

Probing Questions

To Ask Before Becoming a Partnering or Engaging Church

The following are the typical steps in the process of being a Partnering or Engaging Church.

1. Pray for God's passion for the lost and His guidance in the process of deciding to become a Partnering or Engaging Church. You may find it helpful to work through the document *Probing Questions to Ask Before Becoming a Partnering or Engaging Church*, located within this section of your resources.
2. Check out the profiles on:
 - People groups in need of **Partnering Churches** at <http://www.gowestafrica.org/peoplegroups/index.php?engaged=yes>.
 - People groups in need of **Engaging Churches** at <http://www.gowestafrica.org/peoplegroups/index.php?engaged=no>.
3. Prayerfully select a people group. Some things to consider:
 - **Connections.** Does your church already have connections to a particular country or people in West Africa? Do you have members with connections to West Africa, or who have been on previous mission trips to West Africa? Do you have West Africans in your community? Is there a people group or place that keeps coming to your attention?
 - **Country.** Is your church interested in a particular country or open to anywhere in West Africa?
 - **Population.** Does your church prefer a group of a particular size?
 - **Religion.** Does your church want to work with a Muslim people or those who follow African Traditional Religion?
 - **Resources.** Has there been Scripture translation into the people's primary language? Are there any Gospel recordings in their language? Do the people speak a market/trade language that has translation work already done? If you want to be a **Partnering Church**, does your church body have specific skills or gifts that match the strategic needs of the missionary team?
 - **Access.** Are you willing to travel to remote, hard-to-reach places, or do you prefer a people group that's more closely located to a city?
4. Get connected directly with missionaries on the field. They can answer your questions and guide your church to a people group that's right for you.
 - If you want to become a Partnering Church contact: partner@gowestafrica.org
 - If you want to become an Engaging Church contact: engage@gowestafrica.org
5. Send a team of 3-5 church members on a vision trip to West Africa. If you haven't yet selected a people group, a vision trip provides an opportunity to investigate several groups in an area. If you have already selected your people group, use the vision trip to learn about the people, explore ministry opportunities and begin making strategic plans. Begin six weeks before the trip to work through "Pre-Vision Trip Training," located in these resources.
6. Report the findings of the vision team to your church.

7. Corporately commit as a church body to move forward with the task of becoming a Partnering or Engaging Church. A church-wide event celebrating the commitment can create excitement and momentum.
8. Form a Leadership Team, enlisting a “Captain” to provide direction and vision.
9. Build a prayer network that will support each stage of the process.
10. **Partnering Churches** will develop ministry goals with the missionary team on the field.
Engaging Churches will develop a master plan with an Engagement Team missionary on the field.
11. Send teams to West Africa to implement strategies (ideally a minimum of 4-6 times per year). For each trip, each team member is required to:
 - Sign up for travel insurance, preferably through Adams & Associates International (<http://www.aaintl.com> or 800-922-8438)
 - Submit a Volunteer Registration Form at www.gowestafrika.org/volunteers/register.php.
12. Mobilize your entire church to be involved in the process. Even those who don't go to the field can learn about your people group, pray and provide other support.
13. Keep missionaries in the West Africa region informed of your church's work.
Engaging Churches will submit a Trip Notification Form and Trip Feedback Form for each trip using the online account provided by the Engagement Team at <http://westafrika.imb.org/churchresources>.
14. Include periodic evaluations to consider any necessary adjustments to your master plan.