out about his/her beliefs.

Potential obstacles:

- Be aware that students from certain backgrounds may not feel comfortable entering a church. Don't push; continue to be a safe and loving person, regardless of the student's openness to the Gospel.
- Find out about dietary restrictions that the student may have because of cultural/religious background.
- Some universities may be protective of their international students and wary of whole churches reaching out to them. In this case, it may be better for individuals to contact the university.

Reading resources:

- [A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World](#), by Patty Lane
- [Song of a Wanderer: Beckoned by Eternity](#) by Li Cheng - memoir of a Chinese scholar who came to faith in Christ while studying in the United States.

Online resources:

- Free online video courses with a wealth of information and stories about reaching out to international students: <https://everyinternational.com/>
- Conversation partner guide: <http://ism.intervarsity.org/resource/english-conversation-partner-guide>
- International Students Inc. Christian volunteer training and information: <https://www.isivolunteers.org/learn-more.html>
- Discovery Bible study is a simple method to reading and discussing the Bible that can be used with international students: <http://dbsguide.org/>

Community resources:

- Contact Restoring Hope Roanoke to find out ways to connect with international students at Roanoke College, American National University, and Virginia Western Community College.

Material and Practical Assistance Overview

Overview:

- Internationals arriving in a new place will have numerous material needs. For example, newly arriving refugees are provided with apartments with furniture and culturally-appropriate food and also need clothing (particularly cold-weather clothing), toiletries, and other day-to-day life needs, such as backpacks, wallets, and umbrellas. Other internationals, including international students and immigrants arriving for work purposes, may also need help with finding or choosing foods, clothing, and furnishings they want and need.

Clothing and Accessories:

- Refugees often come from warmer climates and specifically need clothing for colder weather, including hats, gloves, socks, shoes, boots, and coats (fleece or puffy coats, not wool). Typically, the refugee population, including adults, needs smaller-sized clothing.
- Refugees are expected to keep important items with them, such as Medicaid cards, and need to travel around the city via Valley Metro buses. Therefore, wallets, backpacks, purses, and tote bags are highly useful. Umbrellas are also important.
- Commonwealth Catholic Charities (CCC) and Blue Ridge Literacy (BRL) provide these items to clients on an as-needed basis. CCC sometimes also needs assistance in sorting and labeling donations.

Food:

- The refugee resettlement office is required to have a culturally-appropriate meal waiting in the apartment when a refugee family arrives in Roanoke. Volunteers can cook a meal to be given to the family and provide them comfort and nourishment for their first night in the United States.
- Culturally-appropriate food supplies are also provided for the refugee family in their apartment for the first several weeks. Refugees are provided with SNAP benefits (supplemental nutrition assistance program, also known as food stamps) for their first several months in the United States. Volunteers can help them learn to ride the bus to a store or farmer's market, choose foods, and pay using the electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card that is issued for SNAP.

Toiletries:

- SNAP benefits do not cover toiletries, but these are also vital, especially as American hygiene norms expect the use of soap, deodorant, etc.

An important note:

- CCC, BRL, Roanoke Refugee Partnership, and other agencies involved in providing material goods to internationals will know best which items are needed and which are not useful. Before beginning any collection program, contact a leader at one of these agencies to find out specifically which items are needed and clearly communicate this to others. Giving unnecessary items can be an additional burden on these agencies as they have to store or give away undesirable items.

Mentoring Overview

Overview:

- Immigrant and refugee youth are navigating school and college in a new culture and cannot ask parents for help or advice, since their parents likely never studied in the United States and perhaps have little or no formal education at all. Mentors can provide encouragement and support to international youth as they grow through their teenage and young adult years.
- Mentors might work with refugee youth who are in high school or just entering college, or meet with Virginia Western Community College international students as they learn how college works.
- Possible areas of need include:
 - Study skills and preparation for college entrance exams
 - Applying for college and knowing what questions to ask on college visits
 - Applying for financial aid and scholarships for college
 - Help with getting jobs (resumes, interviews, etc.)
 - English conversation practice
 - Talking through teenage/young adult life challenges

Resources required:

- Time - 1-2 hours per week. Mentors should plan to be committed for at least a year, unless the commitment requested is for less time.
- Funding - no funding is required.
- People - mentors should work one-to-one or one-to-two. It is a good idea to have others praying for the mentee and the relationship, especially as a mentoring relationship may grow into relationships with the whole family. Male mentors are especially needed.
- Space - no dedicated space is required for this relationship; meetings may take place in public spaces.

Training:

- No formal training is required for this position.

Potential obstacles:

- Mentees may face unique obstacles in adjusting to high school and college life. They may have dealt with trauma in their pasts and cope with cultural and linguistic adjustments to life in the United States.

Reading resources:

- [A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World](#), by Patty Lane. This book explains the worldviews of different cultures and how to work with people of different cultures.

Community resources:

- Roanoke Refugee Partnership and Commonwealth Catholic Charities can provide connections to potential mentees and more insight into their needs. Contact Restoring Hope Roanoke for connections to these organizations.

Refugee Family Support Overview

Overview:

- Refugee families face innumerable obstacles when they arrive in the United States, needing help with everyday activities, such as paying bills and shopping, as well as cultural adjustment and friendship. Small groups can “adopt” a refugee family and commit to come alongside them for support and friendship.
- This is a longer-term commitment. Groups should remember that they are building friendships with real people, not “projects” to be helped for a short time and then left alone. For the first months or years, conversation may be nearly impossible as the family learns English. However, it is an excellent opportunity to love and welcome the foreigner and be the hands and feet of Christ.

Resources required:

- Time - volunteers should commit to being available at least once a week, though in larger groups, responsibilities may be shared.
 - Expectations for time commitments are cultural. For many Americans, a short visit at another family’s home would be only an hour, but for many other cultures, a visit will include a meal and several hours together. Expect this and set aside time generously to love them well.
 - Similarly, many Americans might feel overwhelmed to receive calls asking for help or to spend time together 4 or more times per week, but in many cultures, friendship is a deep and lasting undertaking that assumes this level of commitment.
- Funding - it is not recommended to directly give funding to the family. Instead, if the family has financial needs, a determination should be made in partnership with Roanoke Refugee Partnership and/or Commonwealth Catholic Charities as to how to best support them. In certain situations, it may be appropriate to provide items such as school supplies or furnishings for a home.
- People - a group of 5 to 10 individuals may commit to helping a family. They should be patient and willing to learn and give of their time. They should also be committed to praying for their new friends.
- Space - spatial needs will depend upon activities. It is important to remember that the refugee family may not feel comfortable entering a church. In many cultures, hospitality is important; be willing to have them in your home and enter their homes.

Training:

- Roanoke Refugee Partnership, who connects with families initially to match them to volunteers, provides volunteer oversight and support every step of the way, including in how to help refugees grow in independence and ability to function and how to set healthy boundaries to prevent burnout.
- Restoring Hope Roanoke can provide connections to cross-cultural training and training for working with people who have experienced trauma, as most refugees have.

Potential obstacles:

- It is important to try to find ways for the refugee family to give back, establishing a real friendship. Ask them to teach you language or how to cook an ethnic dish. Spend time

together in which you are not the “givers” and they the “receivers”, but you are just friends spending time together.

- It is also important to allow the refugee family to be independent in whatever ways they can be. If they can ride the bus instead of your giving them a ride in the car, allow them to ride the bus.

Reading resources:

- Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis, by Stephan Bauman, Matthew Soerens, and Dr. Issam Smeir. This book, from three experts from World Relief, explains the global refugee crisis, the plight of refugees, and how we can offer hope and help to them.
- Loving the Stranger: Welcoming Immigrants in the Name of Jesus, by Jessica Udall. This book offers excellent tips to welcome immigrants and refugees into your home and life.
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- Across the Street and Around the World, by Jeannie Marie. This book also offers practical suggestions to show love to internationals in our own neighborhoods, as well as tips for people feeling called to cross-cultural ministry in other countries.

Online resources:

- Honorshame.org explains honor/shame driven worldviews (in much of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East).

Community resources:

- Roanoke Refugee Partnership (<https://www.roanokerefugeepartnership.org/>) provides connections and support for groups and individuals seeking to support refugee families. All volunteers must be background-checked and should keep in contact with RRP’s leadership.

Youth Involvement with International Ministry Overview

Overview:

- Church youth can be involved with international ministries in rich and unique ways. Church youth are able to see the body of Christ living out the call to love the stranger, and the church and the Christian faith grow in credibility in their eyes. Youth are also able to see how their specific gifts and interests can be used in ministry, and youth who are feeling called to cross-cultural ministry can have their first tastes of that ministry in their own country. Youth will grow in their understanding of missions in their own country and around the world.
- Church youth can learn about cross-cultural ministry concepts and welcome international youth to join them in church youth activities, or go outside of their own cultural comfort zones to enter new environments.
- Leadership should be clear about their goals for youth activity and spend time in prayer for and with youth before, during, and after activities.
- Some suggestions for youth involvement include:
 - Joining youth sports leagues in more diverse neighborhoods (or going to watch and cheer them on) - Williamson Road baseball, Lincoln Park soccer, etc.
 - Studying world religions and worldviews and visiting ethnic restaurants connected with those cultures (with a focus on showing friendship)
 - Helping with church-run ESOL classes, after-school programs, international student outreach, etc.
 - Families and/or youth groups spending time at community pools and parks in diverse neighborhoods
 - Volunteering time to help with camps for refugee children

Resources required:

- Time - the time commitment will vary based on the type of activity. Remind youth that relationships require time and are not “one-and-done” activities. Accordingly, youth leaders and/or parents who are interested in participating in these ministries should be equally committed.
- Funding - varies depending on the type of activity.
- People - varies depending on the type of activity. Designated intercessors should be asked to pray before, during, and after activities.
- Space - varies depending on the type of activity, but should take place within diverse neighborhoods as much as possible.

Training:

- No training is required, but spending time learning about world religions, worldviews, and cultures is highly encouraged.

Potential obstacles:

- Working with diverse people can be anxiety-inducing for anyone, but it may prove especially nerve-racking for youth as they also feel the pressures of “looking cool” in front of peers.
- Activities will require transportation for youth who cannot yet drive and do not live near the neighborhoods where activities will take place.

Reading resources:

- [A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World](#), by Patty Lane
- [Loving the Stranger: Welcoming Immigrants in the Name of Jesus](#), by Jessica Udall
- [World Religions: A Christian Perspective on Five World Religions](#) by Walk Thru the Bible

Online resources:

- Roanoke City Parks and Recreation Youth Athletics:
<https://www.playroanoke.com/youth-athletics/>
- Roanoke County Parks and Recreation Youth Athletics:
<https://roanokecountyparks.com/137/How-to-Register>
- World Religions overview from North American Mission Board:
<https://www.namb.net/apologetics-blog/world-religions-overview/>
- Christianity Today article on world religions and their comparisons to Christianity:
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/iyf/hottopics/defendingyourfaith/what-you-need-to-know-about-world-religions.html>

Community resources:

- Restoring Hope Roanoke can provide connections to churches and organizations currently ministering to internationals, as well as a map of locations where internationals live and ethnic stores and restaurants.

Dreaming Big for the Future: Additional Steps for Churches

Overview

- As churches begin to reach out to internationals in diverse ministries, they will find that numerous further ministry opportunities will arise. Many needs that exist in the international community cannot be addressed by programs, but rather, by personal relationships that express love and friendship and take time together.

Examples of Further Ministry Areas

- Visiting ministry: when a church, small group, or individual has made multiple connections with internationals, a visiting ministry can begin. A designated night once a week or once a month can be set aside for a few church members to visit their international friends in their homes. This honors the internationals and allows them to serve their friends with food and showing hospitality, which is common in many world cultures. This is a further opportunity to deepen relationships. Visitors should remember that the cultural expectations for a visit are often 2 hours or more. They can ask a cultural informant (someone from the ethnic culture who understands the culture and can explain it to someone outside of that culture) for any tips, and should be observant to try to follow any cultural norms (such as removing shoes when entering the home).
- Transportation: transportation is consistently identified as a need in the international community, as many internationals cannot obtain driver's licenses (if they lack a Social Security number) and/or cannot afford cars, insurance, and gasoline. Providing transportation to locations that are not accessible by bus (e.g., a certain doctor's office, store, or lawyer's office) can be a way to minister to international friends. Internationals may also need help in obtaining driver's licenses, in studying for the test, getting a ride to the DMV, or getting driving practice hours.
- School help: schools in the United States expect a certain level of parental engagement, which can be very difficult for international families. Friends can help by helping with school contacts and registration, sorting through papers that come home in backpacks and explaining them, when necessary, and helping establish homework practices at home. Some needs may require an interpreter, which the school should provide when needed.
- Housing: Often, internationals who have recently moved are in need of furniture, which can be donated or located at second-hand stores. Occasionally, internationals need temporary emergency housing, as well. Friends can help with these needs.
- Medical needs: along with helping with transportation to medical appointments, friends may help internationals understand medical instructions (such as diet needs and medication labels), and help with registering at free clinics and working with Medicaid/health insurance. Groups and churches may offer health fairs and screenings.
- Spiritual needs: churches may offer small groups or Sunday School classes with simpler English for those who are learning and may need a sheltered environment to understand what is being taught. Individuals and groups may also invite internationals to discovery Bible study (DBS) or other study groups.

- Financial needs: friends can help internationals learn to budget, shop at less expensive stores, avoid scams, and use bank accounts. They can also assist internationals with no financial background in obtaining financial aid for college, when possible.
- Legal needs: friends can help internationals secure appropriate legal assistance (in Roanoke, El Puente or a law firm specializing in immigration law), avoid legal scams, and help with preparations and studying for the citizenship exam for those who are applying to become naturalized citizens.
- Employment needs: internationals may need assistance in finding employment opportunities, applying for jobs, writing resumes, preparing for interviews, and obtaining credentials for certain jobs.
- Social needs: friends can help internationals learn social norms, including everything from the American standards of personal hygiene, to politeness, to how to bargain shop. They may also provide social outlets for internationals to spend time together with new friends and provide opportunities for them to contribute knowledge and skills to the community through cooking and language classes or other possibilities.